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I.

JAMES McCOSH AS THINKER AND EDUCATOR.*

I.—AS BELFAST PROFESSOR.

A SCOT, born in Ayrshire, on the banks of the "Bonnie Doon." of sturdy and God-fearing ancestry, who had played the man more than once in the struggle of the Covenanters against oppression—a scion of the great middle class of Scotland, made up so largely of cultivators of the land, who through the exercise of the proverbial thrift and intelligence of the "canny Scot" had forced an unwilling soil into fertility and had achieved easy circumstances—James McCosh inherited all the virtues of his class and ancestry. These formed the basis of his character, and held the secret of his unvarying success in the larger spheres in which he was destined to become an actor. Born of highly intelligent and conscientious parents, who possessed in full measure that tough moral fibre and that firm adherence to high ideals of religion and duty so characteristic of the Scotch, the parental traits entered as so much clean grit into the constitution of the boy and gave a pledge of the force he was to become in later years in his own and other lands. Young McCosh was fortunate in his home-life and training, thanks to a

* The sources from which the materials used in the following article have been obtained are (1) *The Autobiography of James McCosh*, so ably and gracefully edited by William M. Sloane; (2) the works of McCosh, including books, pamphlets and addresses, a complete bibliography of which has been made out by Joseph H. Dulles, Librarian of the Princeton Theological Seminary, (3) and most important of all, a personal acquaintance ranging over twenty years, in which, as pupil and later as teacher in the department of Philosophy at Princeton, the writer had abundant opportunity to study McCosh's many-sided life.

kind of Dramatis Personæ and lending histrionic effect to the narrative. In such descriptions, moreover, as that of the city itself, Nova Solyma; in the perilous adventures of Alcymus; of the view of the world from the high tower where the guests are assembled; in what are called The Tower Dialogues, on the creation and kindred topics; in the representation of the colleges of the ideal city, and in the scene, near the end of the Romance—the marriage of the sisters and the wedding festivities connected therewith—in all this there is a kind of scenic cast and coloring that adds to the impressiveness of the narrative and confirms its idealistic type.

To students of Milton with special reference to his educational and theological views there are manifold topics of interest—the training of children, moral, mental and physical, and their duties to their parents; the best methods and courses of study at school and college; the high themes of creation and providence and sin and redemption; of prayer and preaching and the Sabbath and the sacraments; poetry and philosophy, and such practical themes as athletics and the use of money. In these and similar subjects, we note the undoubted hand of the author of the *Tractate* and *Christian Doctrine*, the uniform presence of the old Puritan character of the days of the Commonwealth. The closing chapter of the Romance, entitled *The Bridal Song of Heavenly Love—a Divine Pastoral Drama*, is a fitting illustration of the poetic excellence of the Romance and of the lofty Christian spirit that pervades it.

In so far as the purely intellectual and literary quality of the work is concerned, it must be admitted that it cannot be said to add to Milton's reputation, either in the line of original suggestion or classical style; the instances not being infrequent when the allegory usurps the place of sober teaching and the author is somewhat at war with himself as to his meaning and message. This conceded, however, the *Nova Solyma*, mainly by reason of its alleged and substantiated Miltonic authorship, is fraught with keenest interest to every student of Milton and of English Letters, and, as such, may be said to present its claims to an impartial examination.

Princeton.

THEODORE W. HUNT.

UNDER CALVIN'S SPELL. A Tale of the Heroic Times in Old Geneva.

By DEBORAH ALCOCK, author of *The Spanish Brothers*, etc. New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Co. [1902]. 8vo, pp. 365. Illustrated with fifteen full-page plates.

Miss Deborah Alcock has long been known as the author of a series of admirable stories, the scenes of which are cast in stirring periods of religious history, and the religious tone of which is not only sane and true but especially tender and moving. The best of them is probably *The Spanish Brothers*, the scene of which is cast in Reformation Spain: it has been translated into most of the European languages and has had a wide influence for good. Worthy of a place by its side, however, are several others, such as *Crushed Yet Conquering*, a tale of Hus and the council of Constance; *Doctor Adrian*, a Dutch story; *The Czar*; *Under the Southern Cross*; *Génévieve*; *The King's Service*. Miss Alcock was bred under the influences that grew out of the great Evangelical revival, her father, the Rev. John Alcock, afterwards Archdeacon of Waterford, being one of those Irish clergymen who partook in the highest degree of the new life infused into the Irish Church by that great movement. The story of his faithful and beautiful life has been told by his daughter in *Walking with God: a Memoir of the Venerable John Alcock* (Hodder & Houghton). Under his tutelage and example her own religious life blossomed out into abundant evangelistic and

charitable labors, among the products of which is to be counted this series of uplifting religious tales.

Under the Spell of Calvin can scarcely be said to be one of Miss Alcock's best stories. It was written in the midst of many distractions and through many interruptions, when the author was suffering from both physical and mental weariness—as she herself explains in an interview published in *Sunday at Home* for July, 1901. It is, nevertheless, a good story for which no such apologies are needed. Taken in hand in 1896 it was not finished until the autumn of 1899. It was published serially in *Sunday at Home* during the year 1902, at the close of which it has been issued in the goodly book form that lies before us.

The action takes place in Geneva during the closing years of Calvin's life, when the city was at the height of its own internal attainment and external influence. Calvin himself is not a principal character in its drama but is incidentally brought in repeatedly. His figure is drawn and his character painted, not with the deepest sympathy nor yet with the exactest knowledge, but, nevertheless, with an obvious desire to do him not only justice but credit. It is the Calvin of ecclesiastical tradition in evangelical Anglican circles that is given us, a somewhat fearsome figure of superfluous rigor and vigor, but a true son of God striving only to subserve His glory and in large measure succeeding in doing so. The author writes of him apparently with a strong fear of her local Mrs. Grundy before her eyes: here is a personage, obviously to be admired by those who know all, but who must be brought somewhat apologetically before our audience, with the gradual approach of faint praise, lest both he and our story itself be at once rejected with loud reprobation. Clearly Miss Alcock needs to know Calvin better as he was rather than as he has been held to be, that she may be able to do justice even, let alone credit, to that at once majestic and gracious figure—at once the most forceful man and (as Renan puts it) the best Christian of his day.

The real action of the story does not, however, concern Calvin directly, though his form lurks ever in the background: but the everyday life of the Genevans, living under his spell. Specimens of every class are brought before us, and the author seeks to depict the inner life of each sympathetically. Indeed, one of the chief features of the story is its endeavor to find the element of good in the several varieties of faith and unfaith alike that flourished side by side in that period of ferment. Perhaps the most genially drawn of all the characters is that of the skeptical patriot, who from a "libertine" beginning only slowly finds his way to faith. And it is a distinct purpose of the presentation to carry home to the reader the conviction that a true religious faith might be and was nourished under the old religion as well as under the new, and that, indeed, human virtue could flourish under no religion as truly if by no means so richly as under the best. This is probably overdone; but it is saved from the taint of indifferentism by having thrown out against it as a background the purifying effects of religious faith and the ennobling effects of the "true Protestant religion" as taught in Geneva. The chief characters of the book are all fervent Calvinists—evangelists, martyrs, humble believers—and it is obviously the author's wish that we should see in them the height of human and Christian attainment and should understand that this at least is unattainable save along the pathway of faith. The general effect is, therefore, only to make it clear to the reader that it is religion that is the main thing and the import of the story is distinctly wholesome and uplifting. It may be confidently recommended as a "profitable tale" which should find a conspicuous place in our Sabbath-school libraries. It will be strange if young people reading it should not come to love both Geneva and Geneva's religion.

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BENJ. B. WARFIELD.