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DR. SCHAFF AS A LITERARY WORKER.

BY E. C. RICHARDSON, PH.D.,
Librarian of College of New Jersey.

My acquaintance with Dr. Schaff was not as long as that of some of those who have read papers at this meeting, but it extended over eight years, and was developed under circumstances various enough to give some clear impressions of the scholar, and of the man. I met him at the Hartford Seminary and at Union Seminary, at his own table and at the Century Club, in Washington, in New York, and in London—here, there, and everywhere. I knew him as host and as guest, as junior partner in literary work and in plans for the promotion of theological learning, and as friendly gossip, interested in the shrewd views which he expressed on every topic under the sun, and pleased (not to confess flattered) to surrender to his all-embracing interrogations whatever was of interest to him.

If I were to single out the one thing about his personal disposition which came oftenest to the front as characteristic, it would be his readiness to speak a good word for a man. He was always genial and friendly, but perhaps not more so than others. For that friendliness, however, which is alert and ingenious to drop to you a good word on behalf of the reputation or prospects of another, or for you to others, he was certainly unusual. Perhaps one might have come to distrust such general commendation, if it were not that it was joined with a certain shrewd discrimination, and perhaps one might find himself now and then proposed for some position which he had no notion of wanting, but his speaking was never troublesome, and was often helpful. It was

just a constant kindly disposition to remember to say a good word for a man, and this word was the making of more than one. The number of men having more or less favorable positions of influence to-day, who, if the history were traced, would be found to owe their opportunity to that word of Dr. Schaff, must be considerable.

If again I were to speak of Dr. Schaff as a scholar and writer, it would be to speak of those aspects of his literary character which are of peculiar interest to me as a librarian, *i. e.*, of Dr. Schaff as a bibliographer, and, what is closely akin, of Dr. Schaff as an encyclopædist. By encyclopædist I do not refer particularly to that recent work on encyclopædia (*Propædæutic*, 1893), which was a fitting outgrowth of his scholarly life, but to the whole character of his work. This might perhaps be expressed by saying that he was a synthetic writer rather than analytic. His work was rather to do many things better than any one else would, than to do any one thing better than any one else could, or rather this very thing was his specialty—the thing which he did better than any one else could have done.

For he had the spirit and habit of universality. He was ubiquitous in person. You could not travel without meeting him, or finding that he had been there—London, Oxford, or Cambridge, Stuttgart, Berlin, or for that matter, Upsala, St. Petersburg, or Rome. He was ubiquitous in reputation. In Glasgow or Durham, or in the little village of the Bavarian Alps, as an American, you would be asked, “Do you know Dr. Schaff?” And he was equally ubiquitous in mind. In every branch of theology which you might investigate, in every department of this branch, you found that he had visited there, and he was always travelling and retravelling the literature of all lands, garnering information for his encyclopædic purposes.

With this encyclopædic approach to his subject, he united the bibliographic sense. He had the faculty of choosing out the work which would be useful to him. I remember my first meeting with him when he came to Hartford to use the Seminary collection of Reformation literature. I remember

not only the keen interest which he took in conversation, the alert activity of questioning so long as there was any juice left in the topic, but also the skill with which he chose, from the mass, the books which would be serviceable to him. He had a real instinct in the use of secondary sources, and a method in his use or neglect of the primary ones. And he knew as well how to use men in gathering information. He had the rare art of using a librarian.

It is hardly necessary to recall the undertakings to which he applied this encyclopædic and bibliographical genius, and which would not have been done except for him—the *Lange Commentaries*, the *Religious Encyclopædia*, the *Creeds of Christendom*, the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, and the *American Church History Series*. Some of these will never be superseded, and others he has arranged to have kept up to date. Altogether, Dr. Schaff will live in the hearts of his friends on account of his geniality and ready kindness, and will live long in the literary memory of mankind, on account of his monumental works of reference, and the unique genius which brought these to completion.