

THE LIFE

OF

JOSEPH ADDISON ALEXANDER, D.D.,

PROFESSOR IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AT PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY.

BY

HENRY CARRINGTON ALEXANDER.

VOLUME I.

NEW YORK:

CHARLES SCRIBNER & COMPANY.

1870.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1869,

By CHARLES SCRIBNER & CO.,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the  
Southern District of New York.

near Mr. John Potter's? The older boys were required, on set occasions, perhaps at the close of the sessions, to deliver *original* speeches before public audiences. While Addison was a mere boy, I think not more than thirteen years old, he would write speeches for his seniors which would 'bring down the house.' You and I can understand how he would appreciate such a joke; and how much better than most boys, or men either, he could keep such a secret."

He always entertained an affection for the umbrageous solitudes of Stony Brook. The memory of green woods and silver streams as a part, and a most delightful one, of the scenery of his school-boy recreations, was always cherished by him. O that I knew how to tell how he wandered in the summer afternoons under the spreading branches of the elm and the chestnut; and how, perhaps, like his brother James, he cut letters in the beech or aspen!

One day long afterwards he wrote in his journal, "walked to Stony Brook," and then appended the lines given below, and which were "composed while walking, Nov. 5, 1853."

They may chance to strike some as being pretty, and are undoubtedly of biographical interest. They throw an additional ray here and there upon his boyish fancies and ambition, and the mental struggle it must have cost him, with his sense of rare powers and precocious acquisitions, to give up his early dreams of fame in the world of letters, and perhaps of active exploit. They also show how much he loved the place and associations of his childhood.

"Dear Princeton! What a volume is contained  
 In that one word! How many memories,  
 Both sweet and sad, come pouring out of it,  
 As from an ancient spring, long choked or dry,  
 But now reopened with a sudden burst  
 And gush of waters. Oh beloved home  
 Of my long lost, irrevocable youth!  
 Even in sleep, when I revisit thee,  
 I cease to be my present self—I grow  
 Preposterously young—I am a boy,  
 A wild, ambitious, visionary boy,

Dreaming the old dreams all alive with hopes  
Long dead and buried, till I start awake  
And know them to be phantoms. How much more  
When in reality I travel back  
To these familiar places, does my life  
Go backwards too! "

After finally establishing the academy and bringing it to a high state of prosperity, Mr. Baird, in the spring of 1828, gave it up and sought a renewal of health in the more active pursuits in which he spent the remainder of his life. Mr. Baird was in many and perhaps all respects the best of Addison's teachers before he entered college.\* This estimable gentleman afterwards married a Miss Dubuchin, the daughter of a French *émigrée*, and French and perhaps one or more of the modern languages were spoken freely in his family. Two of his sons, when many years had rolled by, became pupils of Dr. Addison Alexander, then professor in the Theological Seminary, and it was evident that the kindly and admiring feeling with which he regarded them, was not due alone to their acknowledged excellence as men and students, but in part also to old recollections. Dr. Baird was a frequent guest of Dr. Archibald Alexander, and the master and pupil of former days spent many a long hour together conversing upon topics of common interest.

For several weeks in the month of February, 1824, the elder brother was engaged in the study of German, with Mr. Zadig, a native of Silesia, who had relinquished the Jewish religion, and been baptized. This was the beginning of an acquaintance with the language, which was afterwards a great delight to the American student, and enabled him to read, write, sing, and speak it admirably. At this time he paid little attention to French, though acquainted with it. The *Christian Advocate* about this date published a communication upon the Praise of God, from the pen of the same young scholar writing under the signature of Cyprian. He also contributed for the January number of the *American Monthly*

\* At a later date he prepared another of Dr. Alexander's sons for Nassau Hall.