

PERSONALITY OF THE WEEK

By HARVEY W. JOHNSTON

The time the hotel keeper offered to treat Rev. H. D. Marr to a few glasses of beer, as a reward for returning a valuable gold watch he had found, will always remain a piquant memory to the retired Southern Alberta district secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

Mr. Marr, who is 88 years of age and full of vitality, can smile today as he recalls the incident. While staying at the hotel he happened upon the watch and promptly placed it in the care of the clerk with instructions to make certain the time-piece reached the rightful owner. The delighted hotel manager upon recovering his watch showed gratitude by insisting that Mr. Marr accompany him into the beverage room.

Mr. Marr made it clear at the time he would have nothing to do with alcohol. However, when he went to pay for three days' accommodation he was pleased to learn his bill was already "paid."

Mr. Marr was born near Sussex in King's County New Brunswick on Feb. 23rd, 1857. He completed his public school and attended the provincial normal training school at Fredericton. He taught school for three and one-half years.

Then came the urge to join the ministry. He was accepted as a probationer in the Methodist Church in 1880 and preached for a year on a mission field. He then was accepted at Mount Allison University, graduating four years later in 1895 with his bachelor of arts. Significant of his eloquence during his college days was the fact that he won first prize in elocution during both his freshman and sophomore years.

In 1896 he was ordained and, that year, married Miss Clara D. Jost of Guyboro, N.S. before going to his first mission charge.

ward in the fortunes of the society in Alberta. For 22 years he worked, lured by the goal of saturating his territory with all the Bible material that was required. His new parish he defined as 130,000 square miles in extent.

Concerning the nature of his duties in the early days Mr. Marr said he was mainly concerned with employing distribution agents and directing their operations, which was to carry the Bible and portions of the Holy Scriptures to the people in their mother tongue, particularly among the settlers, in the more

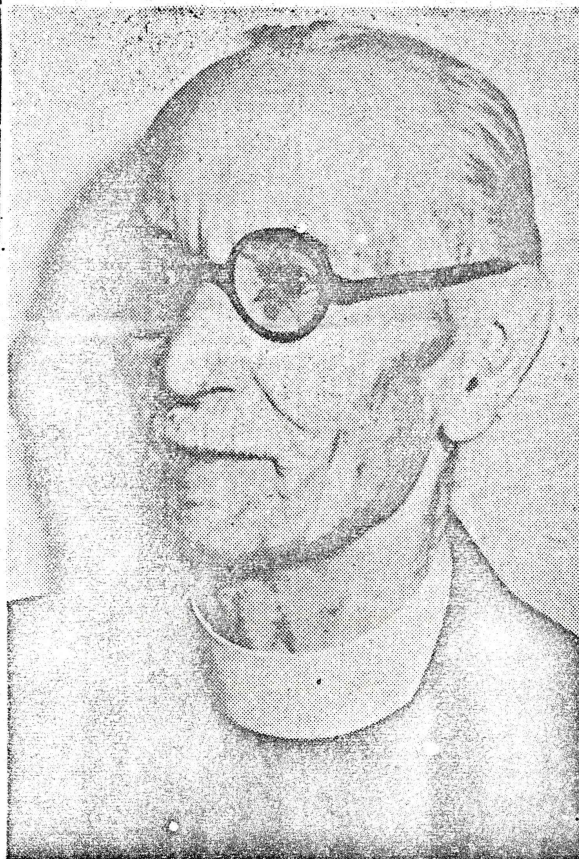
remote areas of Alberta.

The colporteur in their travels became much like pioneer missionaries to farm families who were not yet receiving the ministrations of any organized church.

These agents of Christian teaching often found homes which lacked any part of the Bible, and they took care to supply this need. Each monthly report of the colporteurs tabulated the number of localities visited and homes supplied with the Bible at cost price or as a gift from the society.

The Bible was distributed

Rev. H. D. Marr



in 49 languages in Alberta as the colporteurs moved among the newly arrived settlers from overseas. Significant of the influence the Bible exerted on the people from Protestant countries of Europe is this story which Mr. Marr has told many times.

In one Norwegian immigrant home the parents had brought their family Bible from the home land. A few years afterwards the eldest daughter was to be married. According to custom she was to be presented with a Bible on the occasion of her wedding. Rather than see her leave home without a Bible her mother slashed the family Bible through the binding with a carving knife and gave her daughter half of the severed leaves.

THE COLPORTEUR, also a Norwegian, appeared at the door sometime later and was warmly received. Each member of the family bought a Bible but it illustrated the field for supplying the Bible to the settlers.

The distributors of Holy Scripture were constantly meeting with surprises. On one occasion a colporteur was staying overnight in one of these farm homes. In the morning he noticed that the man's pigs — quite a number of them — were issuing with characteristic grunting noises from under the flooring.

He said to the man, "Do you let your pigs run under your house?"

The farmer answered, "Yes, that is where they sleep . . . Why do you ask?"

"Well," said the colporteur, "I would think it unsafe for health reasons."

"Oh!" replied the farmer stroking his stubbled chin reflectively, "I guess it's OK — we ain't lost a hog since we came here."

The incident described above is an example of the rough and ready hospitality accorded Mr. Marr in the pioneer stages of his field work. With the whole settled area of Alberta as his charge, he had little or no use for a team and buggy of his own. He would travel to his appointments by train, being met at the station by local ministers and taken to the church, where he was to

There his pastoral zeal, use of picturesque language, and simple gospel style of preaching brought him outside attention in the form of a call to the pastorate of Woodstock, N.B., Methodist church in 1898.

HE NEXT TOOK over the pulpit of East St. John Methodist, where in 1901 the same success greeted his efforts. He moved to larger Methodist churches in St. John until he was called to Centenary, the largest in the Maritimes.

Meanwhile he had met Rev. Dr. Roscoe Heine, whose work on behalf of the British and Foreign Bible Society won his unbounded admiration. Dr. Heine distributed diglot editions of the New Testament to immigrants arriving by thousands at the Port of Saint John prior to the First Great War.

THESE COPIES of the New Testament carried parallel columns — one in the native language of the newcomer and the other in English. These books were valued as affording a useful introduction to the English language.

Dr. Heine was singularly gifted with linguistic ability, and at the same time devoted to Bible distribution. He could make himself understood in a dozen languages.

During his incumbency of Centenary Church the General Board of the British and Foreign Bible Society, meeting in Toronto, offered Mr. Marr charge of its activities in Alberta. His decision to accept meant giving up the comparative ease and security of a well-organized and popular church, with possible honors ahead, and taking on the problems and far-ranging responsibilities of an unknown field of endeavor.

The fact which appealed strongly to his imagination was the dormant goodwill toward the society. There was a heavy financial deficit, since the returns on Bible supplies shipped from London had been largely used to meet current expenses.

HIS ARRIVAL in Calgary during 1912 portended a turn up-

THE THINGS THEY SAY

Women are like thoroughbred horses; you have to speak kindly to them before you bridle them.

—M. Andre Maurois

Our profession is the only one which works unceasingly to annihilate itself.

—Dr. Martin H. Fischer, professor of physiology at the University of Cincinnati

The British are the only people who like to be told how bad things are — who like to be told the worst.

—Sir Winston Churchill

There are infallible signs that a man is about to declare his love. If he's timid, he turns bold; if he's frivolous, he turns solemn; if he's solemn, he becomes gay. Then you can be sure he is going to say, "I love you".

—Miss Vicki Baum

They always say in my country that if there were an all-powerful world government, they would put Englishmen in charge of all museums, and Americans in charge of all factories.

—Choi Byung-woo, South Korean journalist

When you look at the world's condition today, you sometimes wish Noah had missed the boat.

—Bishop Fulton J. Sheen

Can we be told whether the government is going to bury Caesar in the House of Lords, or is he going to be allowed to come back here and worry Anthony?

—Mr. Emrys Hughes, British M.P.

A man must marry only a pretty woman if he hopes ever to get some other man to take her off his hands.

—M. Sacha Gultry

A poet can't even starve in a garret these days, because garrets now are too expensive. I think there will be fewer poets, but better ones. You're going to have to be extra good to survive.

—Mr. Louis Untermeyer, poet and anthologist

It is a pity that we have to devote such a large part of our energies to defence, but it is obvious that this is a state vastly to be preferred to war.

—Dr. O. M. Solandt, Chairman of Canada's Defence Research Board.

When Time magazine says the Penticton V's asked for french fries, they're crazy. We weren't permitted to eat greasy foods. And as for complaining about German food, those wiener schnitzels were the best breaded veal cutlets I've ever tasted.

—Jack McDonald of the Penticton V's

We have heard the rustle of the wings of greatness in the years when Sir Winston Churchill has played so great a part in our lives.

—Lord Chancellor, Lord Kilnuir.

The devil and an angel pounce on every new invention, but usually the devil gets it first.

—Mr. Percy MacKay, poet

There are three kinds of husbands — the prize, the surprise and the consolation prize.

—A Boston co-ed.

COMMISSIONER SAILS

LIVERPOOL, England (CP) — Escott M. Reid, Canadian high commissioner in India, sailed for Canada on home leave Friday

preach. Frequently he covered jolting miles on a farm wagon.

Mr. Marr's work was honored on his retirement in 1934 by the General Board of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Canada, which made him district secretary emeritus. At its meeting last spring in Toronto the board elected him an honorary life governor of the society, an honor attained only by a few.

The memoirs of men who have triumphed over obstacles inevitably contain junctures when they could have turned back to the safe and pleasant ways they had abandoned in order to embark on their adventure. This fact also applies to Mr. Marr.

IN 1919 he was invited by the board of the Methodist Church in Kitsalino to take its pulpit, but refused the offer. In 1922 a stronger urge came to abandon the work of the British and Foreign Bible Society as the result of an excruciating stomach condition, which had necessitated a serious operation two years earlier.

He returned from a second visit to the Mayo clinic at Rochester in such a low state of health that he asked the local board of the society to give him a release from his duties, which was granted.

A successor, Rev. G. H. Cobble Dick of Calgary was nominated subject to ratification of the Toronto headquarters. The general board was to meet for the purpose of considering the appointment on Oct. 18. The evening of Oct. 17, Mr. Cobble Dick was fatally injured when a street car struck his car.

The general board met only to take note of the tragedy and to wire regret to the widow and children. No action was taken regarding the appointment of a new secretary. Meanwhile somewhat shaken by the event Mr. Marr resumed his responsibilities, and carried on for twelve years until his official retirement in October, 1934, when he was succeeded by Rev. A. A. Lytle, his field secretary.