

# **FIRESIDE HOMILIES**

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Fireside Homilies by Henry Alford

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**HENRY ALFORD**

**FIRESIDE  
HOMILIES**



## FIRESIDE HOMILIES

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# FIRESIDE HOMILIES

BY THE LATE

HENRY ALFORD, D.D.

DEAN OF CANTERBURY

*EDITED BY HIS WIDOW*

LONDON

DALDY, ISBISTER, & CO.

56, LUDGATE HILL

1875

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## PREFACE.

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AT the request of the Editor, I have undertaken to write a preface to the following Homilies, explaining her motives for republishing them, and the circumstances under which they were written. They appeared first in the *Sunday Magazine* during the years 1868—1871; the last two in the number for January, 1871, the very month in which, after so short an illness, the busy life of their author came to its peaceful close.

It had been his intention to republish them in a separate form, and with this view a portion of them was already in the printer's hands at the time of his death. His widow,

therefore, looks upon the carrying out of this intention of his as a sacred trust.

Moreover, these Homilies are, as a friend has remarked, "more like autobiography than anything he has left in prose—a sort of auto-type of what he was in family life at the fireside;" and it is in this light also, as a fitting supplement to his "Life," that the Editor has been anxious for their republication.

It is needless here to enter at any length into the character or acquirements of Dean Alford, the former having been already set forth in all its purity, single-mindedness, and earnestness, and the latter in their versatility and extent, in the "Life" already referred to. But there is one aspect in which it may be well for a while to regard him before entering upon the following Homilies, and that is, by the light of his own fireside, in the atmosphere of his home.

Few men, we should think, ever had the feeling of family affection more strongly de-

veloped in them than he had. So intense was it, indeed, that at times it seemed almost to border upon pain. Thus the natural breaking-up of the family circle was a real trial to him, and it is to the void felt at his fireside after the marriage of his second daughter, that we owe these touching Homilies. We who remember the happy Canterbury Sundays of the past, before the family party was broken up, can easily picture those later ones on which the following pages were written. The daughters, who were so much to their father, and the cousins and friends they gathered around them, were no longer grouped about in the large drawing-room, he, the centre of them all. The many-sided chat that comes from the contact of many minds was no longer possible. He and his life's companion were alone once more—as much alone as when she left her father's home at Heale, and they went forth to face the world together, in the spring-tide of their youth. But there were no gaps in the family