

"The prominent characteristic of his mind, it ever appeared to me, was a certain massy strength; not the strength of impetuous action, of fervid energy gathering force from the very rapidity of its advance,—but of repose and impenetrability. As his name was, so was he, *stark*, stout, strong. His character had much of the rock in it. It was what you could lean on. Your heart safely trusted him. This quality of stable power attached equally to his intellect and his affections. His judgment had a wide grasp; and his convictions, settled on a comprehensive and broad view of truth, took their seats in his soul, like the solid hills. He formed opinions deliberately; and, when he gave them utterance, they had the maturity and pith of manhood about them. * * * His feelings flowed like the deep river, quiet from the very fulness of its waters. And in him this strong thought and feeling grew up together. His robustness of intellect did not dwarf his emotions. His mind stood like the firm oak's trunk, but not that trunk, barren, rugged, sapless,—but bracing, virent, graceful, inviting to rest under its grateful shade. * * * He had a very wide and discriminating knowledge of human nature. The workings of the endlessly varied motives by which men are actuated he must have carefully studied. He possessed a quick and keen insight into character.

"A fresh and vivid sympathy with youth was, indeed, another prominent characteristic of Dr. Stark's nature even in advanced age. Young men always found him open, considerate, affable. He put you very soon at ease with him, and in the most natural way led you to feel as if he quite regarded you as an equal. More than one have wondered at the frank condescension,—the franker and the greater that it never seemed condescension, and really was but native hearty kindness—which bridged at once the chasm between the wisdom of his gifted age, and their own youthful inexperience.

"He had a high and scrupulously delicate sense of the honorable in human feelings, and a corresponding dislike of the little and the mean. In the intercourse of society, he was considerately and kindly urbane. He had an instinctive regard for the substantial courtesies of life. Without the superficial polish of mere etiquette, he was every way gentlemanly in the sense in which the epithet may be honorably applied to a Christian man.

"As a preacher, and in the class to which he belonged, Dr. Stark was equalled by few. His sermons were expansive, full of matter, rich, savory, searching. There was a peculiar felicity in his exhibitions of the way of salvation to the perishing sinner. Nothing could be more lucid, simple, affecting or persuasive. His manner was admirable. His tone, emphasis, and gesture were throughout natural, correct, impressive. A well known master of elocution was accustomed to speak of his pulpit address as the best example he had met with of effective natural oratory; and, when occasion presented itself in Glasgow, advised his pupils to go and hear Dr. Stark.

"His personal religion was sincere, manly, progressive. In his declining days piety shone in his whole character with peaceful, winning lustre. He was a man of prayer, and of steadfast holy principle. He lived daily on God's word. He had clear, full views of the gospel, and fed his own soul with the truth he preached to others. He was submissive in trial, and solicitous to profit by it. He admired the character of the blessed Saviour. He gloried in the cross. He was truly, as we believe, a servant of Jesus Christ, ripely furnished through divine grace for every good work."

These extracts, which might have been more extended, are happily descriptive of the character and activities of this eminent minister. Were it necessary, the writer could add to the description from his own knowledge. For he had intimate acquaintance with Dr. Stark for many years; and he always loved and venerated him as standing in the foremost ranks, for talent, learning, piety, benevolence, and other excellencies of character which could not but command respect, and endear him to all who had the pleasure of his friendship. Often he heard him preach, but never without admiration, and he trusts without profit.