

popularity, making it a rule not to prepare so-called "great sermons," constantly dealing largely in the exposition of Scripture and the setting forth of doctrine, habitually keeping feeling under restraint, and very sparing of gesture and action, he was yet not only a most instructive, but a most interesting and impressive preacher. His tall stature and noble presence, his admirable delivery, his style refined yet strong, somewhat elaborate but also singularly lucid, the amount of knowledge which he communicated, and of light which he cast on Scripture, his intellectual force, his vivid and deep realisation of spiritual things, and the judiciousness and pointedness of his practical applications of truth, combined to make him a great and beneficent power in the pulpit.

As a man his character commanded universal respect. None doubted his piety and benevolence any more than his learning or ability. He gained many friends, and alienated none. He was especially at home in scholarly and intellectual society, and where at home he was a charming companion, unaffected and genial, with a keen sense of humour and hearty love of mirth, and with an inexhaustible store of anecdotes, which he delighted to tell, and which he told exceedingly well.

His private and domestic life has been gracefully delineated by Miss E. T. M'Laren, in reminiscences originally printed for private circulation, but now incorporated in the *Life of Dr Alexander* by the Rev. Mr Ross. Mr Ross himself, as an old student of Dr Alexander, has given us an account of his character and work as a professor, from which it is apparent that he was nowhere more admirable and successful than in his class-room.

The memory of Dr William Lindsay Alexander will be long affectionately cherished and highly honoured.

WILLIAM CHAMBERS, LL.D. By David Patrick, M.A.

William Chambers, one of the founders of the publishing firm of William and Robert Chambers, and in his later years distinguished for his public spirit as a citizen, was born at Peebles on the 16th April 1800, his father being a cotton manufacturer there. William,

the eldest son, received a fair elementary education at Peebles ; but as, owing to the father's misfortune, his school days terminated with his thirteenth year, his education for life-work was mainly due to the habit, very early acquired and long maintained, of miscellaneous and extensive reading. The household migrated to Edinburgh in 1813, and next year William was apprenticed to a bookseller. Immediately after his five years' apprenticeship was out, he began business in a very humble way for himself, and soon added to bookselling the occupation of a jobbing-printer. He by-and-by ventured to print and publish small pamphlets written or compiled by himself or his younger brother Robert, also established as a bookseller in Edinburgh. Through much industry, care, and economy they each prospered, and by 1825 what they called their "dark ages" had closed for ever. In 1825 William produced *The Book of Scotland*, and had a share with his brother in compiling a gazetteer ; but it was the *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, projected and started by William in 1832, that brought great and permanent success to both brothers. From the beginning, Robert was the most important contributor to the Journal ; and a month or two after it was fairly afloat, the two brothers united their resources and enterprise under the now so well known firm of W. & R. Chambers. Other important publications of the firm were the *Information for the People* (1833) ; the *Educational Course*, comprising an extensive series of text-books in history, science, and literature ; the *Miscellany* ; the *Encyclopædia* (10 vols., 1859–1868) ; the *Cyclopædia of Literature*, and numerous works by Robert Chambers. In 1859 the elder brother presented his native town with a public library, reading room, and museum. In 1865 he was chosen Lord Provost of the city of Edinburgh, and in this capacity carried out a very important measure for the improvement of the city, by substituting healthy houses and airy streets for lanes and closes of pestiferous hovels. He was the chief promoter of a partial restoration of the ancient Kirk of St Giles ; and in 1878–83 he carried out a more complete and extensive restoration at his own expense. He found time to write an admirable county history of Peeblesshire (1864), a short history of France, sketches of tours in Holland, America, Italy, and France, various other short works, and a memoir (with autobiographical reminiscences) of his brother Robert,

who was a member of this Society from 1840 till his death 1871, and is known as the author of numerous works, including the *Traditions of Edinburgh*, the *History of the Rebellion*, the *Ancient Sea Margins*, and the (anonymously published) *Vestiges of Creation*. William became a fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1860; and he was made LL.D. by Edinburgh University in 1872. For his services to the cause of public instruction, and his work as a civic ruler, an offer of knighthood, which he declined, was made in 1881. But when, a fortnight before his death, a baronetcy was offered him, he accepted it. It had not, however, been formally conferred or gazetted, when on the 20th May 1883 he died, at the advanced age of more than 83 years, and but a few days before the ceremony that marked the completion of the last work of his life, the reopening of the restored church of St Giles. He was buried in the place of his birth, and many manifestations were made of esteem and gratitude for his services to English-speaking men and women, by providing works of instruction and entertainment accessible at small cost to all of whatever rank or condition. His life of unremitting labour and his remarkable business abilities brought to him wealth, honour, and influence, and these were by him faithfully turned to account for the general good.

DAVID STEVENSON.

David Stevenson, the third son of the late Mr Robert Stevenson, the well-known civil engineer, was born at Edinburgh on the 11th January 1815. Educated at the High School and University of Edinburgh, he elected from the first to follow his father's profession. Before entering on his apprenticeship he was for some time in the workshops of one of the best millwrights of the day, where he acquired manipulative skill and the proper methods of working in different materials,—a course he always advocated for those who intended to follow the profession of civil engineering. After serving a regular pupilage under his father, during which period he had ample opportunities of attending various engineering works in progress, he was for some time engaged with Mr Mackenzie on

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