



THE STORY OF ROBERT ANNAN.

EN Saturday, the 3rd of August, 1867, there was buried in Dundee, with all the honours of a public funeral, thousands following the body to the grave, one of the poorest of the citizens—Robert Annan.

Robert Annan was only thirty-six when he died, and was born in Dundee. Up to the age of twenty-nine he had lived a wild and wicked life. His nature was fierce and ungovernable, and his ferocity had been made more savage by a life of habitual drunkenness. Like many others, he imagined that new circumstances could make new men; and so he went to the United States, hoping to turn over a new leaf in a new land, among new associates. He was disappointed. He soon moved to Canada, and enlisted in a Highland regiment. He deserted. He went into the Navy; but did not long stay on board his ship. From that service also he deserted. He afterwards gave himself up, was punished, was then bought off by his relatives, and returned to Dundee. What he wanted was not a change of place but a change of heart; and this, "God, who is rich in mercy," gave in the place whence he had wandered.

In 1860 there was a revival of religion in Dundee. Robert Annan was induced to attend some meetings carried on in the Barrack Park and Kinnaird Hall. At one of these meetings the Word of God made a deep impression, and by wisely directing him to the Word of Him who cannot lie, Robert Annan was led to the peace which comes from believing.

He at once gave himself to work for the Master in the roughest part of the missionary work of the Hilltown Church. Strong faith, undaunted courage, were ever with him. Insult and abuse could not move. Every night, and many times each Sabbath, he stood to plead with men. "Often in winter did he stand with the snow to his knees, and with streaming eyes plead with men to turn to the Lord and live."

He became famous in Dundee for his heroic efforts to rescue the drowning. In the year of his death he had saved at least five lives, and perished himself in endeavouring to save a sixth. He had an instinctive sympathy with suffering. This led him to say, "Can I stand aside and see a fellow-creature perish, while I have the power to save him?"

On the day Robert Annan died, after breakfast he spent some time in secret prayer. As he left the house he took a piece of chalk and wrote the word "ETERNITY" on the pavement outside the door. In two hours he was in the eternal world!

Some accounts of his most interesting career were published at the time. One of these fell under the eye of the Hon. James Gordon, a son of the Earl of Aberdeen. He was very deeply impressed with the incident just related—with the fact that, for the admonition of his fellows, Annan should have written on the pavement this great word; and that its monition should be so awfully impressed by the sudden call thither. "Eternity" kept ringing in his ears. Nor in his case was the warning vain. The one word was blessed to his conversion. On leaving home for Cambridge, he requested that the word "ETERNITY" should be carved at his expense on the stone on which Robert Annan had chalked it, so that it might preach for ever afterwards to all who passed that way. The Rev. J. Macpherson received a letter from the