

ARCHDEACON FREDERICK W. FARRAR, D.D.

BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.



ARCHDEACON FARRAR.

SINCE the death of Canon Liddon, the most popular preacher in the Established Church of England is Archdeacon Farrar. Like Thackeray, the novelist, he is a native of India, and was born at Bombay on the 7th of August, 1831. He came early in life to England, and was graduated from King's College in London, and then became a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge—that remark. He is a hive of genius which bears the most splendid muster-roll of any college in Great Britain. He won several prizes, and soon after leaving Cambridge he became Assistant-Master of Harrow School with Dr. Vaughan. In 1871, he was chosen Head-Master of Marlborough College, whence he came to London as Canon of Westminster. Six years ago he was made Archdeacon of Westminster, and is the pastor of the parish of “St. Margaret’s,” in which church he preaches every Sunday. Why a man of his superb powers and scholarship has never been made a bishop may puzzle those who do not know that in Britain the mitre—like the presidency in America—does not always alight on the loftiest heads. Dr. Farrar is too “liberal” in his theology to suit the Low Church, and too radical in his

politics to suit the High Church. He is a decided Broad Churchman, with very pronounced Evangelical views on most points (as his “Life of St. Paul” clearly indicates); but his writings on eschatology lean towards Universalist Restorationism. He was Bampton Lecturer at Oxford in 1885.

In prolific authorship, Farrar is one of the marvels of the age. How he is able to perform the mere mechanical labour of consulting so many authorities, mastering so many authors, and composing so many elaborate works is a mystery. He has produced over twenty volumes, some of them requiring vast research, in addition to a large number of contributions to encyclopedias, reviews, and theological periodicals. And all the time he is preparing powerful sermons for his “St. Margaret’s” pulpit, and often addresses temperance and other philanthropic meetings from the platform. No man could achieve such prodigies unless he were a miser of his minutes and a “terrible toiler.” The last time that I called on him at his pleasant residence in Westminster Yard I found him standing at a high desk with his study-jacket on. Like many other great students he does much of his work on his legs, and walks about to consult his various authorities. For ten months of every year he toils like a galley-slave, and turns off his manuscripts with great rapidity; then he locks up his library and runs away to the mountains of Wales for his annual vacation. The English climate is favourable to hard work, bodily or mental; and, in addition to this, Farrar is possessed of a cast-iron constitution, and is very observant of the laws of health.

The first book that made him famous was his “Life of Christ.” It ran through twelve editions during the first year, and its sale in Britain has been enormous. In America it has been reprinted in