

In Affectionate Remembrance of
ROBERT HENRY HADDEN

Who fell on sleep on Friday, June 11th, 1909.

*Iron sharpeneth iron: so a man sharpeneth the
countenance of his friend.*

PROVERBS xxvii., 17.

A SERMON

PREACHED IN

ST. MARK'S CHURCH, North Audley Street,

BY THE

DEAN OF PETERBOROUGH,

On Sunday, June 20th, 1909.

Privately printed.

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the countenance of his friend.*

PROVERBS xxvii., 17.

THE "friend" who stands first in the thoughts of most of us to-day, would have resented nothing more than that anything should be spoken about him here, which might savour of forced sentiment or of words said, for the sake of saying them, of religious commonplace. I can picture him prompting me privately in my ear: "Let there be no flummery and no fuss; no emotion more than can be helped! What was to be, has been; and life's business is with what is." He was the sworn foe of unrealities and of realities which ought not to be. But in proportion as he hated them, he loved the realities which deserved to be such; he was no enemy to feeling which was spontaneous and genuine, so long as it was in place. I will try to

speak of him as I know that he would have liked to be spoken of—as if he were here to pull me up, should I strike a false note. And in a manner he is perhaps more fully here for some of us in the wholeness of his character than in any moment of chance meeting, which put forward but a single side. For he was in fact a many-sided man, whose qualities were so marked, that each of them in turn absorbed one's attention and diverted it from the rest.

He would not have been impatient with me for telling you some true things about him. He was far too affectionate not to care that his friends should remember him, provided they remembered him exactly as he was. He would not value the "blind-eye" appreciation which spies about for virtues, undiscerned before, amid the shadows of the grave. He would have scorned reparations, which are made too late. But he would desire to be understood still by those who understood him ever, and to be judged of justly always by those who had justly judged of him once.

It is about 26 years since I received one day a letter from a man I had never heard of before, inviting me to become his colleague and fellow-curate under William Rogers of Bishopsgate, whose name may be a name to conjure with even yet for some of you, a clergyman who was a man among men, a man-maker, and a Christian who was a Christian in deed never less than in word. The letter was signed "R. H. Hadden;" and I should be inclined to say that not only was R. H. Hadden the agent upon that occasion of "the Rector," but that he stood to him increasingly throughout the remainder of his own life in truest lineal succession of manful character and influence over others. Both of them were clergymen, who in being much more than clergymen did their Master's work as no mere clergymen can.

It was significant of the natural fellowship of the two men that the one should have entrusted the other with such a task. Rogers was no "slacker" in the matter of efficiency. The brave victim, as he then already was, of bodily disablement, there was not any

detail of parish, and a great deal outside parish, management for which he had not a zealous care. But he knew his man.

For three years we worked together in Bishopsgate, Hadden and I with Rogers, as with one heart and one mind, with no hitch and no jar. As senior in office to me, he might have reserved to himself what was easiest and most attractive. Instead, he transferred it to me. In all that he retained, it might have been said of him, as it was said of one of old who was also a "man," that "whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it." In activities which extended far beyond the borders of Bishopsgate and of sorts which seldom fall to a Curate to undertake, he was a power to be reckoned with. He has sometimes been thought hard. He was hard, when he had scented out a job, when he unmasked a sham, when he happened upon a shirk. But he was very tender to weakness and to pain. I have seen him mourn, as for his own child, for a chorister who died. And his courtesy was of that essential kind which springs from considera-

tion for every one. As I saw him, he was always gracious, when graciousness was not a fault.

I believe, however, that the distinguishing characteristic which contributed most to make him what he was, was that he always sought for, and always pursued, the best. With quick and shrewd insight he took stock of a position; he weighed persons; and then with a single eye to that only, disregarding pedantries and brushing aside trifles, he strove with an undivided energy for the thing which was practicable and right.

He was seldom downhearted; he was never downhearted to that degree which palsies the hand and brain. He had that trust in the continuity of things, which is the wise man's most serviceable application of faith in God. There are two fundamental types of Christian and religious faith. There is that which comes by inheritance, the accident or privilege of birth; and those who so receive it are told mostly that they have done well. There is the faith also which is built up afresh upon observation and inquiry and reflection.

Such was the faith which commended itself to your minister and to our friend. In virtue of its origin it bears always the marks, it may be the defects, of individuality; but perhaps it is not less near to the mind of Him Who taught that His Spirit and His Father's should be our guide, after He was gone, "into all the truth."

We were parted when I left Bishopsgate; and I could only speak by hearsay of the time he spent at Aldgate and of what he has done and of what he has been here for most of you. I do know however that he had all parochial things upon a business footing. He beautified his church. People came to worship in it, who might not have worshipped elsewhere. He was not favourable to forms which are past service or to the mock antique in doctrine or observance. He had no fetiches. The Christianity he preached was the Christianity he practised, and like the Christianity of his Master, was for his own time. I may not speak of those personal and private relations of the family and the home, which are too sacred for a public occasion.

I know how shyly tender and proudly loving he was, with an Englishman's reticence and reserve, where tenderness and love stand first. It would be injudicious for me to refer in detail to that more extended influence which he was sometimes enabled to exercise in very varied directions by reason of his many and important friendships and of the confidence and respect on which they reposed. He won that confidence and respect, because impartially and impersonally he surveyed every position, and having chosen his ground, founded himself upon what he deemed deliberately to be most profitable for good. He put neither himself, nor others, before that. But with that reservation, he was the most thoughtful and diligent of friends. If the secret story of his life could be revealed, I know that it would be a large and interesting part of it, that in almost every walk and rank of life there are men, and women too, who owe to him the best of what they have and the best of what they are. And his friendship, once it was given, never wavered and never dwindled. After weeks or months

of absence or of separation in responsibilities and employments, there was no break. You began again where you had left off. You found him still remembering, caring, planning, for something you had desired or that he had desired for you. For it was of him literally true, that he spared himself no pains when he had undertaken, and sometimes when he had not undertaken, to serve or advise.

And now, I was almost saying, "he is gone." But he is not gone! I must speak to you under restraint. For there is too near me in thought a familiar face, with characteristic upward poise of the head, with eyes that look beyond to the further side of truth, with resolute lips projected as if to catch unuttered words. He was no quack doctor of sad hearts; and I have no private key to the locked doors of death, nor can I lift any corner of the veil which is stretched backward from eternity to time. We share with him the same "hope full of immortality." But there is a sense in which, however short of immortality, he is with us still, and will be

with us while our mortality endures. On every friend who knew him there is, faintly or more deep, the stamp of his personality. He was no model. I fancy I can hear him say, "On models you may mould puppets, but you cannot fashion men." He dared to be, and he was, himself. And the salient lesson of his example, I think, is, that however unlike him each of us may be in everything besides, we should be like him at least in this—in being what God meant us to be, and in doing what God has given us to do. He loved life, as a man ought to love it who has interests and concerns in life; and he would fain have seen good days for others and for himself. But he valued life, less for itself, than as the casket in which is enshrined the opportunity to do.