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I.—Literary.

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*,

III—Missionary.

WORK AMONG THE NEGROES.

A PLEA FOR PERSONAL SERVICE.

I.

All men need to guard against a certain deceitfulness of the human heart which clothes with attractiveness a great duty afar off, and despises an humble duty close at hand; which admires virtue in the abstract, but fails to recognize the time to apply it.

Says Dr. James Stalker: "It is the teaching of the christian faith that beneath the habiliments of even the humblest member of the human family there is hidden what is more precious than the entire material world. That man is the most interesting object in the world, that the soul is precious; that it is better for a human being to lose the whole world than to miss his destiny—these are now common-places which every one who bears the christian name will acknowledge.

"Yet in reality few live under their power. Many a one who has paid the tribute of love and admiration to the spectacle of Christ's compassion for the outcasts, and melted with aesthetic emotion before a picture of the woman that was a sinner, has never once attempted to save an actual woman of the same kind in his own city, and would be utterly at a loss if such a one in an hour of remorse were to throw herself on his pity and protection. There is a great difference between a sinner in a book or a picture, and a sinner in the flesh. Multitudes in their heart believe that all the remarkable and interesting people lived long ago, or that, at any rate, if any are now alive, they live many miles away from their vicinity."

It seems true of duty as of a landscape that "'tis distance lends enchantment to the view." "The duty that lies nearest thee" is always commonplace, unheroic and unattractive. But, none the less, the duty that liest nearest has a prior claim on our attention and our energies. To neglect

it and to go in search of some distant call, is to stifle the voice of conscience, disobey God, and deserve the condemnation of hypocrisy.

II.

The Southern Presbyterian Church has a mission field at its own door of which several things may be affirmed and sustained:

1. It is, like Lazarus at the gate of Dives, piteously needy.

2. And we, like Dives, are amply provided and peculiarly fitted to supply its needs.

3. It has claims upon us which are clear and cogent—among them the mighty claim of *justice*—and we cannot turn over the duty to any one else in the world.

4. To most people it is peculiarly unattractive.

5. But if done, as it ought to be done, it will afford us such an opportunity for illustrating the grace of Christ as few other people in the world possess.

Let us take up these points in their order:

1. On the first point, that the field is needy, a few facts will tell the story: (1) We know that where there is a great deal of ignorance there does not exist much grace, but there is much vice. According to the census of 1894 sixty per cent. of the negroes of our land are "illiterates." They cannot even read or write. Much ignorance, much vice.

(2) We know that where the marriage law is disregarded, immorality is the inevitable consequence. The census of 1891 informs us that "in Washington city over 25 per cent. of the births among negroes are admittedly illegitimate," and that "in a certain county in Mississippi there were during twelve months 300 marriage licenses taken out in the county clerk's office for white people. According to the proportion of population there should have been in the same time 1,200 or more for negroes. There were actually taken out by colored persons just 3"!

(3) We know that a people never rise above their religious leaders; "like priest, like people"; and we know that the immorality among the negro preachers in "the Black Belt" is appalling.

(4) We know that the environments in which the greater

part of them live, and their associations from early childhood, would make it difficult for anybody born with the best blood in their veins, and having the grace of God in their hearts, to grow up pure.

(5) We know their absurd and fanatical emotionalism in their worship, how they mistake "feeling" in a "big meeting" for the unquestionable proof of grace in their hearts!

We know all these things, and yet we still have the stereotyped phrase, "They have preachers of their own; they do not need ours."

If *they* do not need the Gospel in its simplicity and purity, in the name of common sense who does?

We have heard the cry of Ethiopia ten thousand miles away, and have given our noble young men to lay down their lives there; some of us cannot hear the same cry a our own doors!

We owe a debt to Africa, in common with England and with the Northern United States; this field is ours, and no other people ought to have found it necessary to send missionaries here!

2. The second point is, that we, like Dives, are amply provided and peculiarly fitted to supply the needs of the field.

It is readily admitted that our Church is not popular among the negroes, but for that very reason they need its order, quietness and unritualistic worship all the more. They need a carefully-prepared and well-trained ministry, a clean ministry thoroughly tested by just such training as it is the practice of the Presbyterian Church to give. Suppose we knew we never could build up a Presbyterian church among them, may we on that account decline to help in the great task of giving them the Gospel? We are not commanded to make Presbyterians of all men; we *are* commanded to give them the Gospel.

Every Church on earth that has any commission from God whatever, has a commission to reach the destitute at its own doors!

3. This field has claims upon us which are clear and cogent—among them the mighty claim of justice—and we *cannot* "turn it over" to anybody on the face of the earth.

“Turn the work over to the Northern Church,” say some.

Pray tell me *why*? Is it because we have not the right kind of religion? Or is it because the grace of God is not strong enough to surmount the obstacles? Which of these horns of your dilemma will you choose, my halting brother? You are not willing to admit any defect in your religion; then you must lay the responsibility on the weakness of God's grace. Father Damien, a Roman Catholic priest, could go to the lepers of the Sandwich Islands, but *we* cannot go near enough to the negroes to win their confidence and save their souls!

CLAIMS CLEAR AND COGENT.

The first is the claim of *personal influence*.

Here are the negroes right among us. They know us; we know them. They confide in us and love us. They learn from us almost all they know. How can we, without guilt, fail to use this influence to lead them to Christ? Evil men are doing them harm; shall not we exert ourselves to do them good?

A man's personal influence is a part of himself; he cannot turn it over to some one else! As well talk of jumping off your shadow!

The second claim is the claim of self-preservation. If a contagious disease infests any part of the people, it endangers the health of all. Immorality is a contagious disease. Alas! the destruction it has already wrought in this very matter!

The third claim is the claim of *justice*.

The negroes have their faults, great and grievous, but they have their merits also. Every fair-minded man will admit this. Now, one of their good qualities is their *fidelity*. This trait was exhibited during the civil war in a most remarkable manner.

Henry W. Grady says: “The fidelity of the negroes during the war was without a parallel in the history of the world.”

Do we not owe them and their children a debt of gratitude? Taking the negroes as a class, could we find better servants, more patient, more long suffering, more faithful, among any other people?

Shall we receive their toil, enjoy the fruits of their labor all the week, and then on Sunday permit them to get to heaven if they can? But as for us, we have no concern with it!

I am not pleading for mercy ; I am pleading for *justice* ! "The moral relations of men," cannot be absolved by the payment of dollars and cents"!

4. The duty is peculiarly unattractive.

There are antipodes in character as there are on the earth's surface. And if ever there were such, the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians and the Afro-Americans are. Tastes, habits, dispositions, traditions and training all diametrically opposite. It is no easy nor pleasant task for us to bear with the negro's infirmities. It requires *grace* to prepare us for the service.

Moreover, added to our natural antipathies, which would inevitably arise in any similar case, there has come in the fearful struggle of the war engendering rivalries and hard thoughts.

5. But precisely for this reason, we have had such an opportunity to illustrate the grace of our Lord Jesus as few other people in the world possess.

Oh! let us not miss this splendid opportunity. The mightier the obstacles, the greater the constraining love of Christ that surmounts them. "Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear *much* fruit."

Now, our Northern brethren and the English people have their problems: to reach and elevate the slum population of their cities; to preach and live the brotherhood of man; but in their problem it is Caucasian working with Caucasian.

For us the task is *immensely* harder.

But if we solve it aright, the duty thus nobly done will be a volume of Christian Evidences, a Treatise of Apologetics that will shut the mouths of infidels, strengthen the faith of God's people, save the souls of the lost, and glorify Christ with a signal and conspicuous glory. Honor enough to fire the imagination of a stone!

III.

"Solve it aright." How? Simplest thing in the world.

By raising money? No! Doing the work by proxy? No!

The General Assembly has answered the question. "Stillman Institute" is a part of the plan that has come to stay, but the great need is for *personal service*.

The Memphis Assembly recommended to all our churches (Minutes, pp. 615-616): "That our ministers, sessions and people are exhorted to form Sabbath schools for the instruction of colored youth, and the members of our churches are exhorted to give some of their time and Christian charity to giving evangelical training to those who may be gathered into such schools."

And it goes on: "Could this be done, not only might souls be expected to be saved, but to the extent to which this Christlike endeavor would succeed, a temper of docility would be engendered in the rising generation among them, the antagonisms of race would be mollified and amicable relations would be established between those who, in the providence of God, seem destined, we know not how long, to live side by side with each other."

I very believe there are earnest, conscientious Christians in hundreds of congregations who are ripe for obedience to this wise recommendation. They only need to be led!

And instead of the two dozen schools we now have, we might have one thousand!

Now, the Presbyterians are an influential body of people. Suppose they in real earnest lay hold of this task, others will follow, and so, all over the land, the white people who have been blessed of God with great and gracious privileges will be using their "talents" for the enlightening and saving of the inferior people dependent on them! This is work worthy of the highest talent, the most refined Christian culture. If any man think himself above it—may God forgive his sin!

Our gracious Lord Jesus himself is not above it!

IV.

As already said, this for which I am pleading is no easy task. It is a difficult work. There is offered for doing it

no money, no fame, no anything which attracts the carnal heart.

That very fact is the basis of my plea.
Not for the flesh, but for Christ!

We love Him; we desire to serve Him. This work will unquestionably glorify Him before all men. For His sake let us bend to our task with an enthusiasm that knows no defeat, a love that knows no failure!

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