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A Clever Dunce.

(By the Rev. Hilderic Friend, in 'Early Days.')

Every child who has read about Ireland knows that there is a famous place on the north coast which bears the name of the Giant's Causeway. The easiest way to reach it is to go by rail to Portrush, and then take the electric railway. But before starting from Portrush, I would like you to



ADAM CLARKE.

walk a few yards out of the station, and look at the monument on your right, then examine the building close at hand. Here you will find a pleasing memorial to the dunce who became one of the finest scholars of his age, and has left a commentary on the bible which is a gratifying proof of his love for the word of God. The Methodist chapel and monument at Portrush were erected in honor of Dr. Adam Clarke, whose home is only a few miles distant.

The parents and ancestors of Adam Clarke had been well-to-do, but when the lad was only about seven years of age, he heard with sorrow that all the property they once enjoyed had been lost, and now they must begin life again in poverty. How often have the great men of the world been nursed in need! David was a shepherd boy; John was a fisherman; Luther's mother was poor; and John Bunyan, who wrote 'The Pilgrim's Progress,' was destitute. Perhaps if Adam Clarke's parents had been rich, and had given their son plenty of pocket-money, he would have grown up idle and ignorant. His father was well educated, and would naturally feel anxious that his son should be the same. Adam never knew how old he was. Even his mother had forgotten, and although he was baptized by a clergyman, who was his uncle, no trace can be found in the church registers of the date. Luther's mother also forgot the year of her son's birth, so in this respect Adam Clarke and Martin Luther resemble each other. Mrs. Clarke, however, thought her son was born in 1760, and his place of birth was Moybeg in the county of Derry.

The boy was remarkable for the strength of his body; but his hardness was not favorable to study. He found it very difficult to master the A B C. His father, who was the schoolmaster as well, tried every

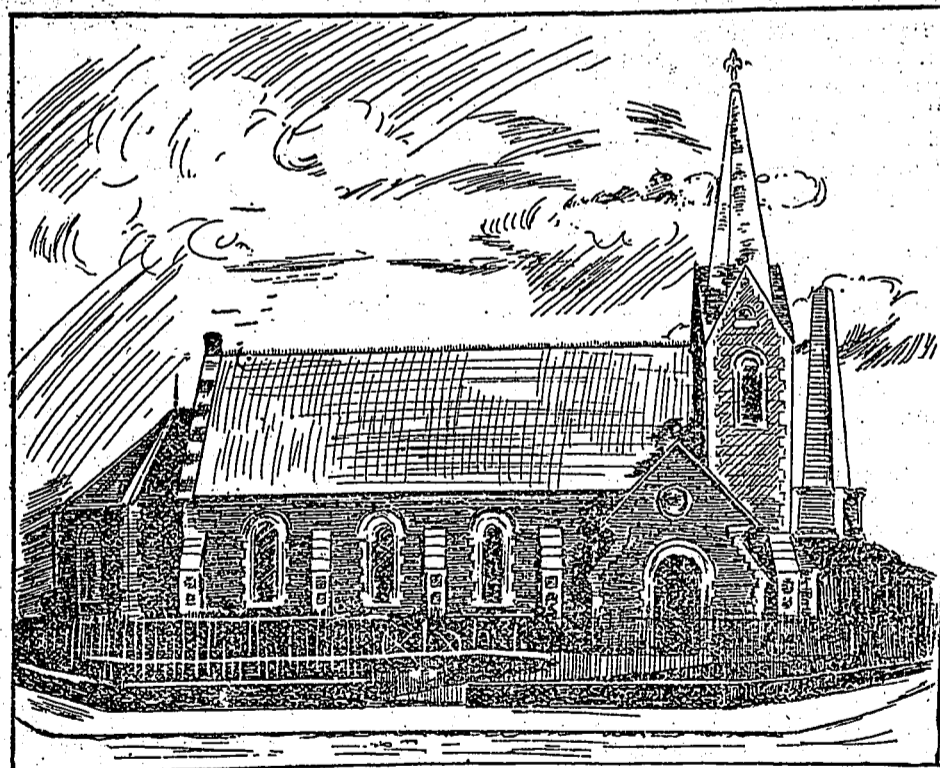
means in his power to make the boy learn. Sometimes he would coax, then he would scold, and finally the rod was used on the dunce's back, but all to no purpose. It is said that one day, when Adam was eight years old, and had begun to think that he never would succeed with his studies, a teacher from another school paid a visit to the one where our dunce was at his lessons. The visitor heard several of the boys go through their tasks. At last came Adam, who got through his lesson so badly, that his teacher apologised to the visitor and said, 'This boy is a grievous dunce, sir.' Poor Adam was in despair, when the visitor, patting him kindly on the head, exclaimed, 'Never mind, this lad will make a good scholar yet.' It was the turning point in Adam's life, and shows how much may be done by a kind word. In after years, when the boy became a man, he was wont to recall the incident, and insist on the value and necessity of kind words and encouragement from the teacher.

But Adam was not yet at the end of his troubles. When he could spell and read simple English books with ease, his father began to teach him Latin. This was one of the greatest trials of his life. He often watered his book with his tears, but that did not soften the page or make the lesson easier. One day, when asked to repeat his lesson, he burst into sobs, and told the master he could not learn Latin.

'If you don't learn your lesson, I'll pull

succeeded, and from that time his sorrow was turned into joy.

The boy fared humbly and worked hard. He was often thinly clad, and any one who saw him when he was made doctor and elected to the different learned societies with which he was connected in his later years would find it difficult to think that he had once trudged to school with bare feet and a bare head. His mother loved the bible, and knew how to make it interesting to her children; and it was from her that he learned its value, as John Ruskin learned it from his mother. When Adam Clarke became a young man he found the Saviour, and in 1778 he joined the Methodist Society at a small place near Coleraine. He soon began to speak for Jesus, then became a preacher, and was admitted into the Methodist ministry. His love for the bible grew, but when he was thirty years of age he was taken ill, and had to give up all study and preaching for some weeks. At this time he bought a large bible without covers, and had it interleaved and bound in three volumes. He ruled every page, and began to fill the book with notes. That was the beginning of his famous Commentary. He soon gave up the plan, because he found he had not room for all the notes he wished to make, and the three volumes are now to be seen in the Methodist College at Belfast. When he recovered his health he renewed his studies with greater zeal than ever, and presently could read not only English, French, and



THE ADAM CLARK MEMORIAL CHURCH, PORTRUSH.

your ears as long as a dog's, and you shall be a beggar all your days,' was the harsh reply.

His schoolfellows taunted him, called him a stupid ass, and looked upon him with contempt. At last his spirit was aroused.

'Shall I always be a dunce, and have to bear these insults all my school days?' he asked.

He could not endure the thoughts, and after making a desperate effort he at last

Latin, but Hebrew and Greek. Then he tried other languages, and found that his work became easier every year. 'He that hath, to him shall be given,' says the word of God, and Adam Clarke soon became famous as one of the most learned men the Methodist church has ever produced. He was diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, and honors flowed in upon him in his later years, which showed the truth of the wise man's words: 'Seest