

FOR PARISH AND HOME.

### A SEQUEL TO SOME GREAT CHURCHMEN.

THE December number of PARISH AND HOME contained a brief notice of the life of the Rev. Charles Simeon, of Cambridge, under the head of "Some Great Churchmen." This he certainly was, but he was much more. At a period when spiritual life was at a low ebb, he was a light set on a hill, that irradiated not only his college sphere, but many parishes throughout England. Wherever he went, his intense earnestness and a clear, simple Gospel, preached from a loving heart, carried a special blessing, and left a lasting memory. The allusion made to his preaching in Presbyterian churches in Scotland, and joining in their communion, recalled an instance mentioned in the life of the Rev. Dr. Duff, which will be read with interest: "In 1796 Mr. Simeon made his first tour through Scotland. He was detained, unexpectedly, at Dunkeld. At Moulin he made the acquaintance of the Rev. Mr. Stewart, clergyman of the parish, and accepted his invitation to preach in his church. Their intercourse resulted in a great and blessed change in the preaching of Mr. Stewart, who, until this time, had no clear views of the Gospel in its fullness and sufficiency, but from this time forward became a living power much used by God in bringing many to the knowledge of truth as it is in Christ. Years after, Simeon looked back on that visit to Scotland, and thanked God for the indisposition that detained him at Dunkeld and sent him to Moulin."

And yet Mr. Simeon little knew the far-reaching influence of this Sabbath service, and it is with peculiar pleasure that a Scotch Christian mind dwells upon the spiritual link that connects the eminent Cambridge divine with the first missionary sent to India by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1829—one whose remarkable work created a new era in missions. "In that visit was the seed of Alexander Duff's higher life." His parents, a young couple at the time when the refreshing from on high descended on the parish of Moulin, were among many who received a special blessing, and when, in 1806, a son was born to them, their one aim was to train him for the service of God. During his childhood his cottage home was hallowed by frequent meetings for prayer and scriptural exposition, and in this Christian atmosphere, and amid scenery of unsurpassed beauty and grandeur,

the boy grew up with a keen perception of the power and glory of God in His creative works. From the influences around him, and much prayer for him, an early realization of his sinfulness sent him to seek pardon and the renewed heart from the Saviour of sinners. The subject of missions to the heathen was brought before him by his father. While quite a child, it took strong hold of his mind, filling him with horror towards idolatry and with compassion towards the poor, blinded idolaters, who knew nothing of the love of Jesus. He once had a very narrow escape from drowning, and, soon after, a remarkable dream, in which he heard the words, "Come up hither; I have work for thee to do." From both incidents, he felt God was calling him to work in His vineyard.

The young mountaineer early displayed talents of no common order. He made rapid progress in every branch of elementary scholarship, and at the age of 17 we find him at St. Andrew's University, where he hailed with great delight the appointment of Dr. Chalmers to the chair of moral philosophy. At this time Alexander Duff had carried off the highest honors in Greek, Latin, Logic, and Natural Philosophy. Even at this early period there were indications of that intellectual power and rare gift of eloquence that was in after years to be used so remarkably in his Master's service before councils and assemblies of men in high places. His spiritual life was quickened by the influence and instructions of Dr. Chalmers, and his desire for missionary work aroused by contact with Dr. Morrison, the first missionary to China. In 1829 he was licensed to preach the Gospel of Christ. At the age of 23 he was ready for a work which had been long waiting for him. In this year a proposal to go to India was made to him, and after prayer and consultation his reply was: "Here am I, send me." He was accordingly appointed by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, May, 1829, their first missionary to India. Young Duff wrote to his father, who had watched with a grateful pride the consecration of the son, so early devoted to God, "Pray with redoubled earnestness that I may be strengthened with all grace, and all divine knowledge, sensible of my own unworthiness; I may cling more closely to my Saviour." Before leaving Scotland, Duff followed the advice given him, and was accompanied by his wife, one like-minded, who proved a constant blessing and help to him. The young couple sailed in the

East India Company's ship, *The Lady Holland*, October 14th, 1829. These were not the days of swift steamers. After a week's delay at Madeira, *The Lady Holland*, sailing to the south of Table Bay, found herself stranded on a sandbank forty or fifty miles from Cape Coast. On February 13th the vessel righted, but shortly grounded on a reef of rocks, over which the waves and billows dashed furiously; from the first the vessel was hopelessly doomed. The passengers, twenty-two in number, were at once roused to a sense of their danger. Mr. Duff, who had held service on board, and daily Bible readings in his cabin, proposed that all should join in prayer for deliverance, if it were God's will; if not, that they might be prepared to meet Him. Meantime every effort was made to find a possible landing, and after a time a small sandy bay was discovered where a landing might be practicable, and this was effected with the greatest difficulty and danger. The shipwrecked party found themselves on an island of which the only tenants were penguins. A copy of Bagster's Bible and psalm book were washed ashore, and proved to be Mr. Duff's. It was gladly welcomed as a message of strength and comfort from God in the hour of desolation. A Dutchman's skiff, who was on the island collecting eggs, was found available; and after a detention of several days a brig of war rescued them, and landed them at Cape Town, where they met with much kindness. The loss of personal property, books, and journals was a great trial to the young missionary, but instead of being disheartened he rises with new energy, and greater trust in his Heavenly Father as the giver of every needed gift. Embarking on the *Moira* from Cape Town, it was the end of May when the travellers entered the Hooghly River, one of the estuaries of the Ganges. Here the ship was overtaken by a monsoon, a wind of great fury, which lifted the vessel from its moorings, leaving it stranded on a bank in a position of great danger. Passengers and crew were landed up to the waist in water near a village, where caste forbade the natives to give them shelter. Ere long they were again rescued by small boats coming up the river. Thus the scene of his future labors was reached by Alexander Duff, May, 1830, more than eight months after leaving Edinburgh. We can fully endorse with a Christian rendering the remark of the natives, "Surely this man is a favorite of the gods, who must have some notable work for him to do in India."