

Review.

Memorials of the Hon. Ion Keith-Falconer, M.A. By Rev. ROBERT SINKER, B.D., Librarian of Trinity College, Cambridge. Deighton, Bell and Co. 1888.

THESE memorials will well repay reading. Ion Keith-Falconer, athlete, scholar, and Christian, was a man of no ordinary character. His father, the late Lord Kintore, lived, the biographer tells us, "in the faith and fear of God, and in the furtherance of every good work—'mente manu voce et exemplo.'" Reared by such a father, and trained "by a God-fearing mother," we can well understand that he should early exhibit the practical fruits of piety.

At the age of nine Ion Keith-Falconer came under the charge of a tutor, who first gave him daily lessons and then became resident at Keith Hall, the family seat in Scotland. He bears similar testimony to his religious character, and adds that "he was a thoroughly conscientious and noble-minded boy." At eleven years of age he went to the well-known school of Rev. R. S. Tabor, at Cheam, and two years subsequently successfully competed for a scholarship at Harrow, which he entered in 1869. His house-master tells us that from his first entrance his boyish life "was noticeable for his marked individuality and determination." He was "always high-principled and religious," but nothing "of a prig or a Pharisee." Mr. G. W. Russell, formerly M.P. for Aylesbury, his school-fellow, and for two years in the same house with him, writes, "Ion's was not the simple goodness of an un instructed but well-meaning boy—though that in its way is beautiful—he was already an advanced and, if the word is permissible in such a context, an *accomplished* Christian."

In 1874 Ion Keith-Falconer, after reading for a while with Mr. Hensley at Hitchin, entered Trinity College, Cambridge—noted for his many-sidedness. For the first year he read for mathematical honours, but then determined to read for the Theological Tripos. This change of front, as every University man knows, is very often fatal even to men of good abilities; but he threw himself into the work *con amore*, won one of the Jeremie Septuagint prizes, and finally obtained a first-class and the prize for Hebrew. He then proceeded to read for the Tyrwhitt Hebrew Scholarship, for which he was successful, and eventually for the new-established Semitic Tripos. In this he took up Hebrew, Rabbinic, and Syriac, leaving out Arabic, with which he had only a slight acquaintance, and obtained a first-class.

In our sketch hitherto we have exhibited Ion Keith-Falconer as a Christian and a scholar. We may now consider him as an athlete. In his Harrow days he does not appear to have taken any special interest in school sports, but bicycling coming into vogue it had a great charm for him, and he very rapidly came to the front. His fame whilst at Harrow and at Hitchin preceded him to the University, and he was elected vice-president of the Cambridge University Bicycle Club before he commenced residence. In November of that year he won, the biographer tells us, "his first race at Cambridge, doing ten miles of road in thirty-four minutes." He was also successful in the races against Oxford, and won numerous other distinctions. His crowning feat was the race against John Keen, which we cannot do better than give in his own words: "Early in the year," he writes, "I consented to meet John Keen, the professional 'champion of the world, in a five-mile bicycle race, on our ground at Cambridge, on October 23. But I forgot all about my engagement till 'I was accidentally reminded of it nine days before it was to come off.

"I immediately began to make my preparations and to train hard. The first great thing to be done was to knock off smoking, which I did ; next, to rise early in the morning, and breathe the fresh air before breakfast, which I did ; next, to go to bed not later than ten, which I did ; next, to eat plenty of wholesome food, and not too much meat and pastry ; and finally, to take plenty of gentle exercise in the open air, which I did. What was the result ? I met Keen on Wednesday last, the 23rd October, and amidst the most deafening applause, or rather yells of delight, this David slew the great Goliath, or, to speak in plain language, I defeated Keen by about five yards. The time was by far the fastest on record. The last lap—that is, the last circuit, measuring 440 yards—we did in 39 seconds : that is more than 11 yards per second. The people here," he writes, "are enchanted about it ; so that it is gratifying for me to think that, notwithstanding my other work and other business, I can yet beat with positive comfort and ease the fastest rider in the world. I am bound to say," he adds, "that smoking is bad—bad for the wind and general condition." In 1879 he again beat Keen in a two-mile race by three inches.

We must now follow our biographer, and touch upon another phase of Mr. Keith-Falconer's life, his evangelistic work at Barnwell and Mile End. The special work in Cambridge seems to have had for its starting-point the proposed visit of D. L. Moody, in connection with which it was determined to hire the theatre at Barnwell. Mr. Moody's visit was postponed ; but a vigorous effort was made by means of evangelistic services to reach, as our biographer tells us, "that still large element of the population which never by any chance went to any place of worship." This was a work after Keith-Falconer's heart. He threw himself into it with his characteristic energy, and in a great measure through his efforts the theatre was eventually purchased, and became the centre of new life. At the formal opening of it he delivered a very telling address, thoroughly appropriate to the occasion, which will amply repay reading. The work at Mile End was in association with Mr. F. N. Charrington, whom he zealously supported by personal help and liberal pecuniary aid. His rule was to do nothing by halves, and, once convinced the work was a worthy one, he backed it up with self-denying effort.

But, though much interested in this movement, he felt conscious that his Cambridge training fitted him for some other sphere of work. He therefore applied himself to the study of Arabic, first at Cambridge, subsequently at Leipsic, and afterwards at Assiout, in Egypt. In 1884 he married Miss Gwendolen Bevan, daughter of Mr. R. C. L. Bevan, and in due time brought his wife to Cambridge, where he occupied himself mainly in preparing and bringing out a translation from the Syriac of the "Fables of Bidpai." Of this work, the biographer tells us, Professor Nöldeke, one of the foremost of living Oriental scholars, writes : "We will look forward with hope to meet the young Orientalist who has so early stepped forward as a master many a time yet, and not only in the region of Syriac."

About this time his attention was very much drawn to Aden and to missionary work in its vicinity ; and in the latter part of 1885 he proceeded there for the purpose of taking a general survey of the place. It had this advantage : that it was British territory, and that the influence of the Government extended far beyond its own limits. In Shaikh Othman, some ten miles from Aden, with a population of about 7,000, he seemed to find a station in all respects suitable. It was on the high-road to Arabia, and, besides the resident population, there was a steady passage of people to and from Aden. A good doctor, to be associated with him, and animated by a missionary spirit, would, he

thought, soon give the cause he had at heart a good start; and a school for the native children would prove very useful, leaving him free for more direct missionary labour amongst the adult population.

Everything seemed to promise fair; a piece of land was offered him if he was in a position to take it up, and nothing remained for him to do but to return homewards, with the view of completing the necessary arrangements. He reached England in 1886, met the Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, with which body he desired the mission to be associated, though the expenses were to be borne by himself, and made diligent inquiries for a suitable doctor, whom he eventually found. During the summer the Bishop of Ely (Lord Alwyne Compton) offered him the Lord Almoner's Professorship of Arabic, which he accepted, as the duties were not onerous. He delivered his first and only course in the November of the year, and then proceeded to take up his work at Shaikh Othman.

Into the details of his work there space does not permit us to enter. It was full of promise for the future; but Aden fever laid hold upon him, from the effects of which he finally succumbed on May 10, 1887, after six months' residence there. Ion Keith-Falconer thus breathed his last in his thirty-first year. He was a man, as our readers will have seen, of rare gifts, and admirably fitted for the last work which he had taken in hand. He has left his mark behind him, which will not be effaced; and his work, we are glad to find, will be carried on, being taken up as a sacred legacy by his family and other friends. All we hope of our readers is that they will endeavour to become acquainted with the "Memorials" for themselves. The story of the life is admirably told by Mr. Sinker, and we do not know when we have read any memoir which has so pleased us.

W. E. RICHARDSON.



THE MONTH.

THE Clergy Discipline Bill was read a third time without a division. The Archbishop of York severely criticised the Bill.

At the Synod of the Roman Catholic clergy of Limerick Bishop O'Dwyer denounced the National League.

We record with regret the death of the much esteemed Archdeacon of Lewes, Ven. John Hannah, D.C.L. Of the Archdeacon's latest contribution to the *CHURCHMAN* the *Guardian* says:

... A singularly clear and cogent essay on "Christianity without Christ" ... is a forcible analysis of the real character of Comtism, and of the views propounded in some "prominent English publications." ... We commend the article to the notice of those who dream that the pure morality of the Gospel and its beneficent influences upon human life and society can be retained whilst its supernatural basis is abandoned or subverted.

After a reign of some ninety days the German Emperor Frederick III. has entered into rest. "History records no nobler or more pathetic spectacle than is presented by the brief reign just closed." He is succeeded by his son, Emperor William II.

Prebendary Billing, Rector of Spitalfields, is appointed Suffragan Bishop of Bedford.