

Dr. Cook, even casually, without realizing that he is no common man. Clearness of intellectual vision is associated with mental hospitality, and both are animated by a fine enthusiasm very unusual in an octogenarian. There are no tokens of decay about him; he is still as open to receive new ideas as when he was forty years old. Not only have his faculties retained all their freshness, but his studious habits have kept him abreast of the intellectual movements of the age, with which he is in full sympathy.

Dr. Cook was born on the 13th April, 1805, at Sanquhar, a village in Dumfriesshire, Scotland, in the district which gave Carlyle to Scotland and the world, and which, at a somewhat later period, has yielded Paton, the distinguished South Sea missionary. In no part of Scotland did the Puritanism of the Reformation period more thoroughly leaven society than in Dumfriesshire, in which the memories of martyrdom still linger, perpetuated by revered churchyard monuments. Whatever faults belonged to the system in which Dr. Cook was nurtured, it at least begot a moral earnestness without which there can be no real greatness. Buckle was too contracted in his sympathies to be able to appreciate the influence for good which the religious teaching of Scotland exercised over the formation of the national character; but others of his countrymen—notably Froude and Dean Stanley—have done justice to the subject. The home training of the Scottish people gave them a fine start in life, begetting self-helpfulness and independence. The Shorter Catechism built up a strong moral and religious fibre, as iron does entering into the blood of the physical man; and whatever accomplishments the youth of Scotland afterwards acquired, they never outgrew the earnestness and thriftiness which were instilled into their minds at their fathers' fireside. With this mental and moral outfit, young Cook went first to the University of Glasgow, and afterwards to that of Edinburgh, where he received his professional training under Dr. Chalmers. He was a fine subject for the great Scottish divine to pour out his enthusiasm upon, and no student of the period more thoroughly absorbed Butler's Analogy, with Chalmers' prelections on it, than the future minister of St. Andrew's Church, Quebec, as the influence of the great English thinker is manifest in the style and manner of Dr. Cook's thought. The evangelical impulse which Chalmers imparted in general to his students has also been apparent throughout Dr. Cook's long career. At college he was the contemporary of Dr. Candlish, Principal Campbell, Professor MacDougall and other men who afterwards made their mark in Scotland, and was on all hands counted the equal of any of them.

Having had the advantage of professional experience for three years in the afterwards noted parish of Cardross, it would appear from the ecclesiastical records that he was ordained by the Presbytery of Dumbarton on Christmas Day, 1835, and designated minister of St. Andrew's Church, Quebec; and he immediately set sail for what was then regarded as a distant colonial post, entering upon the duties of his charge in the spring of 1836. At that time Quebec was relatively a far more important place than it is to-day, and the young minister was at once ushered into a sphere of great influence as the representative of the Church of Scotland in the capital of Lower Canada. There were here not only great social opportunities, which he filled to the credit of the Church to which he belonged; but also, as often as the civil affairs of the community demanded his attention and assistance, his recognized business ability was at the disposal of his fellow-citizens. Notably was this the case at the period of the disastrous fires which devastated so large a part of the ancient capital in 1845 and 1866; and it shows how much prudence and tact he must have exhibited in his relations to a population, the vast majority of which was of a different race and creed from his own, that he has lived among them on terms of amity and goodwill for fifty-five years, and earned their universal respect.

From his first entrance into the ecclesiastical arena, Dr. Cook was accorded a leading position. Two years after his settlement at Quebec he was chosen Moderator of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland, the highest position in the gift of his brethren, a fact which shows how speedily he gained an ascendancy in their councils. For at least half a century, at the end of which period he virtually retired from public life, no voice was more influential than his in the discussion of matters affecting Presbyterianism in Canada. Even within the last two years the old man eloquent was roused to utter a fiery denunciation of what he deemed a breach of the good understanding that had hitherto been observed between the Protestant minority and the French Roman Catholic majority, in the notorious Jesuits' Estates Bill. Yet Dr. Cook is no ecclesiastic in the ordinary acceptance of the term. The head of a faction he neither was nor would be. Canvassing, caballing, or any of the tricks to which party leaders too often resort, were abhorrent to his nature. He trusted entirely to the merits of the case he had to put, and after arguing in favour of any position with the clearness, force and brevity that distinguished his speeches, he was wont to leave matters to their fate in the hands of others, and not unfrequently was absent at the conclusion of a debate in which he took part. Believing in the right of free speech, he credited his brethren with honesty of purpose; and whether his views prevailed or not, discussions ended in such a way as to preserve the good understanding between him and his colleagues. Rev. Dr. Mathieson, of Montreal, and he very often differed in debate; but after it was over,

it was nothing unusual to see them walk away from the place of meeting arm in arm. Impulsive by nature, the heat of discussion might excite him and lead him to say and do regrettable things, but the generosity of his heart made it impossible for him to bear a grudge against any man on account of differences of opinion.

It is on great occasions that men of light and leading are naturally drawn to the front. There have been a few such passages in the life of Dr. Cook. The first was when the wave of the Scottish Church disruption controversy struck the shores of Canada in 1844. Himself a Scot and a minister of the Established Church, he could not but be profoundly moved by the ecclesiastical upheaval that had ended so disastrously on the 18th May, 1843; and not being what might be called a pronounced Churchman at any rate, many supposed that he had not a little sympathy with the position of his former distinguished professor, Dr. Chalmers, and of many young friends of his who were stout non-intrusionists. But whatever thoughts he might have had on the Free Church movement as it affected Scotland, he was resolute in maintaining the position that the Canadian Synod was not called upon to disturb itself on account of the question—that the relations subsisting between the Colonial and Parent Churches were not compromising to the former—and that therefore there was no valid pretext for breaking off the connection established when the Canadian Synod was formed in 1831, or for forfeiting the advantages which such connection had secured. A minority, however, having been carried away by the old Scottish sentiment of enthusiasm for ecclesiastical independence, which had revolutionized the Established Church the previous year, into actual secession from the Synod, and the Moderator, Rev. Mark Y. Stark, among others, Dr. Cook was elected Moderator in his room by the brethren remaining as the man best fitted for dealing with the crisis which had arisen, although it was unusual to elect to that office for a second term. It was meant also to be a conciliatory appointment, as Dr. Cook was known not to be an extreme man, but one who commanded personally the sympathy and confidence of the brethren who had seceded, and it was hoped that even yet the breach might be healed. This expectation was not then realized, but Dr. Cook never lost sight of Presbyterian re-union as an object to be sought, and one in the way of which no insuperable obstacle lay; and as time had already mollified irritated feeling on both sides, and modified the situation otherwise, he proposed to the Synod in 1861 a resolution looking to re-union. The resolution did not then carry, but it launched the question on the ocean of discussion; and as reasonableness and charity were on Dr. Cook's side, and only prejudice and resentment were against him, so far as the Synod was concerned, it needed only time and the letting in of light on the question for him to win the day. Not only had he the satisfaction of finding the principle of union accepted in 1870 in his own section of the Presbyterian communion, and in the other sections as well, but also of seeing all the details for it arranged by 1874. And when at last all the scattered elements of the Presbyterian family in British North America had come together with a view to being fused into one, no one else was thought of for the first Moderator on 15th June, 1875, than the valiant Nestor who had so long contended for this consummation so devoutly to be wished. The sermon he preached on retiring from the chair in 1876 was a noble utterance worthy of the man and of the occasion. Since that date, Dr. Cook has not taken any prominent part in the General Assembly, but has left its destinies in the hands of the younger men of the Church.

It is a common impression that clergymen have no heads for business. This may be true of some clergymen, as it is of some of those whose whole life is supposed to be devoted to it; but it cannot be said of Dr. Cook. Had his practical talents been applied to commerce or to the legal profession, he could not have failed of success in either calling. One of the best brochures on the subject ever given to the public was his plea for life assurance; and his well-known capacity for affairs led to his being frequently requested to act as executor to the estates of deceased friends. But it was in the administration of the business of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland that his talents in this direction shone conspicuously. He was a member of all its important Boards and Committees. To the work of the Clergy Reserves Commission and to that of the Temporalities Board, which succeeded it, he gave a great deal of time and thought; and when the Government of the day resolved in 1854 to commute the life claims of the ministers of the Church of Scotland on the proceeds of the Clergy Reserves lands, Dr. Cook was selected to conduct the negotiations on behalf of the ministers concerned, and was entrusted with powers of attorney from them to that end. The success of the arrangement at last concluded owed not a little to his skilful advocacy. Of the Ministers' Widows and Orphans' Board of that Church he was also a member from the beginning, and it had the benefit of his counsel. He was also a member of the Board of Trustees of Queen's College from its origination until he resigned his position in 1864.

And this brings us to the last aspect in which it is proposed to review Dr. Cook's career, namely, as a friend and promoter of higher education in Canada. Seeing the advantages which the schools, academies and universities of his native country had conferred upon its youth, all his influence from his first coming to Canada was cast in favour of improvement of the provision for education in

the Province. His own scholastic attainments were high, and his professional eminence had received early recognition, his first Alma Mater, Glasgow University, having conferred the degree of D.D. upon him when he was only thirty-three years of age. In 1880 Queen's University honoured itself by honouring him with the degree of LL.D. In 1843, the High School of Quebec, which has left its mark on so many of the youth of the ancient capital, was established mainly by Dr. Cook's exertions, and for many years he remained the chairman of its Board of Directors. But perhaps the most important service which he has rendered to the cause of superior education was in the active part he took in the establishment of Queen's College, at Kingston, and in the valuable assistance which he gave to that institution for twenty-five years afterwards. In company with Rev. W. Rintoul, he was delegated in 1840, by the trustees of the College, to proceed to Great Britain to solicit aid for it, and it was largely through his instrumentality that its Royal Charter was obtained from Her Majesty. Fittingly his name appears at the head of the list of trustees mentioned in it. In 1857, Dr. Cook, on behalf of the College, was authorized to enter into correspondence with leading men of the Church of Scotland with a view to securing a Principal from the Mother Country, but the tables were effectually turned upon him when the answer came back that Scotland could not furnish for that position any one better qualified than himself, a hint which the trustees of the College were not slow to take advantage of, and at a meeting on October 1st, 1857, the acceptance of the Principalship was pressed upon him. After due consideration, he agreed to fill the office temporarily, which he did during the session, 1857-8; but although the trustees urged him to retain the position permanently, and their wish was supported by a unanimous resolution of Synod in 1858, he declined to hold the Principalship longer than another session. Looking back now one is tempted to say that in hesitating to cast in his lot with Queen's College, he made the great mistake of his life. No doubt it would have been hard for him to leave Quebec to which he was bound by so many tender ties. Even as early as 1843, when it is understood tempting offers were made to him to return to his native land, he resolved to stand by his Canadian charge which had always loyally supported him. And he had already attained an age at which men do not easily transplant. St. Andrew's Church, Quebec, the pastorate of which he resigned in 1883, was at that time relatively more important than it is to-day, and the Kingston University is of course now a vastly more prominent institution than it was in 1858; and no one can blame Dr. Cook for not foreseeing the decay of Quebec as a Protestant community and the enlarged influence of Queen's College. But even as things then were, if he had followed the example of the great master whom he revered, Dr. Chalmers, in leaving a large congregation in Glasgow to teach moral philosophy to a handful of students in St. Andrew's University, on the ground that he who prepares the salt performs a more important function than he who only scatters it, he would have consented to enter upon the academic sphere opened to him, for which his abilities and acquirements specially fitted him. Though he did not accept the post of Principal in 1858, he was elected the first Chancellor under the revised constitution of the University, having been unanimously chosen in 1877 to that office by the suffrages of the University Council, in recognition at once of his eminence in the country and of the distinguished service he had rendered to the institution; and a very fine portrait of him in oil, by Notman and Sandham, of Montreal, in his Chancellor's robes, graces the Convocation Hall.

Dr. Cook's splendid academic qualifications have indeed found exercise in Morrin College, Quebec, founded by one of his own elders in 1860, and of which he has been Principal and Professor of Divinity since 1862. The equipment of this College, which is affiliated with McGill University, may be said to be the last item of the work he has done for the advancement of higher education in Canada. But though Morrin College fills now, and seems destined to fill in the future, a most important place in the Province of Quebec, from the nature of things, it reaches but a comparatively small number of students. The quality of the instruction imparted in it, however, and the mark Dr. Cook has made on the candidates for the ministry who have passed through his hands, only increase the regret that he did not allow himself to be persuaded into accepting a position in which his academic qualifications would have had fuller scope. Not that he was not eminently successful in the pulpit. The volume of sermons which he was prevailed upon to publish in 1888 exhibits rare preaching power. Those discourses possess every quality fitted to make a profound impression upon the hearers. Reading them, one has only to regret that their author has not given more of his thoughtful productions to the world. He was contented with the cultured audience to which his discourses were every week addressed; and doubtless through them, dispersed over the country, as many of them are, he continues to exercise an influence over many minds and hearts. But the press, like the College, would have given him a larger audience which would have been grateful for his instructions. He has shown, however, an unaccountable aversion to authorship. It was only at the earnest solicitation of his family and friends that he consented to issue even the modest volume to which reference has been made. But the habit of coming before the public in authorship, like other habits, must be acquired early in life or it never becomes easy; and few men are found to