

# Union Seminary Magazine.

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## I.—Literary.

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### MR. KIPLING'S VERSE.

It has rarely happened in the history of literature that a great writer has been equally great in poetry and in prose. Men who have talent only may do two things equally well; the man of genius is apt to do but one thing, but to do that one thing passing well. One of the unwritten reasons for denying that Bacon wrote Shakespeare's Plays is the difficulty of believing that the *Essays* and *Hamlet* were born of the same brain. Nevertheless, in the opinion of the world, Rudyard Kipling has accomplished the improbable, and, if popularity be an adequate test, has achieved not only supreme but equal excellence in story and in song.

It is at this late day perhaps a trite remark that Mr. Kipling has been happy in his command of subjects. He leads us into unknown lands and shows us men and deeds that are strange to us. His poetry—less, perhaps, than his prose, but still to a marked degree—borrows interest from its far-off background and setting.

Mandelay, with its "old Mulmein Pagoda" is as attractively novel to us in our clanging Western world as is Mowgli, the Jungle Man; and the "*Ballad of East and West*," that stirring tale of a time "when wolf and gray wolf meet," is only another "*Plain Tale from the Hills*," done in incomparably virile verse. Kipling's best work is popularly supposed to be in the noble *Recessional Hymn*,

**"MISS BALDWIN."**

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Miss Mary Julia Baldwin, more generally known simply as "Miss Baldwin," died in Staunton, Va., July 1, 1897, in the 68th year of her age. Just one-half of her life had been spent in a position of prominence, but during almost the whole of that time she was one of the most eminent women in the South.

When she was a very little child she suffered a facial paralysis, by which one side of her face was very much drawn and she became to that extent permanently disfigured. The other side of her face was handsome, and this, with her pretty hands, her graceful presence and gentle dignity indicate that, but for the disfigurement, she would have had unusual personal attraction. But "favor is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord she shall be praised," and possibly that which for a long time seemed to be a misfortune really had in the end an important bearing upon the great service she was to render to the world. She was naturally of an exquisitely sensitive disposition and her sensitiveness was intensified by her keen consciousness of the distortion of her face. While it developed in a rare degree her sympathy in suffering, it caused her at the same time to shrink from society and to fall back upon her own resources for happiness and self-culture.

The great force of her character was not more clearly displayed in anything else than in her complete mastery of her diffidence and the ease with which she could meet all sorts of people when her duties required that she should do so.

She was left an orphan at seven years of age and was raised in Staunton by her maternal grandparents. They gave her the benefit of such facilities for education as the place and the times afforded for girls. But as child, girl or young woman, her life was one of comparative isolation.

As Moses spent forty years in the desert preparing for his forty years of public service, so did she spend her thirty-four years of seclusion preparing unconsciously for her thirty-four years of extraordinary public achievement. What must that life of restriction have been to one of her intellectual capacity, sensitive organization and sympathetic nature! Doubtless it was a ceaseless yearning for opportunity and for the breaking of the bands that held her to that narrow sphere. Perhaps there were eager questionings of the providence that restrained her. Beyond all doubt those were years of wrestling in prayer. Even those who knew her best have not much to tell about her in that period. What they do tell is sufficient to show that she was characterized by the same conscientiousness and deep piety for which she was afterwards so well known. When she was called to public duty, it was not a new thing to her to be good, and true, and meek and self-sacrificing and to try to serve others. This had always been her life. Her character was transplanted without change from privacy to publicity, from a narrow field to a broad one. The following circumstance, told by a gentleman who was then a careless youth, shows the esteem in which she was held in Staunton before she became known to the world without. There was a whiskey saloon just across the street from her home, and when young men went to that bar room they would not enter if they saw Miss Baldwin sitting at her window across the street, because they had too much respect for her. She had always wanted to teach. She had a class in the Sabbath school which she held with magnetic power. In the absence of anything like a public free school in Staunton, she organized a charity school for the poor, and with the assistance of friends conducted it successfully. Afterwards when an opportunity presented itself, she opened a school for girls which lasted for one year and was a great success. Some of the pupils of that school are still living, and hold it in loving remembrance.

At the end of this first year of teaching Miss Baldwin and Miss Agnes McClung were elected joint principals of the Augusta Female Seminary in Staunton. Miss McClung had had as great a desire to conduct a boarding house as

Miss Baldwin had to teach a school. But this enterprise was so much larger than either of them had thought of undertaking that they vehemently protested against the acceptance of the position. Miss Baldwin's objection was made on the ground of her own limited educational advantages. It was urged upon her, however, that she had many important qualifications for the place and that if there were branches which she was not prepared to teach, she could employ assistants to teach those branches. And she finally yielded.

The ladies took charge of the school under circumstances of peculiar difficulty. It was in 1863 when there was great confusion on account of the war. There was no furniture belonging to the school and the ladies had no money with which to purchase any. But the community became deeply interested in the brave venture, and both hotels and private families came to their assistance, lending them all sorts of furnishings for the rooms and for the table. Bedsteads, mattresses, washstands, chairs, mirrors, plates, cups and saucers and knives and forks were among the curious and ill-matched collection of articles which friends brought to help them out. School fees were paid not only in money, but in anything else that might be useful in the conduct of the school, such as flour, meal, potatoes, bacon, beef, sorghum molasses, wood, etc. Laughable stories are told of the ingenious devices of the girls in those war times to protect their precious supplies when the enemy's troops would come to town.

The school was a great success from the very beginning. Miss Baldwin rapidly developed her great ability for administration. She secured a group and succession of superior teachers, ladies who came from families connected with the University of Virginia and who had had all the advantages of education in that great school. Miss McClung, who was a niece of Dr. Archibald Alexander, had an extensive acquaintance with Presbyterian ministers, and she drew a large patronage. Sincere, loving, judicious, Miss McClung became a mother to the school. Her influence over the girls made discipline unnecessary. The memory of her will always be a power with those who knew her.

She died in 1880, and left her share of the accumulated property to Miss Baldwin for the benefit of the school. Girls came to the school in large numbers, far beyond its ability to accommodate them. Increased accommodations were added little by little till a large block of the city has been occupied with dormitories and other buildings needful for school purposes. The trustees gave up all active connection with the institution, and until the time of Miss Baldwin's death ceased to hold any meetings, except such as were necessary to preserve the organization and succession required by law.

Miss Baldwin had a rare endowment for business. She displayed her sagacity in the selection of teachers, assistants and employees, in the making of investments of her earnings and in her plans for the conduct and enlargement of the school. She evinced a farsightedness that looked like daring, and for a while her friends were occasionally alarmed at her rashness, till they came to know her better and to repose in her judgment.

The course of study she adopted for the school was prepared at her request by the celebrated Dr. McGuffey, of the University of Virginia, who believed it was too difficult to succeed in a seminary for young ladies. But she acted upon the principle that if she adopted a high standard of scholarship and employed the very best teachers, even if she had to pay high salaries and charge her patrons high fees, she would enter a field in which she would have but little competition. She was not only right about that, but her action has probably influenced the education of women throughout the South by fixing a high standard, such as very few other schools had, and which has had the effect of raising the standard in all other schools. Several years ago a reunion of her former pupils was held at the seminary. The attendance was large and representative. There could hardly have been a more gratifying sight to her, as she approached the shadows of old age, than this fine array of the best type of womanhood in the whole land. All over this country her girls are scattered and some of them are missionaries in heathen lands, and wherever they are they love and revere Miss Baldwin. Of course, where there are

so many of them, some may not prove a credit to her, but in the main her whole life has made powerfully for righteousness.

When she died she bequeathed the greater part of the fine property she had accumulated to the trustees for the benefit of the school, in order that after her death she might still continue to promote the cherished object of her life. It was an act of simple justice on the part of the trustees to make the school a monument to her by changing its name from "*The Augusta Female Seminary*" to "*The Mary Baldwin Seminary*." This change, however, was made before her death and before the Board knew of her munificent legacy. The tribute was a great pleasure to her in her last days.

Miss Baldwin's greatness was to a large extent the greatness of her religious nature. With a strength in some respects almost masculine, she had the modesty of a child and the self-abasement of a refined christian. There was in her character the queer paradox of a blended self-reliance and self-distrust. She spent her money lavishly for religion and charitable objects. At times she would give away to these causes five or six thousand dollars in the course of a year. She probably gave away in her life fully as much as she left behind when she died. Seldom, if ever, was an applicant for aid denied, however little claim upon her charity he might have. She never allowed a deserving girl to fail of getting an education for lack of means. Some one who was familiar with her business remarked that if it had been possible for Miss Baldwin not to make money, her charities would have ruined her.

Above all she was powerful in prayer. For a long time she herself made the daily prayer at the opening of school. She often opened ladies' meetings with prayer. She felt a great diffidence in doing this, but her ministrations were said to be beautiful and impressive to others. She attributed all her success to God's answers to her prayers. Her plans, her teachers, her pupils, her earnings, all came to her in that way. Her private devotions were in a low audible voice. Perhaps she was not aware that the murmurs of her voice could be heard in the adjoining room. But there are witnesses to the fact that at times she *spent the*

*whole night in prayer.* What a light that throws upon her whole life! It illumines that part of her life which was spent in seclusion and shows it must have been a school of prayer. It also illumines the period of public service and shows that what often seemed to be a brilliant achievement was in reality the sequence of the night oratory.

The strain of such an intense life as she had lived began to waste her strength and make her old before her time. Her last years were years of incredible feebleness. Her chamber (which she had fitted up for herself with characteristic simplicity) was in an upper story of one of the dormitories. There were several flights of steps to descend in order to reach the level of the church across the street. Many a Sunday she might have been seen coming down those flights of steps "in weariness and painfulness," leaning on the strong arm of a friend, slowly making her way to the house of God. After preaching she climbed with even greater difficulty back to her room. What a spectacle of devotion it was!

People wondered that she continued to hold on to the seminary when her health was so wrecked. The secret of it is given in a remark she made one day near the end, "My only object in holding on to the school is that I may do these girls some good spiritually."

Her death was in harmony with her life. The last night of her life was given up to prayer. Early in the morning she quietly sank into that "blessed sleep from which none ever wakes to weep." During the hour of her funeral all places of business in Staunton were closed out of respect for her. It was an unaffected tribute from a community that valued her while living and mourned her when dead, and will always hold her memory in veneration and gratitude.

Some one ought to write a biography of Miss Baldwin. There ought to be material enough to justify it and the material can be gathered without much difficulty if the effort is not deferred too long. The story of her meekness in obscurity, her modesty in the midst of fame, and of her faithful stewardship in the possession of large means, would be a blessing to all and especially the young women of our church. Will not some life-long friend undertake it, or

some one of her devoted pupils ? It is a task worthy of the gracefulest pen that learned its skill in her school.

“Give her the fruit of her hands and let her works praise her in the gates,” for honor and strength were her clothing, she opened opened her mouth with wisdom and in her tongue was the law of kindness.