

Rev. Francis E. Clark, D.D., Founder of the
Y. P. S. C. E.



REV. FRANCIS E. CLARK, D.D.

character of the household at the little rectory in Eversley!

The same impression of harmoniously adjusted lives is made upon even the casual visitor in Dr. Clark's home. The endearing epithet of "Father," bestowed upon him for having organized the first Endeavor Society, has given rise in some minds to the idea that he is a venerable man with whitened locks and patriarchal beard. But he is in the full plenitude of manly strength being only forty-four. Surrounded by his three sons, the oldest fifteen and the youngest, a merry, black-eyed little fellow of four, he seems even younger. The daughter is a sophomore in Wellesley, and another, since early infancy, has been in the tender keeping of the Good Shepherd in the heavenly fold. All the children and their mother are loyal Endeavorers. Even the youngest attends the meetings of the Juniors, of which Mrs. Clark together with a daughter of Dr. Strong of the *Missionary Herald*, has charge. The two are associated, also, in primary Sunday School and King's Daughters work, and Mrs. Clark is an efficient director in the Woman's Board of Missions. These various lines of activity show that devotion to the cause to which their father is pledged in no wise interferes with other forms of service.

Their house in Auburndale stands on an eminence overlooking the winding Charles and commands a noble view of the surrounding country. On entering the porch one notices some curious lettering carved over the portal and around its sides. Our host explains that it is the word welcome in thirteen different languages, representing the countries visited by them during their late tour around the world. The house is a spacious, modern structure, evidently planned with an eye to the needs of growing children and for the exercise of a generous hospitality. In almost every room are trophies brought from the four corners of the earth, many of them beautiful souvenirs presented by Endeavorers. One is a silver salver, the border exquisitely chased with designs in fruits and animals of the locality, recently sent by the society in the State of Washington. Another is a gavel made of the native wood and gold of Oregon, suitably inscribed, which was christened at the Boston convention. One could spend hours examining these treasures and hearing Dr. Clark relate the circumstances that called forth such expressions of affection from young persons all over the world. And in the listening one gains a new impression of the thorough modesty of the man, and of the masterful spirit behind the quiet exterior.

His own particular "den" is a cosy room on the first floor, with a charming view of hill and river from the western window. Most of his work is done here with the help of a stenographer, the time being divided between the editorial duties on *The Golden Rule* and service for the Endeavor Society, the latter taking the larger proportion. On long journeys he does a great deal of writing on the cars, and he has a new book in the press, entitled *World Wide Endeavor*, giving the origin and history of the movement in all lands. Mrs. Clark, too, has a "den" on the floor above, and a most entertaining place it is. One is a bit startled at first to see a row of dolls staring from the top of her desk, strings of rosaries depending from the wall and beaded deities in close proximity to her typewriter, but one soon realizes how effectively she may use these articles in objective teaching to children. There home just now is overflowing with guests, among whom is Rev. W. J. L. Closs, pastor of the Congregational church in Sydney, Australia, who will make one of the principal addresses at the convention. He is an enthusiastic Endeavorer and became warmly attached to the Clarks when they visited his home two years ago.

In most respects Dr. Clark is a delightful host, but he has one idiosyncrasy. You can't find out much about his personal tastes and habits, for before you are aware the conversation has gently drifted into the channels of Christian Endeavor. You do, indeed,

discover that he is fond of out-door sports, of canoeing, and fishing, that Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt are among his favorite essayists, and that he is pegging away at German at odd intervals. But why? Because a colloquial knowledge of that language will be useful in Endeavor work! So the interlocutor may as well recognize his weakness, which somehow reminds one of St. Paul's "This one thing I do," and ply him with some such questions as these:

"Did you anticipate, when you started the Williston society in Portland, in February, 1881, that it would ever gain such tremendous momentum?"

"No, indeed. It was simply an experiment with my own young people. I had tried literary clubs and all the usual ways of interesting them, but I recognized the need of something distinctively religious, especially for youthful converts. We first called the monthly gatherings experience meetings instead of consecration meetings. The second person to adopt the idea was Rev. C. P. Mills. The following August I wrote an article for *The Congregationalist*, which was widely circulated, and from that time onward the movement spread with incredible rapidity, meeting with especial favor in England, until now it embraces thirty denominations and over two million members. In 1883 I was called to the pastorate of Phillips Church in South Boston, but was obliged to resign at the end of four years on account of the increasing demands of this work. Meantime I had become the editor-in-chief of *The Golden Rule*."

"Do you think the tendency to separate into denominational societies is gaining ground?"

"On the contrary there is a decided growth in the spirit of national and international unity. Ecclesiastical pressure naturally converted Endeavor Societies into Epworth Leagues among the Methodists, but in Philadelphia alone there are fifty organizations that remain in the Christian Endeavor Ranks, and in Canada they take the name of Epworth Leagues of Christian Endeavor. The Baptists too have a Young Peoples Society of their own, but it is inclusive of all local Baptist societies, Christian Endeavor and all. On the whole the desire for fellowship with other Christians, rises superior to all differences of church, creed, or polity, provided we stand on the same Evangelical basis, as we propose to do always."

"What about affiliation with political and missionary enterprise?"

"We have never urged such alliances. Such movements have come about naturally in the providence of God, and we dare not check them. The enthusiasm for municipal reform, for instance, ending in the formation of leagues to promote good citizenship, was purely a spontaneous expression growing out of the Montreal meeting."

"What seems to have contributed to the greatest growth of the societies?"

"The holding of conventions, I think. At the first national gathering in 1882 only a dozen societies were represented, and now see what we have in Boston this week! In England, too, where the convention idea is less popular than with us, the growth has been phenomenal. Only last Whitsuntide there was a rally of 10,000 Endeavorers in Birmingham, a thing almost unheard of in England. And in Australia Mr. Closs says that 1,800 societies have formed during the last six or eight years."

So the evening wanes and the deeper one gets into the subject the more he recognizes the hand of God in raising up a man like Dr. Clark to be the leader of a great host of young people of this generation into a richer and more useful Christian life. Not a trace of personal ambition appears in his work. "For Christ and the Church," is the watchword for himself not less than for his devoted and admiring followers. Happy the man thus enshrined in the hearts of youth, who has the power of leading them up to higher levels of consecrated living!—*The Congregationalist*.

The Other Side.

We often have complaint about coldness and neglect on the part of church people towards strangers within their gates. We fear there is too much truth in these charges, and that many good brethren are culpably negligent therein, and that their churches loose, in consequence, in popular esteem. But on the other hand is not the visiting stranger often at fault? An exchange gives the following:

"A story is told of a gentleman who attended church irregularly, and when he did go he occupied a seat near the door. No sooner was the benediction pronounced than he hurried away, speaking to no one and giving no one a chance to speak to him. Meeting a friend who did not attend church at all, he gave it as his opinion that this was the coldest church he ever saw. He declared that he had attended it for a year, and no one had spoken to him, soon this fact was noised abroad and the reputation of the church began to suffer. This unworthy brother saw what he had done and felt ashamed. He decided to change his course and try to mend the mischief he had wrought. Going to the church early he found a seat well forward, and remained after the benediction. To his exceeding delight many grasped his hand, assured him they were delighted to see him, and the pastor said he had seen his face often in the congregation and wished to know him, took his name and street and promised to call. He had now a new song to sing."

When death comes we walk down in the valley of shadows, knowing that we shall find there the shining footprints of the Saviour, and confident that in due time the morning light of the resurrection will break upon the spirit, and we shall be with God forever.