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DR. ALEXANDER DUFF.

Speaking of the missionary heroes who have added a special glory to the history of the Victorian era, Mr. Gladstone once said:—"Dr. Duff was one who not only stood in the first rank for intelligence, energy, devotion, and advancement in the inward and spiritual life, among those distinguished and admirable personages, but who likewise labored so intensely in the cause, that he shortened the career which Providence would in all likelihood have otherwise committed to him; and he has reaped his reward in the world beyond the grave at an earlier date than those whose earthly career is lengthened into a long old age. He was one of the noble army of the confessors of Christ." This is a generous and just tribute from an eminent statesman to an eminent missionary. Dr. Duff's services to the cause of missions can scarcely be exaggerated. In addition to varied and successful labors in the foreign field, he did splendid work by his eloquent writings and spirit-stirring addresses. His influence affected all the evangelical churches of the world; and to him is due, in no small measure, the revived interest in, and cheerful obedience to, the command of the risen Lord, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

Alexander Duff was born in 1806, of poor but godly parents. From the cradle he was trained in the way he should go. His father's teaching told in producing a thoughtfulness and a habit of introspection which marked him out from other boys. At school and college he was very diligent, neglecting no opportunity of gaining knowledge, and winning golden opinions from his professors and fellow-students. What proved to be the crisis of his career came with the appointment of Dr. Chalmers to the chair of Moral Philosophy in his university. Dr. Chalmers had the rare faculty of inspiring with enthusiasm those who sat at his feet; he filled them with an earnest desire to seek truth for its own sake, and a passion for high thinking and pure living. Burning with evangelistic zeal himself, he sought to imbue his students with the same zeal. Some of them were set apart for teaching in Sabbath-schools; others were led to devote their spare time to visiting poor families and conducting kitchen-meetings. Through him a Missionary Association was formed, which helped to kindle a fire not yet extinguished, and which, we believe, will never be extinguished, until heathendom is won for Christ. In this Association, and by means of the impulse given by personal contact with Dr. Chalmers, Duff learned lessons to which he was a stranger before. The duty of carrying the light of the Gospel to those who dwelt in the dark

places of the earth laid hold of him, and forced him to leave home and friends for India. This was in 1829.

On the voyage out he had to face severe trials. The ship struck on a reef of rocks some forty miles from the Cape of Good Hope, and the safety of the passengers was for a time in doubt. Ultimately they were landed on a small island, whence they were conveyed to the Cape. One incident connected with this disaster made a deep impression on the young missionary's mind. Of several articles belonging to the ill-fated ship, which were washed ashore, the only thing fit for use was a Bible presented to

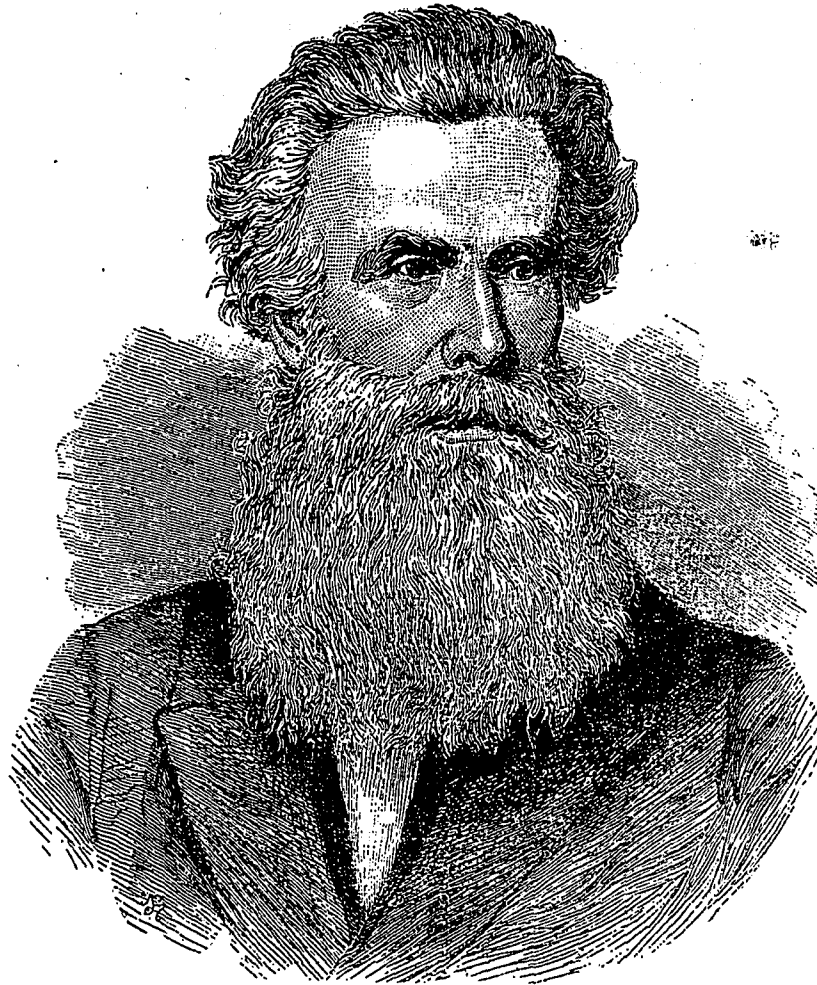
this end he found in the general desire for English education. He organized an Institution, which started with only five students. But great issues often flow from small beginnings. So it was in this case; the Institution flourished, and by-and-by it became a power in intellectual circles. In his anxiety to reach the upper and more educated classes of the Indian capital, Mr. Duff projected a course of lectures, in which Natural Theology and Christian Evidences were fully discussed, and in which the Gospel was clearly set forth. Not the least gratifying of the results of these lectures was the conversion and baptism of three or

ceaseless energy. He was ordered home, and the discharge of his duties fell to the colleagues who had by this time gathered round about him.

A calamity often proves a blessing in disguise. The friends of missions mourned Mr. Duff's departure from India as a crushing blow to the cause, but God overruled it to be the means of awakening a widespread missionary enthusiasm in the Church of Scotland. As soon as his health was in some measure restored, Mr. Duff was sent out on a tour throughout the country to plead for heathendom. What he accomplished in that tour we have not space to tell. One whose knowledge of missions entitles his opinion to respect has written, "I declare that Dr. Duff's advocacy of the cause of missions"—referring to the particular advocacy now under consideration—"was more powerful than any advocacy of the same cause that has ever been conducted in any church since the Reformation." The work of the tour began in a speech before the General Assembly of 1835, which thrilled its hearers through and through. The magnetic eloquence of the speaker fascinated his hearers, and his intense earnestness carried conviction to them. They felt that he was right, and they took to their pulpits some of the fire which entered their souls with his memorable appeal. The closing words of that appeal may be quoted as a specimen of its power and of its spirit:—

Let us enter into a "Solemn League and Covenant" before our God in behalf of that benighted land, that we will not rest till the voices of praise and thanksgiving arise in daily orisons from its coral strands, roll over its fertile plains, resound from its smiling valleys and re-echo from its everlasting hills. Thus shall it be proved that the Church of Scotland, though poor, can make many rich, being herself replenished from the fulness of the Godhead; that the Church of Scotland, though powerless as regards carnal designs and worldly policies, has yet the Divine power of bringing many sons to glory, of calling a spiritual progeny from afar, numerous as the drops of dew in the morning, and resplendent with the shining of the Sun of Righteousness—a noble company of ransomed multitudes that shall hail you in the realms of day, and crown you with the spoils of victory, and sit on thrones, and live, and reign with you amid the splendors of an unclouded universe. May God hasten the day, and put it into the heart of everyone present to engage in the glorious work of realizing it!

In 1840 Dr. Duff began what may be called his second Indian campaign. He flung himself eagerly into the work. In teaching, co-operating with other missionaries writing for the press, and in direct missionary effort, he labored with a zeal which was both a wonder and an inspiration to those who witnessed it. The Divine blessing visibly rested on his activity;



ALEXANDER DUFF, D.D.

him by his College friends. Its preservation was taken by him as a sign that the proclamation of the truths contained in the Bible, was the work to which he should henceforth consecrate his strength and talents.

Calcutta was his destination. He reached it, after passing through the horrors of another shipwreck and the dangers of a hurricane. With characteristic promptitude, he set himself at once to the difficult task of influencing the natives for good. A way to

four young men of social standing and more than average mental power, who did much to strengthen and deepen the effect of Mr. Duff's teaching.

As the months rolled on the ice of prejudice and indifference began to melt. The natives were drawn towards the man whose one desire, it was evident, was to do them good. Just when their hearts were opening to the truth, the indefatigable worker was struck down by a dangerous disease. His constitu-

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