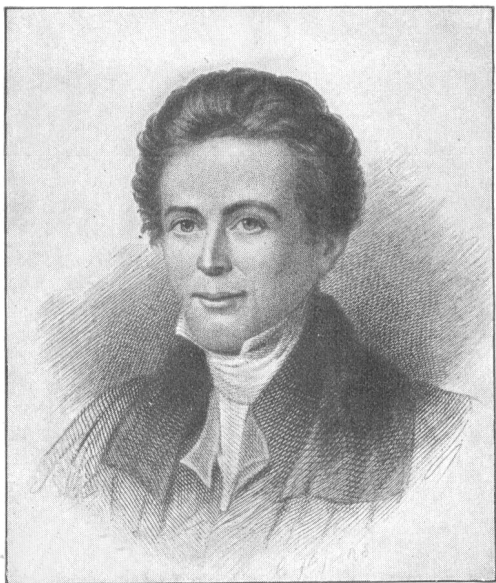


**ALEXANDER DUFF**  
**PIONEER OF MISSIONARY EDUCATION**

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ALEXANDER DUFF  
AT THIRTY

# ALEXANDER DUFF

## PIONEER OF MISSIONARY EDUCATION

*By*

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**ALEXANDER DUFF. V**

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## EDITORIAL NOTE

THIS volume is the second of a uniform series of new missionary biographies.

The series makes no pretence of adding new facts to those already known. The aim rather is to give to the world of to-day a fresh interpretation and a richer understanding of the life and work of great missionaries.

A group of unusually able writers are collaborating, and three volumes will be issued each year.

The enterprise is being undertaken by the United Council for Missionary Education, for whom the series is published by the Student Christian Movement.

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TO  
DAVID AND JAMES





## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

SOME apology is needed for the appearance of a new sketch of the life of Alexander Duff, especially as the present writer cannot lay claim to any special sources of information which were not available when the earlier biographies were written. The reader will not find in this book fresh light on Duff, except in so far as the course of events in itself proves a man's work and makes clear its strength and weakness. It is, however, precisely for this reason that such a new attempt to estimate this famous missionary's life and personality may be considered not untimely. To those who are interested in Indian affairs it is a familiar fact that the whole system of education is in the melting-pot, and this is at least as true of Christian education as of the wider national system. Almost a hundred years have passed since Duff turned Calcutta upside down, and the changes made in those years have been even greater than men like Duff and Macaulay expected, though different in many respects from the course they anticipated. Educational ideas can often best be examined when they are incarnated in persons, and the study of Duff's life and work in relation to the problem of Indian education and missionary policy is, at least in the writer's opinion, a singularly rewarding one.

It is my own belief, which I hope I have justified in the following pages, that the essential thing about

Duff was not so much his policy (though that was important enough) but the courage, insight and comprehensiveness of his approach to the problems of his time. It is that quality of mind and spirit which India needs to-day. In Duff's time the initiative and leadership lay with Europeans. To-day it lies with Indians, especially in the sphere of education, and it is as certain as anything can be in this uncertain world that the place of Indian leadership will increase until it is complete. But the lessons of Duff's life are not the less valuable for that.

I wish to make acknowledgment of the great debt I owe to the standard life of Alexander Duff by the late Dr George Smith. I have carefully studied this work both in its original form and in the later abridgments, which contain in certain places additional matter. For the main outline of events I have been almost entirely dependent on Dr Smith's work, and this should be stated without any ambiguity. At the same time I have read whatever I could find in the way of contemporary biography that would shed light either on Duff's personality or on the times he lived in, and I have found Trevelyan's well-known *Education of the People of India* especially useful. For the personal side of the life I have found the *Memorials of Alexander Duff*, by his son, useful as a supplement and occasionally a corrective to Dr Smith's book. I have also investigated the Government pronouncements on public questions so far as they bore on Duff's work, and have had the advantage of conversation in India with men whose fathers had known Duff, and who could communicate that touch of personal reminiscence which is so stimulating to a biographer.

I am greatly indebted to my friend and late colleague in the Student Christian Movement, Mrs J. W. Woodhouse, who has not only revised the manuscript, but has worked in a considerable amount of material, especially in the portions of the book that deal with Duff's early life. Chapter III is her work in its entirety. Not only there, however, but throughout the book I have profited by her judgment and literary skill.

I have to thank the Rev. J. Fairley Daly for help in revising my references to Scottish affairs, though I do not wish to suggest that he is responsible for any opinions that are expressed. Dr W. S. Urquhart of the Scottish Churches' College, Calcutta, has also read the book and made some corrections. The Rev. A. Duff Watson, a grandson of Dr Duff, has kindly helped me with notes on the earlier years and guidance about books. The work of seeing the book through the press has been entirely done in London, and thanks are due to Miss Cautley and the other officers of the United Council for Missionary Education for undertaking this labour.

Lastly, I have to express my gratitude to my wife for the continual advice, stimulus and criticism, without which I should never have completed the work.

W. P.

CALCUTTA

*November 1922*



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

No one ever forgets his first sight of Calcutta. Whether the traveller lands from a steamer in the Hooghly river, or comes by train to the station on the river's western bank and crosses the bridge packed with bullock-carts, pedestrians and motor-cars, he is speedily in the midst of an amazing medley of old and new. As he makes his way through the city he is jostled by the most varied types of humanity. There is not the same range of nationality and race that is found in Constantinople or Port Said or even Marseilles, but there is the mingling of modern civilization, imported from the West, with the older Indian life still going on, and even in this great city little changed from its ancient ways. Bazaars, shrines, cinemas, mosques, beggars, students, officials, merchants, soldiers and red-turbaned policemen meet his eye in the crowded streets. There is the great shrine of Kali where daily the goats are slaughtered to the dread goddess, and the watercourse where, visible to the eye of faith, the true Ganges flows to the sea. Great mercantile firms divide with those of Bombay the business undertakings of all India, and here the mills and factories on the Hooghly banks have their offices and armies of clerks. The High Court may be in session, with its crowd of pleaders and



anxious clients. The city has more students than any other in the world, members of a University which has colleges of every faculty and every type.

As a centre of Indian life Calcutta is, when we compare it with Benares or other famous Hindu cities, a place of yesterday. In the days of Akbar it was a village and little more. It owes its growth to the traders of the East India Company, for Job Charnock set up his factory here, and in doing so laid the foundation of modern industrial Calcutta. By 1752 the population had risen to near a quarter of a million, and it was then that the ruler of Bengal, Suraj-ud-Dowlah, fell on Calcutta from his own city of Murshidabad, and there followed the Black Hole tragedy and later the rise of Clive and the beginnings of British power in India.

At the time at which this narrative opens, the beginning of the nineteenth century, Calcutta was very different from the Calcutta of to-day. The East India Company was possibly at its lowest level of enlightenment. It had developed trade and established government, but it had done almost nothing else. So far as it had a conscious policy, it was to keep out those forces of education and reform which might, and indeed certainly would, modify or overthrow its own absolutism. Of education there was nothing in Calcutta and all North India but two or three institutions where the old Arabic or Sanskrit learning was taught. The language of Government and the Courts was Persian, and the only learning which was officially encouraged was the lore of the ancient books.

There were, however, signs of a new day approaching. Hindus who cared for education had built the