

**UNCLE JOHN
VASSAR; OR, THE
FIGHT OF FAITH**

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Uncle John Vassar; or, The fight of faith by Thomas Edwin Vassar

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THOMAS EDWIN VASSAR

**UNCLE JOHN
VASSAR; OR, THE
FIGHT OF FAITH**



Head in Paris
Head & Paris

Uncle John Vassar;

OR,

THE FIGHT OF FAITH.

BY HIS NEPHEW,

REV. T. E. VASSAR.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION,

BY REV. A. J. GORDON, D. D.

"A good soldier of Jesus Christ." 2 Tim. 2. 3.

THIRTEENTH THOUSAND.

FROM THE PRESS OF
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INTRODUCTION.

WE are quite accustomed to think of religious heroes like other heroes, as belonging almost exclusively to a past age. We read with admiration of the lives and labors of such men of God as Rutherford, and Baxter, and Flavel, and McCheyne, and Brainerd, and Henry Martyn, and Judson, and we say mentally at least, "Ah yes, but we have no such workers for God in our age." Doubtless we have but few of them, for they are confessedly rare in any period. But it is our conviction, deepened and confirmed by several years of intimate acquaintance, that the servant of God whom this volume commemorates was not a whit behind any one of these great soul-winners whom we have named, either in ardent zeal, or singleness of consecration, or exalted piety. I should not make this statement were I not sure that there are scores of the most thoughtful Christians, both among the ministers and the laymen of our churches, who will be ready at once to endorse it.

To one who never met him it would be quite impossible to describe the impression which he instantly made on meeting him. He gave one literally a powerful electric shock the moment he touched him. There was such intensity of zeal, accompanied with such a magnetic manner, that the impression was instantaneous and quite overwhelming. It was the

lightning-like penetration of a piety that was always charged to the highest pitch. Indeed, it was the first question that occurred to one, how it could be possible for a man to live in such a tense and highly-wrought condition of religious fervor. Yet there was very little apparent variation of temperature. He travelled from Maine to Florida, from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific, on foot, on horseback, by rail, and by steamer, resting not in summer or in winter, in the one intense, eager pursuit of lost souls; and wherever you found him there was the same burning zeal speaking out in his looks and in his words. He was always moving in his work at a pace much nearer to a run than to a walk. In his humility he named himself "The Shepherd's Dog," and I often thought when I saw him, of the aptness of the name in another sense than that which he intended. For he was not only wonderfully successful in bringing home lost sheep to the good Shepherd, but he followed them with the keen scent and the swift pace of the hound upon the track of his game, tiring not, resting not, till he had won the object of his pursuit.

It may be permitted, in this introduction, penned by one who was privileged to know this good man intimately and to see much of his work, to point out the most striking traits of his religious character, to indicate his methods of working, and to draw therefrom such lessons as may be useful to Christian workers.

In the first place I recall with deepest interest his singular consecration and prayerfulness. Is it possible for one to live for a single end—the glory of God in the salvation of souls, and to pursue that end with all the ardor and enthusiasm with which the merchant pursues a fortune or the politician an office? It is good to find in this skeptical age one life that can answer that question without any qualification. This

man knew nothing else, thought of nothing else, asked for nothing else, but this one thing. When he came occasionally to work among my flock, he at once took the whole church and people on his heart, and began to travail for them in prayer, as though his very life depended on the issue. This intercession continued "night and day with tears" as long as he was with us. He never said indeed that he had prayed all night. But I could hear him again and again breaking forth in the darkness "with strong crying" unto God, and I knew what the burden was. It was this congregation, strangers to him till to-day. It was this flock, not one of whom had he ever seen till now. So Christlike was the love of this man, whose field was the world, that each lost soul was just as dear to him as every other. With a soul knit into unbroken fellowship with Christ, he had become "baptized into a sense of all conditions." He did not love men with the natural heart any longer. He could say with Paul, "God is my witness, how greatly I long after you all in the heart of Jesus Christ." This habitual prayerfulness was something so wonderful that I wish to emphasize it as furnishing the true secret of his life. A lady at whose house he spent a night told me that in the morning her Roman-catholic servant-girl came down, and with an astonished expression said, "Mrs. B——, that old man was praying all night; I could not sleep it made me feel so. But I should never be afraid with such a man in the house." It was impossible that he should not pray thus. It was with him as with the devoted John Welch, of whom Fleming says that he used to make his nights such Gethsemane seasons that his family had often to remonstrate with him for losing his sleep; when he would reply, "Ah, but I have the souls of three thousand to answer for, and I know not how it is with many of them." And all through the day