

## ADDRESS AT FUNERAL OF JOHN ROBERTSON

Talk by Rev. Frank Fitt at Services Nov. 19 for Beloved Ravinia Resident

Following is the address of the Rev. Frank Fitt at the funeral services for John Robertson, at Highland Park Presbyterian church, Nov. 9, 1930. Mr. Robertson was greatly beloved by everybody in Ravinia, and his friends will appreciate the publication of this talk by Mr. Fitt, it is believed. The address:

### John Robertson

Born, Sanffshire, Scotland, June 21, 1844. Son of James Robertson and Elizabeth Dawson Robertson. Came to Chicago in 1870. Married Christina Mitchell in Chicago. Four children: William, who died in infancy, David Allan Robertson, Elizabeth Wells Robertson, John Bright Robertson. Four grandchildren: David, Betty, John, Jane. Lived in Chicago on west side until coming to Ravinia six years ago. Former member Third Presbyterian church.

It was about six years ago that I met Mr. Robertson. After long residence in Chicago he had built this home in Ravinia and soon after his arrival, true to his family tradition and his own convictions, he identified himself with the local parish, transferring his letter of membership from the Third Presbyterian church, Chicago, in April, 1926. It was my privilege, therefore, to know him from his eighthieth to his eighty-sixth year. Even at that advanced age, a time of life which so few attain, he carried within himself the central phases of his personality in such a rich and glowing sense that for all of us who became his friends in this new environment he remains a most memorable figure.

Tracing out the meaning of Mr. Robertson's friendship in my own life I find three distinct impressions.

First of all he possessed a rare and fragrant sweetness of disposition. In him there was nothing of the querulousness usually associated with advanced age. On my visits to his home, on occasions when his physical limitations permitted him to attend church, and at other times when I saw him he always reflected a warmth and friendliness that bespoke his trust in life as an experience in which kindness and charity should be the guiding signs. He had nothing of the demanding and the hurrying about him. His outlook was serene and one could always be sure of his smile and his welcome. Even when the last weeks of his life brought increasing evidence of physical infirmity there was no complaint. To the last the even balance of his nature, the outcome of his confidence in life's invisible values, it was his gift to possess.

Somewhat akin to this, and yet quite distinctly independent of it, was a very definite resiliency of spirit. Just before coming to live in Ravinia he had known the great sorrow of losing the partner who had been with him for 49 years. He and she were looking forward to the new home; but he entered it without her. Coming at such a period in life that loss is almost shattering. It left its mark upon him; but he went forward with

courage. There was an occasional reference, an expression of disappointment that she could not share the joys of the new creation of love and thought in Ravinia; but there was no sense of defeat and the outlook was always forward. At 80 most of us are not ready to change our abode and form new friendships and enter new circles. He was; and did so with zest and interest and enjoyment. In the winter months he traveled on long journeys to Texas and California and found something rewarding in these ventures. He

watched his flowers and shared the enthusiasms of those younger than he and never lost his hold upon the expanding interests of his surroundings.

Then, too, he had great pride of family. In that he ran true to his Scottish inheritance. Home was the sacred place, the nurturing ground of virtue and power where the enduring values find their source. To his home he gave unceasingly of his best and found his happiness in his children, their work, their progress, their contribution to life. We exchanged

letters when he was on his winter vacationing in distant places or when I happened to be away from home. More than once I had the joy of writing him a letter of congratulation when a member of his family had received recognition for worthy achievement. I knew the happiness that was in his heart. And as the closing years sped by he received the richest blessing that anyone can receive, the devotion of those who had known him as a father who had never failed them and whom they would

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