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RECOLLECTIONS

OF THE

REV. JOHN McELHENNEY, D. D.

BY HIS GRANDDAUGHTER.

ROSE W. FRY.

“O good gray head which all men knew.”

Richmond, Va. :

WHITTET & SHEPPERSON, PRINTERS, 1001 MAIN STREET.

1893.

CHAPTER V.

THE FIELD.

OVER eighty years have passed since John McElhenney took his first memorable ride over the Alleghanies, through the Greenbrier country, and on down the green waters of the Kanawha to the banks of the Ohio. In his pocket he carried a letter of introduction from that thoughtful minister, Samuel Brown, of Rockbridge, to the notables of Greenbrier county. Fortunately this letter has been preserved:

“ROCKBRIDGE, VA., Feb. 13, 1808.

“*To Messrs. John Anderson, Henry Hunter, Alexander Welch, Thomas Grattan, Charles Arbuckle, William Morrow, Linah Mims, and Thomas Creigh:*

“DEAR SIR: The bearer thereof is John McElhenney, who has been licensed to preach the gospel by the Presbytery of Lexington. He comes to you under the direction of a committee of the presbytery, appointed by the Synod of Virginia at their last meeting to employ missionaries, and will remain with you one month.

“He is a young man of very unblemished character, and we entertain strong hopes that he will be a respectable minister of the gospel.

“As synod depends entirely on the liberality of the pious and benevolent for the support of their mission-

aries, we have no doubt that you will pay due attention to this matter. I have taken the liberty of directing this letter to you (Mr. Anderson), because Mr. McElhenney will probably call on you first. You will be so kind as to introduce him to the other gentlemen to whom this letter is also directed.

“Yours very respectfully,

“SAMUEL BROWN.”

Most of the names addressed in this letter find representatives in the county families of to-day. Captain John Anderson, an elder and county magnate; Henry Hunter, extensive land owner; Captain Alex. Welch, colonial soldier and second county surveyor; Charles Arbuckle and Thomas Creigh, merchants; and others, whose history I have not been able to trace.

My grandfather has given a brief outline of this journey in his semi-centenary discourse. He came through the Gaps of Monroe, stopping at the house of one Mr. William Haynes,* where he made his first call, and preached at his house.

The following Sabbath he preaches in the court-house in Union, and presses on to Major John Anderson's, near Greenbrier Bridge, where his letter of introduction insured him a cordial reception, and arrangements were made for his preaching in Lewisburg the following Sunday. Three missionary sermons follow in quick succession in the outskirts of the county. He preaches at Major William Hamil-

* A grandson of this gentleman, the Rev. James Haynes, was licensed in 1864, in the Lewisburg Church, and has been an acceptable laborer in Greenbrier Presbytery for nearly thirty years.