

**MR. SPURGEON AT THE MASONIC HALL.***(From the Evening News.)*

"A chip of the old block." Yes, there is no doubt that Mr Thomas Spurgeon, now travelling in the Australian colonies, is a thorough chip of the old block, a worthy son of the great Charles Spurgeon, England's great middle-class preacher. The eminent Baptist, once famous as a boy-preacher, has now at any rate one son who is already a distinguished boy-preacher, following closely in his father's footsteps. The Spurgeons are a preaching family; the great orator's brother, the Rev. Thomas Spurgeon, is an acceptable preacher, who has no need to hang upon his brother's coat tail. The pastor of the Tabernacle has spoken so frequently of his "twins," that they have been public characters ever since the day when Mrs. Spurgeon presented her husband with two fine boys. Both of them have taken to preaching, and Thomas Spurgeon, the young man who is now among us, is one of the twins, and is about the age at which his father made his great reputation as a boy preacher. Nearly thirty years have passed since, and Mr Spurgeon has proved to be no ephemeral meteor, but a clear shining star, a permanent power among the middle classes of England. A great critic, with no Baptist proclivities, once said "Spurgeon is the greatest English orator after John Bright," and such is the opinion of many impartial persons. He is the most English of Englishmen, stern in his theology, yet genial in character, intensely earnest, yet jovial in disposition. Namby-pambyism meets with no support from him; his Christianity is too vigorous to suit sentimental religionists, and the "unco guid" have received many a good shock at his hands. He thoroughly believes in enjoying the present life, and the good things that God has given us. In the intervals between the intense suffering which he has had to bear in recent years, no man is more jolly than he. He will joke and chat with his friends, play like a schoolboy, and I have heard of his rolling over on the sand at a sea-side place with a "dear brother in Christ." At all times he dearly loves a whiff of the weed, and this touch of nature has made many a young man listen with respect to his words, who would have turned aside to any of the sanctimonious persons who are, alas, too common. This habit has frequently brought reproof down on his head. Three years ago one of the American evangelists who followed in the wake of Moody and Sankey, Mr. Pentecost, I think, was his name, preached at Spurgeon's Tabernacle by request. He concluded his sermon by a dissertation on the evils of smoking, and Spurgeon, before pronouncing the benediction, announced that he intended to go home and "smoke a pipe to the glory of God." So runs the story, and it agrees well with the straightforward, honest character

agrees well with the straightforward, honest character of the man; but stories about Spurgeon have to be received with caution. At one time it was the fashion to put every eccentricity down to him,—until at last it was stated that he slid down the bannister rail of his pulpit stairs to show how easy is the descent to the lower regions. This he was compelled to deny, and of late his common sense has been recognised as well as his wit. He is, indeed, a great English humourist, and he employs his powers of humour frequently in the pulpit and always in tea-party addresses. His jokes and witticisms would fill a goodly volume, and many of them are, fortunately, in a permanent form. There is one that the Nonconformist parsons are not likely to forget. "Resist the devil, and he will fly from you; but resist a deacon, and he will fly at you." But all Spurgeon's eloquence and all his humour are made subservient to his great purpose of saving the souls of his fellow-creatures. Apparently he has not a shadow of doubt on theology, but with clearness of vision and singleness of purpose he preaches salvation through faith in the blood of Christ. He can scarcely understand anyone differing from the Spurgionic creed, and he is not very gentle with those who do. The conversion which is the aim of his preaching, is a vital change in action as well as belief, and that it is something definite and practical is shown by the best known of his illustrations of conversion. A servant girl said to him, "Mr Spurgeon, I think I am converted." "What makes you think so?" "Cos, sir, I sweeps under the mats."

Whatever we may think of Spurgeon's theology, it must be admitted that his influence and training are likely to produce a manly, vigorous, earnest Christian character, and therefore his son's arrival in Australia, with his father's certificate that "he can preach a bit," was welcomed by the religious communities. For his father's sake many went to hear him on Sunday week at the Masonic Hall—for his own sake many more went last Sunday, as the report of his powers had spread throughout the city. At half-past 2 the hall was well filled, but I obtained a seat in one of the four corners, and during the half-hour that elapsed before the commencement of the service, a steady stream filled up the galleries and every available space for standing. The large congregation, I suppose 1200 people, was exactly the sort of gathering that would muster in any part of England to hear Spurgeon, senior, for so we must now call him. Every denomination was represented, every suburb from Hunter's Hill to Woodlaha sent its contingent. There were plenty of middle-aged substantial men and women, plenty of young ladies, and a sprinkling, that might with advantage have been larger, of young men. The fashionables, of course, were not there, for they have

fashionables, of course, were not there, for they have an invincible objection to make their way heavenwards by a Baptist path, and their nearest approach to Evangelicism must be taken under the guidance of a dean or canon.

A goodly choir of young ladies and young gentlemen, whose faces were familiar to attendants at Dr. Somerville's services, were arranged on the platform, and were supported by Mr. Dowie and the principal Baptist divines of Sydney. As the young preacher came forward to give out a hymn there was a subdued whisper of each one to his or her neighbour, "Is that him? He's only a boy." So he certainly looked. With smooth hair, and face innocent of the razor, Mr. Thomas Spurgeon looks even more boy-like than his father did at the same age. He bears a strong resemblance to his father, but has a more refined face, and naturally is without those traces of suffering that are now painfully manifest on his father's countenance. When nature has provided him with a manly addition of hair on his cheeks, lip, and chin, he will appear indeed "a chip of the old block." His voice is clear and good; it will fill any building that he is likely to speak in, but towards the end of the service his throat was clearly affected, owing to a temporary cold. I hear that his twin brother has a finer voice, but Mr. Thomas Spurgeon will never be at less in this respect, if he has good health. He came forward in a simple manner, and gave out the hymn in Sankey's collection, frequently used at revival meetings, "Lord we hear of showers of blessing." Then he offered a long extempore prayer, most distinctly, in his father's style. With great simplicity he implored God's blessing, that "the sluices of heaven might be up-drawn," that none should leave the hall unblessed, unprofited. That the hand that strengthens the weak, and upholds the falling that was marked by the nails of Calvary, might be outstretched to help and to bless. In touching terms he prayed for relations and friends in "our dear old native land," that they might receive the richest blessings of God, and that this round world might go on its way through space, as a continual anthem, a universal shout of "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, goodwill to men." Time after time he returned to the prayer, in one form or other, that the Almighty would manifest his power in the extension of his kingdom.

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The colonies which stand out of the proposed cable contract are Queensland and Tasmania, and it is the intention of Mr. Burns and Mr. Berry to sign independently of these colonies. However, as the Victorian Parliament is now in session, and as the contract is subject to its ratification, it is probable that preliminary resolutions will be submitted before the

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**LORD LEITRIM.**—This is perfectly true about the late Lord Leitrim. One of his tenants, a Scotchman, spent a deal of time and money draining and hedging his holding. His landlord happened to pass by one day, and immediately turned in on the land when he saw the improvements. "Had you my orders for doing this?" "No, my lord." "Very well. This is Saturday. If you have not got these drains filled up and those hedges pulled down on Monday, out you go." Not a very long, but a very pithy conversation. The man was in despair and went for advice to the priest. "All right, my boy," said his reverence; "I'll make it all right for you, I'll go bail. Come to mass to-morrow, and see what I'll do for you." A very short service was the result, and then the priest led the way to the Scotchman's holding, followed by the whole congregation armed with picks, spades, and shovels, and by Monday morning not a vestige remained of the improvements. When Lord Leitrim arrived he was utterly amazed. But not more amazed than delighted. His whim was an expensive one, for he paid out of his own pocket to have every single thing re-made which had by his orders been demolished.—*Tru/A.*