

THE LATE FATHER DAWSON.

A SKETCH OF HIS ACTIVE AND USEFUL LIFE.

One of the Most Popular and Universally Beloved Priests in Canada; a Splendid Litterateur; a Saintly Man.

In our last issue we had only time to say a few words about the death of the Very Reverend Aeneas Macdonell Dawson, D.D., V.G., whose somewhat sudden death took place on Saturday, 29th December last. The following sketch is from the Ottawa Free Press:

He was born at Red Haven, Banffshire, Scotland, on July 30th, 1810, and was consequently in his eighty-fifth year.

For many years there has been no more familiar figure about the city than Father Dawson. Known far and near for his readiness to engage in any Christian work without drawing very closely the lines of distinction between creeds differing from his own, honored and respected by all, taking an active part so far as his advanced years would permit, right up to the very last, it was his lot to be, probably more than any other man of his time, the friend of Roman Catholic and Protestant alike.

Had he lived until April next, it would have been the 60th anniversary of his ordination in the priesthood, and this was an event he looked forward to.

A NOBLE CHARACTER.

Probably nothing can place on record the general appreciation of his liberality of thought better than the address which was presented to him on December 2nd, 1890. "Friends of all religious beliefs take especial delight," it said, "in coming together for the purpose of giving expression to the feeling of regard and attachment which they entertain towards you as a Christian minister and as a fellow-citizen." The occasion of this presentation, which took place in the city hall, will be yet fresh in the memory of many citizens. It was when, in response to the request of the wide circle of friends, his Lordship Bishop Macdonnell, of Alexandria, was pleased to appoint Father Dawson the honorary vicar general of the new Scotch diocese of Alexandria. This address was accompanied by a costly set of furs and a purse containing \$400, and was subscribed to by Protestants as well as Catholics. While always laboring zealously for the advancement of the interests of his own church, the reverend gentleman had so lived as to be on terms of the most perfect harmony with members of all other denominations. His claims to the honor of being Vicar General of the diocese were fully acknowledged by Bishop Macdonnell. As a poet, lecturer and historian, the reverend father had given to the world many thoughts of value and on various occasions had received public recognition of his able services. He was an LL.D. of Queen's university, while Laval university conferred upon him the degree of doctor of letters, and shortly afterwards the Ottawa university awarded him the same distinction; he was also a Fellow of the Royal Society, and at the recent annual convocation of Queen's university, was called upon to deliver the baccalaureate sermon, an address which was widely commented upon.

HIS EARLY HISTORY.

Of his history and life work in the old and new worlds a whole volume might be written. It has fallen to few men to have had the experience which was his. One of seven sons, descended from parents who traced their ancestry back to the early history of Scotland, the reverend gentleman, when but sixteen years of age, studied at the French capital, and together with other youths of his class, as was the custom of the time, served as a page of honor to King Charles X of France. In 1830 the revolution upset the educational institutions of Paris, and eventually he returned to Scotland in 1835, there completing his studies, and being ordained to the priesthood on the 2nd of April in that year, he was appointed to the parish of Dumfries. Mission work was the branch to which he most inclined, and to him is credited the organization of several missions in Scotland and England which have brought large numbers within the rescuing influence of the church. For nearly twenty years he labored on those lines, until in 1852 he accepted the in-

itation of His Lordship the Bishop of Alexandria and came out to Canada. First at Quebec for a short period, and afterwards at Toronto, he was one of the clergymen of these dioceses.

Consequently others of his family came also, and taking some land at Goodwood, four miles from Richmond village, they settled there. After a few years the family moved down to Jockvale, where at the present time an aged brother and sister still reside.

LIFE IN OTTAWA.

Father Dawson was appointed to the parish of Upper Town and many will yet remember having heard him preach in the "St. Andrew's church"—so called out of courtesy to the Scotch Catholics—which stood on Sparks street until two years ago, when the last vestige of it was removed. For five years he remained there. Later on the parish of Long Island, and later still, that of Osgoode, was the field of his faithful ministrations. Among other honors which have been bestowed upon him, it may be noticed that he was duly appointed Roman Catholic chaplain to Her Majesty's forces when the regular soldiers made Bytown their headquarters, and two years ago he was chosen chaplain of St. Andrew's society. For many years he was president of the society for the prevention of cruelty, and until within a year he might be found presiding at its monthly meetings, always ready to aid by his experience what many might have considered as a matter of small importance to men as busy as he.

PIUS IX. AND HIS TIMES.

The reverend gentleman was a classical scholar of the highest order. Although his work in the ministry was at all times arduous, he devoted his leisure moments to literature. Of the numerous writings on various subjects, both in prose and poetry, he is best known by his history of the Catholics of Scotland, and Pius IX. and his time. These two works alone have been everywhere received as standard authorities upon these matters, the latter especially being acknowledged as the most complete in existence. Father Dawson was a well read man; he kept up with the times, and was able to talk in a manner which always commanded attention and reverence.

Of late years it has been his delight to celebrate mass at the congregation of Notre Dame (Gloucester street convent); he did so on Christmas morning, and it was while coming from there to his lodgings that he caught the cold which brought about his death. The sisters and pupils of this congregation feel his death to be to each a personal loss. To the reverend fathers and students of the Ottawa university he was well known, and Rev. Father Murphy, who happened to call upon him Saturday afternoon, was present when the aged patriarch passed peacefully away to his well earned reward.

WAS IT REALITY?

A Visit from the Demon of Intemperance.

Temperance lecturers and advocates, in their exhortations to those whom they wish to convert, have always two models to hold up in illustration of their arguments—the teetotaler and the drunkard. By exhibiting those characters in contrast, they impress their audience with the veracity of their assertions, and thus attain their object to a great extent.

But they seem to forget that sandwiched between these extremes of humanity is another class on whom they might exercise their influence with greater effect than on confirmed drunkards, and to this class belongs the "moderate drinker." I say a greater effect, because it is with extraordinary difficulty that the drunkard can be reformed, as habitual drinking has become to him a second nature, whereas the moderate drinker may be easily rescued from his errors. These reformers also forget that the drunkards of this year were the moderate drinkers of last year, and that the moderate drinkers of to-day will be drunkards a year hence.

The moderate drinker of our large towns and cities is, generally speaking, a "good fellow" imbued with a fair proportion of respectability, and will look with contempt on a poor unfortunate man who has gone beyond the bounds of reformation. Rather should it be a

warning to him to desist from his habit, lest that unfortunate man's fate should be his own in a short time.

I would respectfully say to those excellent reformers: "Strike at the root of the evil—moderate drinking—and you will dispel the evil itself. No man ever became a drunkard at once, moderate drinking was his stepping stone. Cast that stepping-stone into the waves, and the wretched coast of drunkenness can never be reached."

I was led into these reflections by a story which was told me a few nights since by one who was a moderate drinker. This young man, now a staunch teetotaler, was converted from his habit in a supernatural way, and I shall give his wonderful experience in his own words:—

"You know," said he, "that I was never a drunkard. At the same time I must confess that I was accustomed to drink often, but moderately. By degrees I became fond of drink, and could not, as I thought, enjoy myself without a few bottles of stout or ale every night. Besides this, when in any trouble or difficulty, I used to endeavor to drown my sorrows in the brandy bottle. On these occasions I found that the state of my mind was ten times worse when the effects of the 'fiery liquid' had disappeared; in fact I was so often so mentally tortured after the exhilaration produced by drink that I actually contemplated suicide.

"Well, one night, about six months ago, being involved in family disputes, I resorted to my usual antidote, and remained sitting in my bedroom until midnight imbibing pretty freely. About that hour I felt drowsy, and dozed away on my chair. I could not have been long asleep when I woke feeling very chilly. Of course my first impulse was to reach for the bottle, and I took a good drink. I then rubbed my eyes, and opened them pretty wide, to find that my light was extinguished. Now, I was aware I had not slept long, and I knew my candle could not be exhausted in a short time, so I felt anxious about the matter. However, I attempted to light it again, but found to my astonishment and indignation that every lucifer match which I struck was damp, and would not ignite. With an imprecation on the innocent lucifers I tumbled into bed, and was again about entering the land of 'Nod' when I became conscious of the presence of somebody, or rather something. It is remarkable that even when in total darkness we become instinctively conscious of the presence of another being. This was my feeling, and, as I am not by any means superstitious, I looked out, when, to my sorrow, I discerned a hideous figure bending over me.

"Though all around was dark, the figure was enveloped in a sort of unearthly light, but I cannot describe more than the head, for the eyes had a strange fascination for me. Try how I might, I should gaze into those huge prominent bloodshot eyes that, as I thought, pierced my very soul. Flaming, sparkling, penetrating, they held mine in a sort of mesmeric influence.

"Though my eyes did not, or could not move, I knew the head was of an enormous size, and the cheeks puffed and bloated.

"I cannot say how many seconds this lasted, but at length by a supreme effort I turned my gaze from the horrible figure and buried myself in the bedclothes.

"Of course I could not sleep, but by degrees it occurred to me that perhaps after all it was a delusion or a dream, and after a lapse of half an hour I ventured to look again, and saw nothing.

"The first thing I did was to reach for the bottle, and I took a long pull. I got out of bed and tried the lucifers again. To my agreeable surprise the first one I struck caught fire, so I lighted the candle. I took up Tom Hood's Wit and Humor, and in a few minutes was actually convinced that I was only the victim of some frightful hallucination. After another half hour or so I put out the light and immediately went to sleep.

"Next morning when I awoke I took a 'refresher' from the bottle, laughed at my strange dream, dressed, and went to business as usual. During the day I did not even recall my experience of the previous night.

"In the evening, after business, I had a few bottles of beer, as usual, and went home to find the family disputes before referred to, instead of being, as I hoped, in a state of settlement, or at least abeyance, more intricate and unsettled than

ever. As myself was chiefly concerned, I silently ate my supper and left the house in indignation.

At eleven I returned, not forgetting to arm myself against my mental struggle with the brandy bottle. I indulged to a greater extent than on the previous night, partly on account of my mind being more unbinged, and partly to prevent another encounter with my nocturnal visitor. In this latter object, however, I was disappointed, for another visit was paid. I need only tell you that it occurred exactly as before, with this difference—that a strong impression of the reality of that horrible figure was instilled in this instance.

"Next day I certainly felt troubled over the matter, and went home from business with a rather melancholy air. My parents noticed the change, but attributed it to the aforesaid family disagreements, and on that account were more lenient towards me. I retired with the bottle, but this third night's experience was more interesting, as it was, and I shall never believe otherwise, reality itself.

"The figure appeared as on the two previous nights, but its eyes were more flaming and bloodshot. On this occasion, too, while my eyes were held in influence, the revolting head bent over me until it almost touched my face. It then, with a mouth reaching, as I thought, from ear to ear, hissed, rather than spoke, mine! mine! mine!—each repetition of the word increasing in emphasis.

"You can imagine how I felt better than I can describe. Huge beads of perspiration were rolling down my face. I was certain the monster was going to seize and take me down to hell, for it smelt strongly of brimstone, and flames of fire began to issue from its mouth, nostrils and ears. Soon, however, I was aware of a new light in the room quite different from that which surrounded my enemy. I looked towards it, and saw that it proceeded from a beautiful and angelic figure, which was standing behind the demon.

"This figure looked appealingly and pathetically on me, at the same time unrolling a scrip which it held in its hand. Raising this scrip over the head of the monster, I saw printed thereon in large letters:—THE DEMON OF INTemperance!

"The monster, turning round to see what had diverted my attention, beheld the angelic form, and, with a piercing shriek, disappeared. The beautiful figure, casting on me a lingering, imploring look, gradually faded from my sight.

"The incident was so impressive and appropriate, that I shall never doubt its reality.

"After a few minutes' thought, I saw how my moderate drinking would end, so I got out of bed, went on my knees, and there and then promised God never to taste intoxicating drink again. This promise I renewed subsequently at the tribunal of Penance. I have faithfully kept it to the present time and with God's help will do so in the future. If ever I am tempted to break it that night's experience will be a powerful and effective incentive to resist the temptation."

This was my friend's story.

"Do you think time will erase the reality of the wonderful incidents of that night?" said I.

"No," said he, "until my dying day I will believe that my guardian angel interposed on that never-to-be-forgotten night to save me from the drunkard's fate. Should my story become known some may laugh at me, some may say, it was the effects of the brandy; but I believe, and ever will believe, that it was a reality.—W. J. M. C., in Cork Examiner.

A VOTE OF THANKS.

At the last general meeting of St. Anthony's C.Y.M.S. a vote of thanks was unanimously tendered to Misses Marie Hollinshead, M. Drumm, N. M. Andrew, M. O'Malley and Mabel Appleton, and Messrs. Frank Feron, C. M. Hockley, M. A. Phelan, James Cardiff, Thomas Matthews, Percy Evans, W. Hammall, E. C. Eaton, J. P. McNally, L. O'Brien, W. P. Doyle, H. Corcoran, M. T. Cullen, W. Wall and J. Bulger, who kindly took part in their musical and dramatic entertainment which took place on the 6th Dec., 1894, in the basement of St. Anthony's Church, which undoubtedly was a grand success in every way.