



HOOKER'S MONUMENT AT BISHOPSBOURNE.

RICHARD HOOKER.

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MANY proofs are brought under our notice that books which rank among the most classic in the English language, and were once familiar not only to scholars but to most readers of ordinary education, have now fallen into comparative neglect. They are, so to speak, crowded out by the boundless multiplicity of novels and other ephemeral literature in these days when "of the making of books there is no end." If this is true of Milton's "Paradise Lost," and even of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," it is far more applicable to the famous "Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity" by Richard Hooker. That book gained for the writer the title of "the Judicious Hooker," which was first given him by Sir William Cowper, on the monument which he erected to his memory in the Church of Bishopsbourne. The "Ecclesiastical Polity" was very highly commended by the learned King James I., by Charles I., and even by James II., and it has received the warmest testimonies of admiration from our chief Divines from the days of Dr. Reynolds down to those of Keble and Dean Church. The book might be found specially valuable in these days of violent partisanship on opposite sides of Church opinion; for Hooker treats, with consummate learning, calmness, and dignity, of many of the Church questions which are now prominently brought before us, not only in

religious, but even in secular newspapers. Perhaps a brief paper about the man himself may lead some of our readers to take up the study of his writings.

The best life of Richard Hooker is that by the famous Izaak Walton. It was not written till sixty-four years after Hooker's death, but Walton had the advantage of knowing William Cranmer (grand-nephew of the martyred Archbishop) and his sisters, who lived at Canterbury, and had known Hooker well when he was Rector of the neighbouring parish of Bishopsbourne. One of the sisters was the wife of Dr. Spencer, who had been a bosom friend and fellow pupil of Hooker at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Walton had also obtained information about Hooker from Archbishop Usher, Bishop Morton, of Durham, and the "ever-memorable" John Hales, of Eton, "who loved the very name of Mr. Hooker."

RICHARD HOOKER was born about 1553, at Heavitree, near Exeter. His family—they had changed the name of Vowell for that of Hooker—was an honourable one, and had a right to a coat-of-arms; but Hooker's father was poor, and could provide nothing for his son but a good education. Richard, we are told, was a quiet, earnest, serious boy, of "remarkable modesty and a sweet, serene quietness of nature"; of quick apprehension, and unflinching diligence. He was "an early questionist," and made such progress, even "in many perplexed paths of learning," that he was regarded as "a little wonder." His schoolmaster, seeing that he was also "a dutiful and dear child," trained him gratuitously, and urged the boy's uncle, John Hooker, then Chamberlain of Exeter, to send him to college, which he did with the assistance of Jewel, the learned Bishop of Salisbury. Accordingly, at the age of fifteen, the boy was sent as a clerk to Corpus Christi College, Oxford. In this position he continued till he was eighteen, "still increasing in learning and prudence, and so much in humility and piety that he seemed to be filled with the Holy Ghost." After an illness he journeyed on foot from Oxford to Exeter to see his beloved mother, and on the way called on Bishop Jewel, his kind and generous patron, at Salisbury. The good Bishop helped the youth with a gift of money, and also gave him his walking staff, with the words, "Richard, *I lend you a horse* which hath carried me many a mile, and, I thank God, with much ease." Jewel died shortly afterwards; but Dr. Cole, President of Corpus Christi College, generously became Hooker's patron, and supplied his modest needs.

These years at Oxford were the happiest of Hooker's life. Bishop Jewel had spoken so highly of him to Dr. Edwin Sandys, Bishop of London, afterwards Archbishop of York, that the Bishop, though himself a Cambridge man, sent his son Edwin to be educated by Hooker at Corpus Christi, Oxford, in order that the youth, who was but little younger than his tutor, might be taught "learning by instruction, and virtue