

UNITARIAN

HYMN

WRITERS

**Unitarian
Hymn
Writers**

H.W. Stephenson

UNITARIAN HYMN-WRITERS

BY

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PREFACE

I HAVE not attempted, in these brief notices of Unitarian hymn-writers, to meet the requirements of the student of Hymnody. My aim has been to interest the general reader in what has interested me. The text, therefore, is not burdened with footnotes and references. The chief sources of information, so far as they are known to me, are indicated in the Bibliography at the end of the book. In many cases, however, I have failed to find any memoir adequate to my purpose, and have had to make use of " appreciations " such as have appeared in this journal or that, scanty obituary notices, and scattered references in other biographies, memoirs, and reminiscences. Complete acknowledgment of sources is hardly possible, and may be regarded as unnecessary. Primarily, the Bibliography is given in order that any interested reader may not be entirely without guidance if there is the desire to know more than could be included in these pages. Though entirely responsible for what is here presented, I gladly acknowledge my indebtedness to the Rev.

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Valentine D. Davis for reading most of the copy in MS. and the whole of the proofs. For his long-continued and careful work on Unitarian Hymnody Mr. Davis has earned the gratitude of us all.

H. W. S.

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UNITARIAN HYMN-WRITERS

I

JOHN JOHNS

1801-1847

JOHN JOHNS, born 17 March, 1801, settled, when he was barely twenty years of age, as minister of the Unitarian congregation at Crediton, Devon. Already, at Edinburgh University, he had distinguished himself by his classical attainments. Advantageous offers in other walks of life had been made to him, but thoughts of the work of the ministry had captivated his mind. That being so, Crediton may well have seemed to be, for him, an ideal place. He was at heart a poet, a man who dreamed dreams, one who might appear to others to be most fitted to live in realms of his own, a man not to be disturbed too much by harsh contact with the cruder and less pleasing aspects of human life.

Those who are familiar with the country round Crediton, with Exeter but seven miles away, and not far distant the impressive solitudes of the wilder parts of Dartmoor, will understand what

it may well have meant to this young man, for whom the beauty of the earth was very heaven, and "every flower that starred the fresh green sod a word of God." No family cares were his; there were no home responsibilities to curtail or limit the vagaries of his eager spirit, and we can picture him wandering away over the hills, lingering by the rivers and the brooks, meandering through the woods, as though the amplitude of his time were eternity itself.

Poems by him began to appear in various papers and journals; after eight years he collected them together and published them in book form under the title *Dews of Castalie* (1828). In the following year there followed another volume—*The Valley of the Nymphs, a dream of the Golden World* (1829). Yet was he not neglectful of his pastoral duties; nor did he withhold his active participation in the fostering of such social agencies as promoted the general welfare of the people.

For thirteen years he lived his care-free bachelor life, and then in 1833 he married Caroline Reynell. In the spring of the following year events were transpiring which were, at no distant date, going to be big with meaning for both of them. James Martineau and John Hamilton Thom were two of the Unitarian ministers in Liverpool. In the early part of 1834 they were visited by Dr. Joseph Tuckerman, of Boston, U.S.A. Tuckerman was a saint and a hero. He was the central figure in the philanthropies undertaken by the American

Unitarians for the poor and degraded of Boston. Tuckerman was what was "the minister at large."

"It is," he wrote, "the first object of the minister at large never to be lost sight of, and to other is to be preferred, as far as shall be possible, to extend its offices to the poor and the low and the lowest, to the most friendless and uncared for, the most miserable."

Martineau and Hamilton Thom had felt that the claims of the poor and the degraded deserved a response beyond anything that the Liverpool Unitarians had then found. Tuckerman's visit fired them with the feeling that something must and could be done. Something was done. The Liverpool Domesday House was founded in 1836, and the Rev. John Johns was invited to be "the minister at large."

At this time Johns was but thirty-six years of age. The whole of his manhood—some thirty years—had been, as it were, one long pilgrimage of joy and peace and quiet helpfulness in the Devon town. If ever a man seemed, by his manner of life, to be unprepared for the lay before him, it was surely John Johns. He packed up bag and baggage and left for Liverpool. "Many," says Hamilton Thom, "would have thought it a violence to call him away for even a few scenes of beauty in which his spirit felt . . . and make him the daily companion

perance, coarseness, sensuality, and brutal vice." Nevertheless, for ten and a half years he fulfilled the rôle of Minister to the Poor in ways as heroic as they were unforgettable for those who watched him in his work.

The annual reports of this "minister at large" witness to the thoroughness and the rare humanity with which he carried out the work entrusted to him, his own contributions to Liverpool newspapers doing something towards calling a wider attention to the intolerable conditions of life under which many were still living. In an article, in 1841, on "Cellars," he wrote: "In the part of the country from which I come I have seen a great deal of occasional suffering, but it was *suffering above ground*. In the country a man's *death* always preceded his interment. It was in Liverpool that I first found graves inhabited by the living. In Liverpool I first found families immured in underground dwellings, which cut them off from sunshine and air, and only admitted light enough to show in what dismal abodes life could linger on."

In a similar communication on "Courts," in which multitudes of the same class of people hid themselves, Mr. Johns wrote: "I have neither words nor will to describe the filth of some of these regions. It is unimaginable and unutterable." And we have to picture him entering "the small, close, and sunless dwellings, with their broken floors and stairs, and greasy walls, and shattered

casements." He mentioned, also, that "not unfrequently these courts have *other* courts *within* them, branching off on one or both sides; sometimes through doors, sometimes through passages between walls, which lead, if possible, to haunts yet more forlorn and repulsive."

And thus we gain an impression of the kind of environment in which much of the work of Mr. Johns was done. It might be thought that the poet in him would suffer eclipse, or that, at least, the old impulse to write would die away. Nevertheless, no less than nine of the monthly issues of the *Christian Reformer* for 1843 contain contributions in verse from him.

And then, some four years later, in the full prime of his manhood, he was cut off. "The Irish famine of 1846 led to an influx into Liverpool of miserable emigrants and other sufferers hoping to find there some means of support; and the following winter was a time of dreadful trial, both to the poor and to those who in personal service dared to be their friends. The inevitable malignant fever broke out, and among its many victims carried off ten priests of the Roman Catholic Church. With one of these, John Johns, who had relaxed none of his faithful efforts during those trying months, compassionately tended the body of a man who had just died, and whom no one else would touch." Both took the infection, and in both cases it proved fatal. John Johns died on 23 June, 1847.

In the early part of the previous year he published *Georgics of Life : or, Scenes from the Town Life of the Poor. Being the first part of an intended Poem on that Subject.* There were only twenty pages of it, and, alas ! there were to be no more. By these *Georgics* he hoped that he might send forth :—

A voice not heard in vain, that yet may wake
A sympathy divine for human woe.

And so soon were his own mortal remains to be laid to rest. From the Rev. J. Hamilton Thom's memorial address the following is taken : " A more awful solitude is now reigning in damp cellars, in wretched garrets, in the close recesses of noisome courts. His form will never darken again the low entrance. His step will never be heard again on the creaking, upright stair, listened for by lonely sufferers, to whom he brought the only gleam of heaven that sanctified the long day and longer night. He will be seen no more in those gloomy regions where for years he walked daily, with offers of sympathy and help to all who wanted a counsellor and friend."

Thus ended, all too soon, the earthly career of the Rev. John Johns, and when we think of him, it is not primarily as hymn-writer, but as one who lived by the vision splendid of the world made better by the sustained efforts of those whose faith in God and in man was no less real than his own.

Of the many hymns that he wrote, the one by

which he is best known, and which has been included in other than Unitarian hymnals, is :—

Come, kingdom of our God,
Sweet reign of light and love !
Shed peace and hope and joy abroad,
And wisdom from above.

It means something to us that we know these words to be very much more than the pious utterance of one who had always chosen or happened upon smooth and pleasant paths. Indeed, there are few hymns which do not become more precious to us, into which we do not read a greater fulness of meaning, from which we do not receive a greater inspiration, if we know something of those who wrote them.

II

SIR JOHN BOWRING, LL.D.

1792-1872

No more than casual references can here be made to the many-sided public work of Sir John Bowring; a fuller account thereof is easily obtainable from other sources. This record is to be of what are, perhaps, more personal matters, and such as are less likely to be brought to our notice elsewhere. Our particular interest may be somewhat circumscribed, but, such as it is, it is real enough, and has to do with what Sir John himself regarded as the most significant aspect of his life.

"I have found," he wrote, "a representation from the Bishop of Exeter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the time of James I, denouncing a turbulent and unmanageable nonconformist, one John Bowring, from whom I am directly descended. I possess a licence granted to a John Bowring, in the time of William and Mary, authorizing him to use his house at Chumleigh for the purpose of religious worship." By the time we come to the father of John Bowring the hymn-writer the turbulence of spirits seems to have worked itself out, but the nonconformity remains. The son

speaks of the sweetness of his father's temper; only twice did he see it "ruffled."

The family attended the George's Meeting, Exeter. "In that meeting-house I well remember my grandfather's venerable form, his tall person, and white hairs. He stood (for from the beginning to the end of the service he never sat down) behind one of the square-fluted pillars, upon a peg of which his hat was hung, a model of devout attention and an image of serene piety." This paternal grandfather was a man "of great independence of character, and deeply imbued with religious sentiments, which he endeavoured to impress upon his grandson in early childhood." Quite soon was the young boy trained to an intense love of liberty and independence of opinion. As a little child, John Bowring loved this grandfather, who lived next door. "Kneeling at his feet, I said my morning prayers, and many a sweet and kind counsel fell from his lips. Well do I remember the emphasis with which he repeated to me hymns and passages of poetry, which left an indelible impression upon a somewhat susceptible mind."

Dr. Lant Carpenter was one of the ministers of the George's Meeting from 1805 to 1817, and to him, also, Bowring felt he owed a boundless debt. "He developed much that lay hidden in my nature." Of his more secular education little can be said. He was sent to school at Moreton-Hampstead, then one of the rudest spots in Devonshire, and put under the charge of James

Bransby, minister of the Unitarian Church in that place. Here he cannot have remained very long, for Bransby went there in 1803 and left in 1805, when Bowring was but thirteen years of age. Subsequently he received teaching from Lant Carpenter, who was an intimate friend of the family.

It appears to have been as early as his fifteenth year that he entered a merchant's office at Exeter, wherein he remained until 1811, when he went as clerk in the office of Milford & Co., London. This firm carried on an extensive business with Spain, and Bowring, having already considerable linguistic attainments, was sent to that country in 1813. Two years later he set up in business on his own account, but as time went on there was an increasing tendency to deviate from the career he had adopted. His own wish had been to enter the Unitarian ministry, but it had been defeated by his diffidence and the failure of anyone else to suggest that such a course should be followed. Later he was to discover a strong literary bent, with a special interest in the poets of many lands. Apparently, before he was sixteen years old, he had "mastered Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese, and had made considerable progress in German and Dutch." At a still later day the *Edinburgh Review* could write of Bowring's "varied and almost Mithridatic acquaintance with the languages of modern Europe." In 1820 he had published a small work entitled *Specimens from the Russian Poets*. It was followed

as the years went on by selections from poems in thirty languages and dialects. This interest never waned, and when he was seventy-four years of age there appeared his translations from Alexander Petofi, the Hungarian poet.

By 1822 he had thrown himself wholeheartedly into literary pursuits. In 1824 he became a joint editor of the *Westminster Review*, being responsible for the political side of that periodical. For this work he was, on his own confession, "liberally paid."

If Dr. Lant Carpenter was the guide and instructor of Bowring's early youth, Jeremy Bentham was the admiration of his riper years. It was Bentham who originally provided the funds for the *Westminster Review*. For many years Bowring lived in his house, acting as his private secretary. On 6 June, 1832, Bentham died, having already appointed Bowring his literary executor. Prior to this, however, Bowring had discovered the need for greater financial resources, and it was probably due to the good offices of Bentham that his name was laid before the Government as one seeking employment. He was sent in 1828 to examine the method pursued in the finances of Holland, and in the following year received the LL.D. of Groningen University. In 1831 Bowring produced an elaborate report on Great Britain's commercial relations with France. In 1835 he was elected member of Parliament for the Kilmarnock boroughs. He lost this seat two years later, but

was member for Bolton from 1841 to 1849. Writing in 1861 he said: "When I was in the House of Commons, of fourteen Dissenters I think thirteen belonged to the Unitarian community."

Bowring had now become, quite conspicuously, the man of affairs; nevertheless, he continued to be the man of letters. Indeed, much as he appreciated the wide experience gained from his public life and the contacts that he had thereby made, it appears unlikely that he would have deviated much from his literary work, though it would have included politics, but for financial considerations. It was anxiety for his own affairs which led him, in 1848, to apply for the post of Consul at Canton. He received this appointment, and, at a later date, was made Governor of Hong Kong. It was whilst holding the latter office that he was given a knighthood. Not until 1860 did he finally settle again in this country. Although now in his sixty-ninth year, he retained a lively interest in all social and economic questions, was regular in his attendance as a county Magistrate, gave his support to the various local scientific or educational institutions of Exeter (in which city he had been born), and gave much thought to the subject of Prison Discipline, including that of the Reformation of the Criminal. During the last year of his life he attended, and took an active part in, the debates at the International Prison Conference in London, in the meetings of the British Association and the Social Science Association.

But, as had already been indicated, no weight of other interests could long impede the itch to write; Bowring's prolonged continuance in public affairs did but increase the number of things concerning which he eagerly put pen to paper. In his *Autobiographical Recollections* he could say: "I have published between forty and fifty volumes—in every case with some pecuniary profit—and several pamphlets." He had also contributed prolifically to the periodical literature of the day, including the *Gentleman's Magazine*, the *Fortnightly*, the *St. James's Magazine*, the *Cornhill*, and *All the Year Round*.

Mention has already been made of Bowring's interest in the poetry of many lands, and of the persistence of that interest right up to the end of his life. He was, however, not only a lover of poetry, but also essayed himself to be a poet. The best known of his poems are to be found in the little volume *Matins and Vespers* (1823, 1824, 1841 and 1851), each edition being an enlargement of that which preceded it. *Matins and Vespers* contained many hymns, eventually including the *Hymns* published in 1825. Bowring's hope concerning the *Matins and Vespers* was not that it would gain him literary fame, but that it would be useful.

He was, in truth, not so much a poet, as one entranced by poetry; that he should himself experiment in verse forms was natural enough, and perhaps inevitable, but gaining the mastery was,

for him, by no means frequent. We can imagine that such writing was a form of pleasurable recreation rather than a direct result of some inspiration which must find utterance. But, even so, sometimes in the act of writing the inspiration did come, and with it the words that bodied it forth not unworthily.

The best known of his hymns is :—

In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.

When the woes of life o'ertake me,
Hopes deceive, and fears annoy,
Never shall the cross forsake me;
Lo, it glows with peace and joy!

When the sun of bliss is beaming
Light and love upon my way,
From the cross the radiance streaming
Adds more lustre to the day.

Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
By the cross are sanctified;
Peace is there, that knows no measure,
Joys, that through all times abide.

In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time,
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.

That is a hymn that is endeared to very many both among those who are and those who are not of the Unitarian movement. It is doubtful whether any other hymn by a Unitarian writer, with the

exception of *Nearer, my God, to Thee*, has been so widely adopted by the compilers of hymnals for use by almost all sections of the Christian Church.

Mention may be made of one other of Bowring's hymns—one that has gained increased usage :—

God is love; his mercy brightens
All the path in which we rove;
Bliss he wakes, and woe he lightens:
God is wisdom, God is love.

He with earthly cares entwineth
Hope and comfort from above;
Everywhere his glory shineth:
God is wisdom, God is love.

This hymn accords well with what we feel to have been the vital and most essential elements in Bowring's faith: it was sung at his own funeral, and we may at least believe it to be possible that, of all his own hymns, this was the one that he loved best of all. Sir John Bowring died 23 November, 1872. A few days earlier he had completed for publication an essay on Prison Labour, and had, also, in process of compilation a volume of songs and hymns adapted for use in schools.

The Unitarians of Exeter showed their appreciation of his association with the George's Meeting by placing in the vestry a marble bust of Sir John executed by Edward Bowring Stephens. On his grave-stone, together with a brief inscription, are the words *In the cross of Christ I glory*. Writing interesting reminiscences, 'Anglo-Scotus' said, "In personal appearance

Sir John reminded one, to some extent, of his master and friend, Jeremy Bentham. Though he was of an extremely venerable aspect, his hair silvered with the frost of eighty winters, he had no sign of decrepitude about him, was compact and firm-looking in body, walked erect, and could address a public meeting with graceful ease and fluency. . . . He was one of several who exemplified the fact that old age, as well as youth, may be beautiful."

III

SARAH FLOWER ADAMS

1805-1848

SARAH FLOWER ADAMS, born at Harlow, Essex, on 22 February, 1805, was the daughter of Benjamin Flower (1755-1829), a printer and publisher, first in Cambridge and then at Harlow. At Cambridge he had edited and published for a period of ten years the *Cambridge Intelligencer*, gaining considerable notoriety by his pronounced advocacy of civil and religious liberty, whilst as a lay preacher his services had been characterized by an antagonism to dogmatism and spiritual domination. He was on friendly terms with the Rev. Robert Aspland, the minister of the Gravel Pit Chapel, Hackney, and editor of the *Monthly Repository*, a Unitarian periodical to which Flower frequently contributed. In 1820, ten years after the death of his wife, he removed to Dalston, London, with his two daughters Eliza and Sarah. Their new home was in close proximity to that of the Rev. W. J. Fox, the minister of the South Place Chapel, Finsbury, who became very intimate with them, and, on the death of the father in 1829, the guardian of the two daughters.

A word about Eliza Flower will be neither irrelevant nor inappropriate. When she was but about four years old, her mother had written of the surprise she felt at the facility with which the child learnt a new tune; there was a rare talent which astonished the organist of the village church at Harlow, and he marvelled at the music which she composed in early years. The late Richard Garnett's estimate of her more mature work is here given from his *Life of W. J. Fox*: "She was emphatically a child of nature, open and transparent as the day. She worshipped Mozart, Shakespeare, Milton, Burns, Byron; but, if these had never existed, Eliza Flower would still have been Eliza Flower. While this independence and spontaneity gave an indescribable charm to her character, they were not wholly favourable to her in the world of Art. Music came so naturally to her that she never realized the importance of strenuous study, and such a professional training as, indeed, it would probably have been beyond her means to procure. When we read of the enormous pains which the greatest masters of the art have found needful, we must think with astonishment of this young girl, with so slender a technical equipment, claiming a place at the head of English female composers in her own day."

Writing to her in 1845, the poet Browning said: "For me, I never had another feeling other than entire admiration for your music—entire admiration—I put it apart from all other English music I

know, and fully believe in it as the music we all waited for." On another occasion he had written: "By the way you speak of 'Pippa,' could we not make some arrangement about it? The lyrics want your music—five or six in all. How say you?"

Browning had become acquainted with the two sisters through the agency of a mutual friend, and had experienced a boyish love for Eliza, though she was some nine years older than himself. Mrs. Sutherland Orr, in her *Life and Letters of Robert Browning*, says: "As time advanced his feelings seem to have subsided into one of warm and very loyal friendship. . . . The admiration, even tenderness, for Miss Flower had so deep a root that he never in later life mentioned her name with indifference. . . . If, in spite of his denials, any woman inspired 'Pauline' it can be no other than she. He began writing to her at twelve or thirteen, probably on the occasion of her expressed sympathy with his first distinct effort at authorship; and what he afterwards called 'the few utterly insignificant scraps of letter and verse' which formed his part of the correspondence were preserved by her as long as she lived. But he recovered, and destroyed them after his return to England, with all the other reminiscences of those early years."

Browning's action in this matter we may attribute to the ardency of his feeling for Elizabeth Barrett, whom he married on 12 September, 1846, rather

than to a decided wish to forget for ever the earlier association. Eliza Flower died three months after the marriage—a victim to consumption—on 12 December of the same year. “I believe,” said Moncure D. Conway, “the sisters Flower inspired both ‘Pauline’ and ‘Pippa Passes.’ Long before I knew the relations between Browning and these ladies, I had felt that Pippa’s voice told the secret of the poet’s experience.” With Browning, Sarah had discussed certain difficulties in respect of orthodox beliefs. “It was,” she says, “in answering Robert Browning that my mind refused to bring forward argument, turned recreant, and sided with the enemy.”

Her trouble was that she could not retain hold of “a firm belief in the genuineness of the Scriptures”—that is, in their verbal inspiration. She affirms her belief in an All-wise and Omnipotent Being, but adds: “Still, I would fain go to my Bible as I used to, but I cannot.”

Having already shown symptoms of a tendency to consumption, she broke down completely under the shock of her father’s death when she was nearly twenty-four years of age. Compelled by the need for change of air and scene, she went to the Isle of Wight. There, with ample time at her disposal, she employed herself in writing. *The Little Church of Yaverland* and *The Royal Progress* are among the compositions of this period.

Later, between the years 1833 and 1836, she contributed stories, essays, and poems to the

Monthly Repository, which was then under the editorship of W. J. Fox. The most notable contribution is an essay entitled “An Evening with Charles Lamb.” This essay was reprinted by Bertram Dobell, in 1903, in his volume *Sidelights on Charles Lamb*. Concerning it he remarks: “It is true that we are rich in pictures of Coleridge and Lamb; but were our knowledge of them, as gained from the writings of their contemporaries, ten times more copious than it is, we should still have reason to welcome such accessions to it as we find in S. Y.’s paper.” Mr. Dobell was, however, nonplussed as to the authorship. By the initials “S. Y.,” Sarah Flower, according to Mrs. Bridell Fox, was wont to indicate the name “Sally,” by which she was known to her personal friends.

At the parish church of St. John’s, Hackney, on 24 September, 1834, she was married to William Bridges Adams; previously to the year 1836 Non-conformists were compelled to go to the parish church for the marriage ceremony if it was to be valid in the eyes of the Law. W. J. Linton (*Memories*, 1895) speaks of Adams as “one of our best civil engineers, a man held in high esteem in his profession, and also for his most unselfish and wide philanthropy.” In the same volume may be found reference to the two sisters, Eliza and Sarah. “With their love and feeling for music and pictorial art, and their high poetic thought, they were such women in their purity, intelligence, and high-

souled enthusiasm, as Shelley might have sung as fitted to redeem the world by their very presence."

With some encouragement from Macready, who found her "a wonderful woman," Sarah attempted to fulfil her own ambitions on the stage. Her health gave way under the strain, and for a long time her physical strength remained at a low ebb.

The appearance, in February 1841, of the dramatic poem *Vivia Perpetua* is evidence enough that she sought relief and some measure of self-forgetfulness in further literary activity. This work is characterized by purity of emotion, intensity of feeling, moral ardour, and a mystic exaltation of spirit. Having lost some of her early cherished beliefs, Mrs. Adams had to discover the value, the all-sufficiency, of what yet remained. When Saturus had bidden Vivia—

Beware of doubt, that gloomiest, coldest cloud,
A shroud of death in life for human hearts.

Vivia replies—

But are there really those who have no God?
All have some faith, some hope, a lingering wish,
Or a bare possible—that is one step
Out of the nothingness that else were theirs.

It is difficult to suppose that these words are other than an authentic record of the writer's own experience—the impassioned utterance of what seemed to her to be the limits of unbelief.

Three months after the publication of *Vivia Perpetua* she writes to a cousin about a new hymn

book which her sister Eliza is arranging, and which was to supersede Aspland's collection at the South Place Chapel. To that book Mrs. Adams contributed thirteen original hymns, and is accredited with paraphrases of hymns by Fenelon, Schiller, and Luis de Leon. *He sendeth sun, he sendeth shower; Part in peace! Is day before us?* and *The world may change from old to new*, are still to be found in modern collections. It was in this South Place Chapel hymnal that *Nearer, my God, to Thee* was given to the world. That hymn, no longer the possession of a particular congregation, has become a part of universal hymnody, and has been translated into many languages. But Mrs. Adams had died before it emerged from the comparative obscurity of the hymnal in which it first appeared.

After the death of her sister Eliza, in December 1846, it became apparent that Mrs. Adams would succumb to the same dread disease. According to Mrs. Bridell Fox, she never recovered from the loss of her sister, but literally pined away; on 21 August, 1848, she was laid to rest, in the family grave in the Foster Street Cemetery, Harlow, Essex.

They were lovely and pleasant in their lives
And in their deaths they were not divided.

IV

FREDERIC HENRY HEDGE, LL.D.

1805-1890

“HEDGE is one of the sturdiest little fellows I have come across for many a day. A face like a rock; a voice like a howitzer; only his honest kind grey eyes reassure you a little.” So wrote Carlyle to Emerson after he had received a visit from Hedge in the summer of 1847, and, as far as they go, his words would seem to give a substantially correct impression of the man whom Emerson had introduced as “a recluse but catholic scholar in our remote Bangor, who reads German and smokes in his solitary study through nearly eight months of snow, and deals out, every Sunday, his witty apothegms to the lumber merchants and township owners of Penobscot River, who have actually grown intelligent interpreters of his riddles by long hearkening after them.”

Born on 12 December, 1805, Frederic Henry Hedge at an early age gave indications of an aptitude for scholarly pursuits. When but seven years old he was committing to memory the Eclogues of Virgil in Latin, and three years later he knew by heart, in Greek, long passages of Homer. By his

own confession, he had delight in such exercises as these. Later he spent four years in schools in Germany, and graduated from Harvard in 1825. He became minister of the West Cambridge (now Arlington) Unitarian Church. Subsequent pastorates were at Bangor, Providence, and Brookline. Emerson's words to Carlyle hardly do justice to the personnel of his congregation at Bangor. Dr. Pierce, who visited him there in 1842, “recorded in his memoirs with delight the names of thirty lawyers in Mr. Hedge's society, among whom were five judges and an ex-Governor.” The ministry at Providence was conspicuously successful, whilst at Brookline “transepts were added to the church, and the fulness of the treasury justified the doubling of the minister's salary.” For twenty-one years (1856-1877) Dr. Hedge had charge of the department in Ecclesiastical History in the Harvard Divinity School, and from 1872 to 1881 held the post of Professor of German to the University.

It was as a scholar and a writer that he became widely known, but one who knew him well has told us that the main region of his intellectual activity and spiritual joy was found in his work as a preacher of the Unitarian faith. Strength, sincerity, and a remarkable perfection of literary form characterized his pulpit efforts. “When he was at his best, his sentences and his paragraphs were like blocks in some imposing edifice,” said the Rev. Charles Carrol Everett, his successor at Bangor, who relates also that Hedge's hearers were wont

not to feel "the bareness of the Puritan service or the bareness of the walls of the New England meeting-house—did not miss robe or incense. The temple was there. It was reared by the power of an imagination, aglow with the power of religion, until it became a dwelling-place for the Holy Ghost." "It was," says another of his friends, "his passion for ideas that obliged him to demand for them the fairest temple he could build for them, with words chosen and fitted with the great builder's mastery and patient care."

We have seen with what delight Dr. Hedge, as a boy, read Virgil and Homer. Whilst a student at Harvard his great ambition was to be a poet, a fairly common ambition among the Divinity School men of that day, but the prevailing cast of his thought did not too easily lend itself to lyrical utterance. This is not to say that he had no gift for it at all. He can be eloquent and infuse into his verse something of the stately and moving rhetoric of his prose. He can be simple too. Literary artist that he was, his verse was little likely to be hopelessly mediocre, nor would it lack in perfection of form anything which patient care and strenuous effort could achieve.

His best-known hymn, written as early as 1829, is :—

Sovereign and transforming grace,
We invoke thy quickening power ;
Reign the spirit of this place,
Bless the purpose of this hour.

Holy and creative Light !
We invoke thy kindling ray ;
Dawn upon our spirit's night,
Turn our darkness into day.

To the anxious soul impart
Hope all other hopes above ;
Stir the dull and hardened heart
With a longing and a love.

This thy house, the house of prayer ;
This the day we hallow thine.
O let now thy grace appear,
Hallowing every place and time.

Work in all ; in all renew
Day by day the life divine ;
All our wills to thee subdue,
All our hearts to thee incline.

The verses as here given were considerably altered and revised ; in their original form they were part of a hymn of ten verses written for a friend's ordination service.

It may be noted that whereas Thomas Carlyle's translation of Luther's *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott* has held its own in most hymnals, Hedge's translation has long been adopted by Unitarian editors, and it has continued to have a place given to it. This old battle-song of the Reformation—*A mighty fortress is our God*—has lost something of its one-time popularity, and, despite such merits as it may possess, is not likely to regain the widespread favour it once enjoyed.

As a writer it was in his prose, and not in his

poems, that Frederic Henry Hedge gained the greatest distinction. We may surmise that his thought was, for the most part, too subtle, involved, and even complicated, to readily allow of its being cast into a form of utterance which demands flexibility and a fine blending of thought and emotion—the indispensable conditions for the production of hymns of highest worth. It is, however, necessary to remember that although he lived well-nigh to the close of the nineteenth century, he was some fifteen years earlier in time than the school of hymn-writers represented by Longfellow, Johnson, Higginson, and others; he is to be classed rather with the earlier group, amongst whom are to be found Henry Ware, Jun., Andrews Norton, and Stephen Greenleaf Bulfinch. This earlier group went very little of the way of emancipation from the influence of the correct but often stilted verse of the eighteenth century. That Dr. Hedge is, here, correctly assigned to the group to which he rightly belongs will be made manifest by a perusal of *Hymns for the Church of Christ* (1853), edited by him with the co-operation of the Rev. F. Dan Huntington (later Bishop Huntington).

His most important service to his countrymen was his work as a pioneer in introducing to them a knowledge of German poetry and metaphysics, a similar service to that of Thomas Carlyle in England. Whilst still in Bangor he completed his monumental work—*Prose Writers of Germany*—which contained translations from each author,

together with biographical and critical notes. *Reason and Religion* was published in 1865, *The Primeval World of Hebrew Tradition* in 1869, *Ways of the Spirit* in 1877, and *Atheism in Philosophy* in 1884.

V

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, M.D.,
LL.D., D.C.L.

1809-1894

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, born 29 August, 1809, lived through the greater part of the nineteenth century, which had little more than five years to run when he died, on 7 October, 1894. Of him there is ample record, and he who would may familiarize himself with the course of Dr. Holmes' life and the personal characteristics which endeared him to his fellow-men. We are not, however, left entirely dependent on his biographers. In the "Breakfast Table" series the man himself stands revealed. In these and other of the writings of Oliver Wendell Holmes we discover the texture of his thought and that rare humanity to which so many of his contemporaries bore witness, and which, more than aught else besides, gained for him the love of those with whom he was in any way associated.

Our concern here is not with the details of that long, though somewhat uneventful life. It is well, nevertheless, to remind ourselves that, though his fame rests on his writings, authorship

was not the work into which he poured the greater part of his energies, but rather the hobby which beguiled what with many another would have been unprofitable hours. As early as 1847 he had become the Parkman Professor of Anatomy and Physiology in the Medical School of Harvard University, and held that position for thirty-five years, only relinquishing it at the age of seventy-three.

For our particular purpose we have to turn to that which interested Dr. Holmes more than either medicine or literature. In the *Life and Letters*, by John T. Morse, Jun., there is the following statement: "Dr. Holmes loved medicine and found deep pleasure in literature, but more than either medicine or literature he was attracted by theology. His thought, his talk, his writing, in whatever direction it might set out, was sure to oscillate towards this polar topic. It was this which lent the dignity of a persistent and serious purpose to his work." We have his own confession that he began to speculate on the problems of existence at a very early age. His father was a Calvinistic minister, whose kindly nature, together with the influence of the "liberal" ways of thought amidst which he laboured, had done something towards humanizing his creed. He was content to leave it to his wife to hear the children recite the shorter *Westminster Catechism*, concerning which the son said: "I do not think we believed a word of it, or ever understood much

of its phraseology. . . . I was given to questionings, and my mind early revolted against the teachings of the Catechism and the books which followed out its dogmas." And yet when he was near three-score years and ten, he said to Harriet Beecher Stowe : " I do not believe that you or I can ever get the iron of Calvinism out of our souls," and at the age of eighty-two he wrote the hymn :—

Our Father ! while our hearts unlearn
The creeds that wrong thy name,
Still let our hallowed altars burn
With faith's undying flame !

Not by thy lightning gleams of wrath
Our souls thy face shall see,
The star of love must light the path
That leads to heaven and thee.

At no time during his life did Oliver Wendell Holmes build up for himself a four-square system of theology that should be equal to his every need. He has told us that the first two words of the Lord's Prayer covered everything, and how for the rest his beliefs were apt to change with his changing moods and the weight of newer thoughts pressing upon them.

To him peace of mind was but an indifferent prize. " Heaven," he said, " will not be the same to the saint who has slumbered on the pillow of tradition as to him who has kept his mind open to all truth." Yet how he valued such faith as was his ! During the Civil War he writes to his friend John Lothrop Motley, the historian : " *Faith*, faith is the only thing that keeps a man

up in times like these ; and those persons who, by temperament or under-feeding of the soul, are in a state of spiritual anæmia, are the persons I like least to meet, and try hard not to talk with." Dr. Holmes had a real distaste for those whom he described as having " the small end of their opera-glasses towards everything that looks encouraging."

He confessed that he hated the sight of certain people. But he was careful to add that he was much disposed to pity all such just because of the qualities which made them repugnant to him. " Except under immediate aggravation, I feel kindly enough to the worst of them. It is such a sad thing to be born a sneaking fellow, so much worse than to inherit a hump back or a couple of club feet, that I sometimes feel as if we ought to love the *crippled souls*, if I may use this expression, with a certain tenderness which we need not waste on noble natures."

Dr. Holmes liked cheerful people, as, indeed, do most of us. He tells us that he might have been a minister but for a certain clergyman, who not only talked, but looked " so like an undertaker." Although an old worn-out catechism was one of the books of his early years, he had also, as soon as he stepped outside the door, the influence of a Unitarian atmosphere—" the benignant smile of President Kirkland had so much more of heaven in it than the sour aspect of certain clergymen . . . that it went far towards making me a ' liberal ' thinker."

Throughout a long life Dr. Holmes never gave up the habit of attending divine service on the first day of the week. "There is," said he, "a little plant called *reverence* in the corner of my soul's garden, which I love to have watered about once a week." Of King's Chapel, the home of the first avowedly Unitarian congregation in Boston, he writes: "There on the fifteenth of June, 1840, I was married, there my children were all christened, from that church the dear companion of so many years was buried. In her seat I must sit, and through its door I hope to be carried to my resting-place." Six years after these words were written, his hope was fulfilled.

Writing to one of his correspondents in 1876, and speaking of hymns, Oliver Wendell Holmes said: "It would be one of the most agreeable reflections to me, if I could feel that I had left a few worthy to be remembered after me." And thus it was.

The best known of his hymns is probably:—

Lord of all being ! throned afar,
Thy glory flames from sun and star ;
Centre and soul of every sphere,
Yet to each loving heart how near !

Sun of our life ! Thy quickening ray
Sheds on our path the glow of day :
Star of our hope ! Thy softened light
Cheers the long watches of the night.

Our midnight is thy smile withdrawn ;
Our noontide is thy gracious dawn ;
Our rainbow arch thy mercy's sign ;
All, save the clouds of sin, are thine.

Lord of all life, below, above,
Whose light is truth, whose warmth is love,
Before thy ever-blazing throne
We ask no lustre of our own.

Grant us thy truth to make us free,
And kindling hearts that burn for thee,
Till all thy living altars claim
One holy light, one heavenly flame.

This hymn, now widely accepted, is to be found in the writings of Oliver Wendell Holmes at the end of the *Professor at the Breakfast-Table* ; it first appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* for December 1859. The previous issue of the *Monthly* contained the hymn *O love divine, that stoop'st to share*, which had been written as early as 1848. It gives utterance to aspects of the life of the spirit which now receive less emphasis than was the case two or three generations ago ; nevertheless, it will doubtless continue to have a limited vogue. W. Garrett Horder included it in his *Treasury of Hymns*, and it is still to be found in new compilations.

Lord of all being ! throned afar is, of the two hymns, the more felicitous in expression, the more captivating to the ear, and, as may be surmised, is likely to have a usage prolonged beyond that of any other of the same author's hymns. It does not suggest any particular appropriateness in that criticism of the hymns of Dr. Holmes which affirmed that what they lack in fervour they make up in poetry.

written more hymns than he actually did, had he not been so mightily preoccupied with other matters.

But the barest indications of his widespread activities can here be given, and no more than a very inadequate impression of the man. Theodore Parker was born at Lexington, Mass., on 24 August, 1810. He died in Florence, 10 May, 1860, without completing his fiftieth year. Let us try to visualize the man as he was during the last few years of his life. He is of medium height; in his physique there is nothing to attract attention, and the face is striking rather than handsome; the head is bald, but already there is a beard, snowy white. There is a set to the mouth indicative of the man who does not vacillate, but knowing what he would do, does it. The eyes are clear and penetrating. But there is no hardness in this countenance, or such as there may be is offset by the marks of a rare sensitiveness. Something of the rustic habit, so it is said, clung to him through life; hence something of shyness and self-consciousness if merged in a crowd of New England aristocrats.

As a youth he was a voracious reader, and had the advantage of an extraordinarily retentive memory. Entering the Harvard Divinity School in 1834, he was somewhat isolated from the other students by his intense preoccupation with his books. Whatever he did, he did with all his might, and this excessive devotion to books was

VI

THEODORE PARKER

1810-1860

OUR interest in a hymn-writer is not measured by profusion of output. A single hymn may create a widespread interest in its author, whilst fifty by a less successful writer gain for him no honoured place in the annals of hymnody. Theodore Parker was not a hymn-writer in the same sense as were, for example, Longfellow, Hosmer, and Tarrant, each one of whom practised the art of hymn-writing over a long period of years and with conspicuous success.

Parker's place would seem to be much more with the pamphleteers; he was one who spoke with extraordinary energy and great potency to his own age. The aggregate of his published writings came to be formidable indeed; nevertheless, to-day he is read but little, if at all. It is the few words of one hymn that will do most to provoke inquiry about a great apostle of faith and of social righteousness. And he was a great hymn-lover. "He enjoyed classical music, but not so much, in all sincerity, as his favourite hymns." Probably he would himself have

a life-long characteristic. When, in 1847, he removed to Boston, "the whole of the fourth floor was given up to them, and from thence the inundation poured downstairs, filling the bathroom on the way, pausing reluctant only at the kitchen door." Omniscience, says one of his biographers, was for Parker the most enviable of the attributes of God. Thus, by over-statement, was indicated his passion for information of almost any kind whatsoever. Eventually he had "some twenty languages and dialects well in hand."

In the year 1837 he was ordained minister of a congregation at West Roxbury, Mass., thus forming a connection which was not finally broken until nine years later. Here he performed arduously his pastoral duties and continued his reading with unabated energy; and all the time there was being created a growing divergence between his own thought concerning Christianity and that which characterized the Boston Unitarians of the first half of the nineteenth century. So when, in 1841, he preached in Boston one of his most notable sermons, *The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity*, it was taken as a direct attack on a supernatural Christianity, the miraculous attestation being vigorously denied, and affirmed unnecessary. The publication, in the following year, of a series of lectures entitled *A Discourse of Matters pertaining to Religion* revealed still further Parker's divergence from the conservative Unitarians amongst whom his lot was cast. The

Boston ministers, almost without exception, excluded him from their pulpits and from the fellowship that pulpit exchange implied. It may be well here to point out that this was, in reality, the action of what has been called "a local clique." Theodore Parker did not sever his connection with the Unitarian movement, nor break many of the links which bound him to it. He was a life member of the American Unitarian Association, not disdaining at times to be present at its meetings; also, he attended the annual meetings of the Berry Street Conference—an exclusively ministerial body. So far as that could be, Unitarians of a later day did more than make amends for the animus and the hostility to which Parker was so sensitive by republishing and distributing far and wide the very writings so severely censured on their first appearance. Fortunately, there were from the first words of appreciation mingled with the gall of unfriendly criticism.

James Martineau concluded a critical notice of the *Discourse* with these words: "We part with Theodore Parker in hope to meet again. He has, we are persuaded, a task, severe perhaps, but assuredly noble, to achieve in this world. The work we have reviewed is the confession, at the threshold of a high career, of a great reforming soul, that has thus cleared itself of hindrance, and girded up itself for a faithful future." Thus, in 1846, did Martineau foresee that which should be. But already he had seen his man, for Parker on a

European voyage had, in 1844, sought out Martineau and preached for him in Liverpool at the very time the Boston ministers rejected him.

Throughout his life Parker continued to be the great and oft-times pungent controversialist, but he was more than that. "It was as a preacher of righteousness that he had the strength of ten." And ever there were those who heard him gladly. For the six years immediately prior to his last illness and death he occupied, Sunday by Sunday, the platform in the Boston Music Hall. His usual congregation numbered not less than fifteen hundred, whilst at times the seating accommodation for three thousand did not suffice for those who wanted to hear him. For the great majority it was the sermon that mattered most, but we note that Parker's reading of the hymns was the significant event for some, and there were those who would have been content to go away after the prayer, "feeling themselves filled and overflowed with the brave, kindly spirit of the man and his serene and joyful trust in God." And we may believe that, in his sermons, the most telling thing upon his audience was not his argument, good as that might be, nor yet the overflow from his well-stored mind, but the impact of his own tremendous faith—the confidence and the assurance that were his. "Higher than the controversialist reached up the scholar and the critic; higher still the philosopher and theologian; far above these went up the preacher, the prophet, the

believing soul, eager to share his joy with all his kind." And if religion was his joy, preaching was his delight. Yet from his pulpit every question of the day that could be connected with the conscience of the people received attention. "No important law could be enacted, no public man could die, no right of any body be threatened or invaded, no movement be made significant of the stirring of the heart of the nation towards good or towards evil," without Parker "opening upon it a mighty flood of information, instruction, warning, denunciation and judgment."

Theodore Parker's intimate connection with the anti-slavery movement makes a grand and an inspiring story, but one that cannot here be told. The whole man was in it. The passing of the Fugitive Slave Law roused him as had nothing before, and he has been described as "minister at large" to all the fugitive slaves in the city of Boston; nor was he afraid to give such fugitives covert in his own house. And when there was money to be raised, his habit was to set the pace himself. Indeed, it has been said that "the whole course of the struggle could be recovered from his sermons and letters if all the other records of it should be lost." Characteristically, Parker did not wait until what he had to say would be received with acclamation, but thundered it forth when it meant obloquy and abuse.

But all the time there is no abatement of his work as an apostle of faith. There is still an

abundance of preaching that is "moral and religious in a simple, homely way, with much of picture and parable." But meanwhile his vigorous and potent life was hastening to its end. Early in 1858 he wrote: "I have less than half my old joyous power of work. . . . I am forty-seven by the reckoning of my mother: seventy-four in my own (internal) account. I am an *old man*." On the first Sunday of the following year his last sermon was preached; the search for renewed health gave no permanent benefit. He died in Florence on 10 May, 1860, his fiftieth birthday still some three months ahead.

Theodore Parker, wisely, did not consider himself a poet. Nevertheless, his ever-active mind found pleasurable recreation in writing occasional verse, the satisfaction to be derived therefrom having no necessary relation to ability. We must not, however, suppose that his poems are mean and insignificant; he gained something of the practised hand by translating German mystic hymns into English—and even some of Heine's songs. For his own writings the sonnet form proved attractive to him, however arbitrary he might be in its use. The hymn which still perpetuates his name is, with some modifications and the discarding of the last two lines, one of three sonnets printed in 1846 in the *Liberty Bell*:

O thou great Friend to all the sons of men,
Who once appeared in humblest guise below,
Sin to rebuke and break the captive's chain,
To call thy brethren forth from want and woe!

We look to thee; thy truth is still the light
Which guides the nations—groping on their way,
Stumbling and falling in disastrous night,
Yet hoping ever for the perfect day.

Yes! Thou art still the Life; thou art the Way
The holiest know;—Light, Life, and Way of Heaven!
And they who dearest hope, and deepest pray,
Toil by the light, life, way, which thou hast given.

Here is manifest that reverence for the person of Jesus of Nazareth in which Theodore Parker never wavered. Miracles might be discarded and considered no essential support of Christianity, supernatural authority might be denied and deemed unnecessary, but ever this profound regard for "the greatest of the sons of men." Substantially he remained true to his own utterance in 1841 in the sermon *The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity*: "That pure ideal religion which Jesus saw on the mount of vision, and lived out in the lowly life of a Galilean peasant; which transforms his cross into an emblem of all that is holiest on earth; which makes sacred the ground he trod, and is dearest to the best of men, most true to what is truest in them—cannot pass away. Let men improve never so far in civilization, or soar never so high on the wings of religion and love, they can never outgo the flight of truth and Christianity. It will always be above them. It is as if we were to fly towards a star, which becomes larger and more bright the nearer we approach, till we enter and are absorbed in its glory."

his graduation he preached for about a year in the West, mostly in Toledo, Ohio. On 20 February, 1839, he was ordained to the ministry as pastor of the Unitarian Church in Wayland, Mass.

VII

EDMUND HAMILTON SEARS

1810-1876

THE name of the Rev. Edmund Hamilton Sears is remembered, not as that of a Unitarian country minister, but as the author of two hymns which have gained almost a world-wide appreciation and, as if by inevitable right, have taken their place in the hymn-books of all denominations of the Christian Church. A direct descendant from Richard Sears, one of John Robinson's congregation who landed in Plymouth, Mass., in 1630, Edmund Hamilton was born on 6 April, 1810, at Sandisfield, Mass., in which town he had his earliest schooling; subsequently he spent nine months in the Westfield Academy, at that time in charge of Emerson Davis. On reaching the age of twenty-one he entered Union College, Schenectady, and graduated three years later, in 1834. He then went into the office of Thomas Twining, a Sandisfield lawyer, but within a few months he was teaching in an academy in Brattleboro', Vt., and studying divinity with the Rev. Addison Brown of that place. A year later he entered the Cambridge Divinity School. After

“When we left the school [said Mr. Sears, many years afterwards] some of my classmates sought metropolitan positions; and their names have become somewhat celebrated. I had no other ambition than to lead such a quiet pastorate as Goldsmith describes in the ‘Deserted Village.’”

Less than two years after his settlement at Wayland he entered on his six years' ministry in the still attractive and beautiful little town of Lancaster, Mass., where he so severely overtaxed his strength that, at last, his physician ordered absolute quiet and seclusion. A small farm, near to Wayland, was bought, and there the enfeebled pastor slowly, but very slowly, regained his strength. In 1848 he once again took charge of the Wayland pulpit, and remained with this, his first, congregation for nearly sixteen years, when he removed to the neighbouring village of Weston, ministering to the Unitarian congregation there for the remaining ten years of his life. He died on 16 January, 1876.

The hymn *Calm, on the listening ear of night*, was written when its author was but twenty-four years of age, in the year that he graduated from the Union College, Schenectady. It is but one of the instances of hymns by Unitarian writers, pro-

duced in early manhood, which have stood the test of time and hold an honoured place in our hymnals. Chadwick's *Eternal Ruler of the ceaseless round*, and Frothingham's *Thou Lord of Hosts, whose guiding hand*, are other notable examples.

Edmund Sears has told us that amongst his earliest recollections are those of his father reading or rather *chanting* poetry, "for he never read without a sort of sing-song tone. . . . Almost the first emotion of the sublime that was awakened within me came from hearing him read one of Watts' Psalms—the nineteenth—declaring it equal to Homer." The works of Pope, brought home from the public library, completely bewitched the young boy. "I became so familiar with his Homer that I could repeat nearly whole books from beginning to end." A further confession is equally interesting.

"I do not know that I ever read or heard anything which excited high admiration, without asking myself whether I could beat it. It is not strange, then, that I soon began to produce lyrics and epics without number. I wrote whole books of rhymes; and, when at work, some poem was always singing through my brain. I wrote a poem on the seasons, in four parts,—a long epic, and took deadly vengeance upon the tithing man for looking sour at us in church by lampooning him."

In New England the tithing man is remembered as a kind of Sunday constable whose special duty

it was, in the old parish meeting-houses, to quiet the restlessness of youth and to disturb the slumbers of the aged. Many are the tales of these vigilant watchmen of the congregations, who saw to it that all persons, except themselves, were attentive, and who occasionally broke the peace by sharply rapping out with a tune-book and pointing at some whispering boy, or else by patrolling the aisles to arouse sleeping saints by means of their black poles, tipped at one end with brass.

To his early rhyming propensity Sears attributed, in large measure, such command of the English language as he was able to attain to, and tells us that he was "mastering the English tongue and making it flexible as a medium of thought, without any unpleasant associations of lessons and pedagogues." That his endeavours were not in vain is abundantly manifest not only in his hymns, but also in his prose works. His was, indeed, a practised hand, whether in prose or rhyme.

"I actually fell to sermonizing [he tells us] when not more than twelve years old, and among others wrote a discourse in full from Luke xvi. 25, which I delivered to a full assembly of alder-bushes, but which no one else ever heard. I carefully hid all my manuscripts from all the family; for I knew I should meet with ridicule, to which I was keenly alive. I had deposited a pile of half-written sermons in a dark nook over my bed-chamber, and had the mortification to wake up

one night, and hear the rats drag them all off together."

Throughout his life there seems to have been ever with him the need for self-expression, and as year was added to year, Edmund Sears, by his sermons, his magazine articles, his books, and his poems, told to his hearers and his readers the things that lay nearest to his heart. From the first his utterance was that of a man who had in him something of prophetic vision.

"It was plain from the very start [said one who had known him in the Divinity School] that here was a man in love with the thing itself and not with the name of it; who devoted himself to religion for its own sake, and not as an occupation or as the means to livelihood; who desired the knowledge of God and the communion of Christ for himself, and not merely to lead others into them, but who would lead others only the more surely because his heart was alive and on fire with his own faith in them."

He first came to be widely known by an able and suggestive treatise entitled *Regeneration*, which was written at the request of the American Unitarian Association, and published in 1854. *Pictures of the Olden Time* followed in 1857; although "neither romance nor pure history," it was written "in strict subservience to historical truth," and its author was elected a member of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Mr. Sears' next book was *Athanasia, or Foregleams of Immor-*

tality, published in 1858, and an enlarged edition of it in 1872, with the title *Foregleams and Fore-shadows of Immortality*. Of the earlier edition Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote:

"Few books have pleased me so much as *Foregleams of Immortality*. It is full of beauty and truth. The writer is wise from Swedenborg, and has his own gifts besides. I can scarcely conceive of his writings not impressing many, and deeply. I have lent the book and recommended it in England, where the husks of the old theology interfere much with development and growth. Certainly it is a most beautiful and pungent book."

Late in life Dr. Sears stated what he believed to be the highest function of a hymn. "In our church service the sermon consummates in the hymn, or sacred song, which makes the heart lyrical with the truth it sets forth. . . . The song, or hymn, should be a summing up of the sermon, helping us to take home its truth, and so carry it with us to fill our daily life with its melodies."

Calm, on the listening ear of night, was published in its original form in the *Boston Observer* in 1834, and in an amended form in 1837 in the *Monthly Magazine*. It is to be found in its entirety in Putnam's *Songs of the Liberal Faith*, where it is given in eight-line stanzas, of which there are five. In most hymnals the last two are omitted. Oliver Wendell Holmes regarded this hymn as "one of the finest and most beautiful

ever written." In *Sermons and Songs of the Christian Life*, published by Dr. Sears in 1875, it immediately follows a Christmas Eve sermon entitled *One Mediator*.

It came upon the midnight clear, follows a sermon preached on All Saints' Day, and entitled *The Cloud of Witnesses*. This hymn is, in our judgment, the better of the two, and that by which the name of Edmund Sears will be most gratefully remembered. It was written in 1849, and shortly afterwards appeared in print in *The Christian Register*. Because of limits of space only, we forbear to quote more than three of the five verses, which every Christmas are sung by many thousands of worshippers in all parts of the world.

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold :
"Peace on the earth, good-will to men,
From heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled ;
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world ;
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

But with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long ;
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong ;

And man, at war with man, hears not
The love song which they bring—
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing !

From 1859 to 1870 Mr. Sears (he received his D.D. from his *alma mater* in 1871) was associated with the Rev. Rufus Ellis in the editorial care of the *Monthly Religious Magazine*, a periodical in which most of his hymns and poems were first printed. It was after appearing in successive issues of the *Magazine* that his book *The Fourth Gospel the Heart of Christ* was published in 1872. It was the ripe fruit of Dr. Sears' maturest thought, and its preparation, extending over a period of ten years, was to him but a labour of love. The author brought to it an unstinted reverence for the person of Christ, and a heart that was not only touched, but consciously thrilled by the Johannine writings. For modern readers the book is marred by the argumentation of a bygone day ; its exegesis is based on critical apparatus now either discarded or so supplemented as to have rendered untenable many positions that, fifty years ago, were common enough amongst Unitarians of the more conservative type. Its appeal for those of Dr. Sears' own day and generation is indicated in the words of Dr. A. P. Peabody : " I hesitate not to term it the most precious contribution of our time to Christian literature ; and that equally for its ability, its learning, and its wealth of devotional sentiment."

Edmund Sears would readily have testified that his life's work would not have been possible but for "the beauty and strength of woman's devotion." In November 1837 he had married Ellen Bacon, of Barnstable, Mass., and she it was who ever shielded him from unnecessary cares. "The details of the parish work and life were better known to her than to him. When he wanted time for rest, for study, for writing, he was protected from all disturbing influences. When he needed a reader, an amanuensis, or copyist, she was always at hand. When any parish duty summoned him, she was never unprepared to accompany him without delay. And through the recurring seasons of his weakness, illness, or depression, her watchful care and tender ministrations never failed him by night or day." Fifteen months of ill-health followed on a fall in the autumn of 1874, and on 16 January, 1876, Edmund Sears died. His wife survived until 24 April, 1897. Her old age was serene and beautiful.

VIII

WILLIAM GASKELL

1805-1884

THE subject of this brief notice was the son of William Gaskell, a manufacturer of sail-canvas, and was born on 24 July, 1805, at Latchford, near Warrington. He was educated at Glasgow University, where he took his M.A. degree in 1824, and thereafter at Manchester College, York. In the year 1828 he was appointed assistant minister to the Rev. J. G. Robberds at Cross Street Chapel, Manchester, with whom he continued to be associated for twenty-six years; on the death of Mr. Robberds he became the senior minister, and held that position for thirty years, thus completing more than half a century with his first and only congregation.

This period (1828-1884) corresponded with an era during which there was an increasing support given to both churches and Sunday Schools, William Gaskell finishing his work at what might be called the very heyday of religious observance in this country. Cross Street Chapel, one of the finest of our old meeting-houses, will seat some twelve hundred people. The congregation as it

was in Mr. Gaskell's time has been described as "very large and aristocratic." In 1859 "the society was in a state of great prosperity; there was scarcely a sitting to be let, and the services were attended by ardent worshippers." And in the fifty-first year of Gaskell's ministry it could be said that at no time had he preached with more vigour and effect, nor had his ministrations ever been more acceptable to the people. He received continuous invitations to preach at Anniversary Services and on special occasions of one kind and another, becoming a "minister-at-large" for the counties of Lancashire and Cheshire. On three occasions, in 1844, 1862, and 1875, he was called upon to preach the Annual Sermon of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. "No preacher amongst us," says a contemporary estimate, "was more popular or more sought after. A master of pure and classical English, he knew the power of unadorned simplicity in style, and while he never tried to shine with rhetorical declamation, he always impressed his hearers with a dignity worthy of his theme, and, warmed at times into true poetical expression, reaching a high class of homiletical eloquence."

Gaskell's other services to the group of churches to which he belonged cannot here be spoken of adequately. He was appointed the first chairman of the Manchester District Unitarian Association (1859), and continued as such for more than twenty years. For a like period of years he was

the President of the Provincial Assembly of Presbyterian and Unitarian Ministers and Congregations of Lancashire and Cheshire. One of the founders of the Manchester Domestic Mission, its first secretary, then chairman of its Committee, a generous contributor to its funds, he had a first place among its zealous supporters, being assured of "how completely the Unitarian faith is fitted to meet the difficulties and satisfy the wants of what were then called the working classes."

From 1858 to 1867 he lectured on English Literature to what was, at first, the working-men's college, but in 1862 was amalgamated with the evening classes at Owen's College. For some forty years he was closely associated with the work of training students for the ministry, being one of the founders of the Unitarian Home Missionary Board, which has since developed into what is now known as the Unitarian College, Manchester. For many years he was its Literary Tutor, and gave instruction in New Testament Greek, and in 1874 was appointed the Principal. He had, also, a long association with Manchester New College as, successively, its Secretary, one of its lecturers, and its Chairman of Committee.

In Manchester he gained "a position quite by itself, which can never be attained again till equal gifts exercised with like faithfulness, for more than half a century, shall again be consecrated to the public good." William Gaskell was the zealous promoter of education and learning. He

took an active part in founding the Sanitary Association, and we find record of him on such committees as were for "the better regulation of beerhouses and places of public amusement" or "to prepare the town for the next visit of the cholera." If he was a fine preacher, he was a fine citizen too.

Apparently, his work as a hymn-writer was largely the result of a particular demand made upon him, rather than the outcome of his being possessed of any considerable fountain of spiritual song. The Rev. J. R. Beard, for his *Collection of Hymns* (1837), required as many serviceable hymns by Unitarian writers as he could command, and doubtless it was to no little extent at his urge that Gaskell set to work and contributed to that collection no less than seventy-nine hymns out of a total of five hundred and sixty. During the remaining forty-seven years of his life he does not appear to have written more than half a dozen that appeared in print.

His hymns are limited in their range, but a number of them are characterized by a real adequacy for their purpose and by a directness of practical implication. Gaskell had the homiletical ideal; many of his hymns strike one as pious exhortations, as do many others of the same period. Fervour is restrained; he takes no empyrean flights. His inspiration is very nearly all on a level, though, for that, none the less real. The hymns manifest the even temper of a con-

secrated and steady purpose; high emotional stress is not there. For the most part, they are characterized by a calm sobriety, a sometimes beautiful simplicity, and the piety that companies with a sweet reasonableness.

The following is a good example:—

Not on this day, O God, alone,
Would we thy presence seek,
But fain its hallowing power would own
Through all the coming week.

If calm and bright its moments prove,
Untouched by pain or woe,
May they reflect a thankful love
To thee, from whom they flow.

Or should they bring us griefs severe,
Still may we lean on thee,
And, though our eyes let fall the tear,
At peace our spirits be.

In every scene, or dark, or bright,
Thy favour may we seek;
And O do thou direct us right
Through all the coming week!

Among other of Gaskell's hymns which have stood the test of time are *Forth went the heralds of the cross*, *Though lowly here our lot may be*, and *Calmly, calmly, lay him down*, a funeral hymn.

In 1832 William Gaskell had married Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson. It was a happy union, for in them were identity of aim and aspiration and a great similarity in their tastes. In *Blackwood's Magazine* (January 1837) there appeared a poem entitled *Sketches among the Poor*, No. 1. It was the joint work of husband and wife, but no further

instalment ever appeared. Writing at a later date, Mrs. Gaskell said, in reference to it: "We once thought of *trying* to write sketches among the poor, rather in the manner of Crabbe (now don't think this presumptuous), but in a more seeing-beauty spirit. . . . But I suppose we spoke our plan near a dog-rose, for it never went any further." They were both admirers of Crabbe's works, and had their own very near experience of tragedy among the poor of Manchester. In 1838 Mr. Gaskell prepared his lectures on *The Poets and Poetry of Humble Life*; "even amongst the poorest of the weavers in one of the most poverty-stricken districts of Manchester, Miles Platting," the delivery of these lectures proved very popular.

A further series on the Lancashire dialect was appended to the fifth edition of his wife's first novel, *Mary Barton*, originally published, in 1848, under a pseudonym. The desire to write such a book had come to Mrs. Gaskell when visiting a labourer's cottage. It was a story of poverty as she herself had seen it, and was written out of knowledge and sympathy. Immediately the book was published, its author distributed copies not only amongst her own family, but also to all the girls in her own Sunday School class. Mr. Gaskell, with his ability to picture forth the virtues of the poor in simple verse, had supplied a number of the quotations which appeared as chapter headings. "His knowledge of the Lancashire dialect and the accurate information he

possessed on the subject of his wife's story, together with his keen interest, were of immense value, as he was able to act not only as censor, but also as adviser."

In 1853 Mrs. Gaskell published *Ruth*, a story in which may be found a faithful description of the old Brook Street Chapel at Knutsford. The chapter entitled "The Dissenting Minister's Household" is said to have been inspired by the home of the Rev. William Turner, the Unitarian minister at Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Meanwhile the sketches which appeared as *Cranford* had been separately published in *Household Words* from December 1851 to May 1853.

It is remarkable to read that Mrs. Gaskell's books were written only "when all possible domestic and social claims had been satisfied." In her husband she found a wise and able critic, in whom she placed complete reliance. If Charles Dickens wished to enliven with purple patches work that had passed Mr. Gaskell's critical examination, he was met with nothing but firm resistance. Whenever he visited Manchester, Dickens called at the Gaskells' home in Plymouth Grove, and knew that he would be a welcome guest. Indeed, Plymouth Grove became the frequent resort of those who were or became celebrated in the world of letters. Charlotte Brontë stayed there on three occasions, and before her marriage to the Rev. A. B. Nicholls expressed the wish that he might meet Mr.

Gaskell in order that he (her future husband) should have a broader view "of other sects and their beliefs." Mrs. Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë* is one of the best known of English biographies.

His wife's work and her growing fame must, in one way and another, have been the cause of a not inconsiderable encroachment upon the time and the energies of the Rev. William Gaskell, but it is not apparent that there was any diminution of his own particular labours, the extent of which has already been indicated. Mrs. Gaskell died in 1865, and for nearly a score more years her husband sustained his ministry at Cross Street Chapel, together with his other varied and extensive work for the advancement of the Unitarian faith, of which he had been and was so worthy an exponent. He died on 11 June, 1884, and was buried in the old burial-ground at the foot of Adam's Hill, Knutsford, by the side of his wife, whose story of *Sylvia's Lovers* was dedicated "to my dear husband, by her who best knows his value."

By others that worth was widely, if not so intimately known, and there would be general endorsement of the words of an old Manchester Unitarian: "Nothing but good was ever known of William Gaskell; he was a man after God's own heart—modest, cultured, and religious in the truest sense of the word; he lived a life which shed its radiance on those who were privileged to know him, and he went about doing good."

IX

THOMAS HINCKS, F.R.S.

1818-1899

THE three hymns by which the name of Thomas Hincks is best known are written for evening service. They are—*Lord, in this holy hour of even: Hark, the evening call to prayer!* and:—

Heavenly Father, by whose care
Comes again this hour of prayer,
In the evening stillness we
Grateful raise our hearts to thee:
To our spirits as we bend,
Peace and holy comfort send.

Gladly we thy presence seek:
Father, to our spirits speak;
Call us from the world away;
Still our passions' reckless play;
On our inner darkness shine;
Bend our wayward will to thine.

In this quiet eventide,
May we all with thee abide,
Own thy presence, feel thy power,
Through this consecrated hour,
And from peaceful vesper-prayer
Purer, stronger spirits bear.

That is a beautiful hymn, and *Hark, the evening call to prayer!* is comparable to it. Pondering

over them both, we may confess some surprise on learning that Thomas Hincks wrote also a book on *British Hydroid Zoophytes* (1868), another on *British Marine Polyzoa* (1880), and frequently contributed to the *Transactions* of various learned societies. And many years after the hymns were written he was, in 1872, elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

He was the son of a Unitarian minister, who was the first editor of the *Inquirer*, had a genius for journalism, was proficient in science and philosophy, becoming eventually a Professor of Natural History, first at Cork and later at Toronto. This was the Rev. William Hincks, F.S.L. His son Thomas was born at Exeter, 15 July, 1818, when his father was minister at George's Meeting in that city. It is interesting to note that not only was the father interested in scientific pursuits, but so also were the paternal grandparents. Thomas Dix Hincks (1767-1818) delivered lectures on Experimental Philosophy, and was Corresponding Secretary of the Royal Belfast Botanical Society. His wife, who was an excellent botanist, formed a Herbarium, which in 1815 she presented to the Royal Cork Institution.

After some years at the Belfast Academical Institution, Thomas Hincks entered Manchester College (at York), in 1833, as a lay student, but finally went through the whole theological course. So, following in his father's footsteps, he became a Unitarian minister, and held pastorates succes-

sively at Cork, Dublin, Warrington, Exeter, Sheffield (Upper Chapel), and Leeds (Mill Hill), over a period of thirty years. "All his friends," said an old member of the Mill Hill congregation, "can bear witness to his gentle courtesy and dignity befitting a Christian gentleman and scholar; to him was ever present the sacredness of his calling. Some can recall the pure melodious voice, others admired the intellectual noble head, the serenity of the beautiful face, which to them was Christ-like in expression. Many were impressed by his calm, persuasive, but eloquent spirituality, by his devotion to God, his uncompromising allegiance to the right, fearing not the opinion of men, but gaining their fealty; his strong attachment to the cause of Unitarian Christianity, although claiming perfect freedom for himself and for others."

The same witness writes of those who looked back to the ministry of Thomas Hincks "as the source whence arose their deepest religious feelings, convictions, and aspirations. He was not only their esteemed minister, their beloved friend, but they regarded him in the light of a spiritual father, and looked upon him with reverence as a true 'divine,' and to them the remembrance of his inspiring words will be a life-long holy influence." There was remembered, also, "his kindly interest in the children of the congregation, gathering them together at the close of the morning service to listen to his simple teachings on the

life of Christ, or preparing an elder class for a touching and beautiful monthly Communion Service." In the little book of *Vespers* which he edited for the Mill Hill congregation, he included his three hymns to which reference has already been made and also his Communion hymn :—

To the Cross, O Lord, we bear
All the spirit's darker care.

Between the years 1857 and 1883, Thomas Hincks contributed no fewer than forty-eight original memoirs to scientific literature. His own work as a scientist had always been considered (vide *The Times*) "remarkable for its accuracy and for the sound judgment he displayed as an observer." Mention was made, also, of "his wide reputation as an authority of great weight in several departments of marine zoology."

He was, nevertheless, accounted "a laborious and devoted pastor," and the Unitarian Church at Hunslet is a memorial to his zeal and enthusiasm for the religious movement to which he belonged. When, after his retirement, he removed to Clifton, he identified himself with the work of the Lewin's Mead Mission, acting as honorary secretary from 1886 to 1889, "with efficiency and with ripened wisdom."

Owing to the failure of his voice, he had to relinquish pastoral work in 1869, in his fifty-first year. This was a cause for regret both to himself and to his hearers. "A man of God, earnest,

pious, devoted, resigned when the dark cloud overshadowed him in mid-life, and the work he loved was taken from his hands."

His hymns, written very much earlier, were but few, yet are notable and worthy of attention. Probably they all belong to the eighteen-forties or thereabouts, and were the work of a young man not yet thirty years of age. After his resignation of the Mill Hill pulpit, Thomas Hincks lived to a ripe old age, dying on 25 January, 1899, in his eighty-first year. Already sixty years of age when he published his monograph on *British Marine Polyzoa*, he continued actively engaged in his scientific work until near the close of his life.

X

JAMES MARTINEAU, D.D., LL.D.,
D.C.L., D.LITT.

1805-1900

WHEN, on 11 January, 1900, James Martineau died, the Unitarian movement was bereft of one whose influence upon it has not been, nor is likely to be, paralleled, whether in respect of its long duration, its power, or its range. That influence, indeed, extended far beyond the confines of any particular Church or any one section of Christendom. It may be doubted whether in the ranks of Nonconformity there has ever been a more profound thinker, a more subtle dialectician. "He climbed the heights of speculative thought; he walked secure where others trod with faltering step." Speaking of him, the late Dr. John Clifford could testify to his own gratitude "for the incomparable service rendered to Christianity and the cause of religion by one of the greatest men of the century. . . . He has passed into the Unseen; but his work will be endlessly reproductive."

No attempt can be made here to outline the course of James Martineau's life. He died in

his ninety-fifth year, and his unabated vigour was sufficiently prolonged to make the record both long and full. It may perhaps be admirably summarized in his own words: "On looking back over the remembered work of fourscore years, I find it all summed up in the simplest of arts—the unreserved expression of whatever took hold of me as most true and good."

Confronted by such works as *The Study of Religion*, *Types of Ethical Theory*, and other of his writings, and remembering the range of his scholarly achievements and the length of his association with Manchester College, first as Professor and then as Principal, we find it remarkable that Martineau's work in connection with the group of churches to which he belonged should have been so considerable and had so wide a range. For anything that touched their welfare he had ever the liveliest concern. He was the true ecclesiastic in his clear apprehension of the far-reaching importance of matters of Church polity; his interest in the work of the Domestic Missions and the Sunday Schools was notable. Whilst sharing the pastorate of the Little Portland Street Chapel, London, he undertook the superintending of the afternoon Sunday School. The whole order of the school revolved round him; "he was the pulse of the machine," and we may learn how he spent many precious hours "in correcting registers, checking marks, and arranging for the supply of teachers." The

details, the so-called small matters, which are inevitable in any work, were by James Martineau never disdained or neglected.

His efforts as a hymn-writer would not, perhaps, justify an account of him here to the exclusion of another, were it not for the fact that he, more than any other, influenced, through a long period of years, the congregational singing of the churches associated with the Unitarian movement. So widespread did the use of his hymnals become, and so prolonged was the impact of their hymnody upon the minds of worshippers, that there is little danger of over-emphasizing the way in which Martineau's characteristic selections helped to preserve or modify forms of faith, and to foster certain feelings in religious worship rather than others. Nor was this the only source of his influence. Having already given considerable thought to the theory of congregational devotion, Martineau was keenly interested in a series of services contemplated, and in course of preparation, by Dr. Sadler. They were published in 1862, under the title *Common Prayer for Christian Worship*, and included two, the ninth and the tenth, by Martineau himself. "By nothing perhaps did he render more potent aid to the devotional culture of his household of faith. . . . Their central canticles rested on a profound sense of the order and progress of Divine Revelation in human history and life. Voices of the Old Testament and of the New

blend in the praise of 'the only Holy, the First and the Last.' A rich glow of hallowed gladness shines in these songs; the *Endeavours* are never wholly free from the secret consciousness of failure; in *Hours of Thought* the intellect is sometimes laboriously occupied; but a generation of worshippers who have breathed out their spirit in these psalms have found them grow into permanent symbols of spiritual joy." Such was Estlin Carpenter's estimate of their worth. In 1879, with the consent of Dr. Sadler, Martineau revised the whole of these services, and they reappeared under the title *Ten Services of Public Prayer*.

Of the volumes of sermons mentioned above, *Endeavours after the Christian Life* were issued in two volumes (1843 and 1847), as also were the *Hours of Thought on Sacred Things* (1876 and 1879). The earlier set would appear to have gained and retained the greater number of readers, though there could never be a very wide public for either. Fine as the utterance is, it is not the idiom of the people. Austerity mingles with the rapture, the sovereignty of duty pervades, and sometimes disturbs, the mystic vision. Speaking of Martineau's style as revealed in his sermons, the *Spectator*, at the time of his death, said: "Its severity and restraint perchance repel some. But he who thinks that the note of distinction is the finest element in prose literature, will then admit that while Ruskin or Arnold may give greater

and more varied delight, we should lose one of the finest and purest products of our time had we not the dignified prose writings of James Martineau." In the preface to the second volume of the *Endeavours* he had himself said : " Preaching is essentially a lyric expression of the soul, an utterance of meditation in sorrow, hope, love, and joy, from a representative of the human heart in its divine relations." Naturally, perhaps, he condemns extemporaneous preaching, which " is as little likely to produce a genuine sermon as the practice of improvising to produce a great poem." And for Martineau that was, doubtless, altogether true.

Certainly, his own hymns show no signs of being improvisations ; though not laboured, they suggest careful workmanship. Of the few that he wrote the most distinctive is :—

" Where is your God ? " they say :
 Answer them, Lord most holy !
 Reveal thy secret way
 Of visiting the lowly :
 Not wrapped in moving cloud
 Or nightly resting fire ;
 But veiled within the shroud
 Of silent, high desire.

Come not in flashing storm,
 Or bursting frown of thunder ;
 Come in the viewless form
 Of wakening love and wonder ;—
 Of duty grown divine,
 The restless spirit still ;
 Of sorrows taught to shine,
 As shadows of thy will.

O God, the pure alone,—
 E'en in their deep confessing,—
 Can see thee as their own,
 And find the perfect blessing ;
 Yet to each waiting soul
 Speak in thy still, small voice,
 Till broken love's made whole,
 And saddened hearts rejoice.

Apparently this hymn was written whilst Martineau was compiling *Hymns of Praise and Prayer*, for in that collection it is dated 1873. In 1840 he had published *Hymns for the Christian Church and Home*, and the only other known hymns by him appeared in that volume, and are given that date ; they are *Thy way is in the deep, O Lord !* and *A voice upon the midnight air*. All three hymns appeared anonymously in *Hymns of Praise and Prayer*, though their writer was made known in the first and the " revised " editions of the *Essex Hall Hymnal* (1890 and 1902).

It would appear, then, that only at two junctures in his life was the impulse, in Martineau, to write hymns sufficiently strong to break through and overcome the multitude of his other pre-occupations. That the three hymns specified represent his sole efforts may perhaps well be doubted, but there is no record whereby to justify such doubt. It is to be noted that he had well-nigh reached his three-score years and ten when "*Where is your God ?*" *they say*, was written. More than forty years earlier he had edited *Hymns for Christian Worship* (1831), at the request of his Dublin congregation. Therein, he was much

concerned with "the part which the imagination and affections perform in true worship," and was anxious to "bring all the resources of lyric poetry (the poetry of the affections) into the service of religion."

In the preface to *Hymns for the Christian Church and Home* (1840), he writes: "Every spontaneous utterance of a deep devotion is poetry in its essence, and has only to fall into lyrical form to be a hymn. No expression of thought or feeling that has an ulterior purpose (*i.e.* instruction, exposition, impression) can have the spirit of poetry; but always misses the true lyrical character, and furnishes only rhymed theology, versified precepts, or biblical descriptions, capable of being sung, but merely hiding their didactic spirit under the borrowed style of poetry." With this utterance may be compared John Wesley's words in the preface to his collection of 1779: "That which is of infinitely more moment than the spirit of poetry, is the spirit of piety."

Yet, earlier, Isaac Watts had continually insisted that his hymns were not poetry: they were measured verse, written in such fashion as to be understood by the meanest intelligence. There was the supposition that in order to write good hymns it is not necessary to be a poet. It is a supposition that is not yet dead, and one that is sometimes justified. Nevertheless, whatever Watts' theory may have been, he did on occasion, if unconsciously, rise to poetry, and Martineau

did not hesitate to include seventy-seven hymns by Watts among the *Hymns for the Christian Church and Home*.

Undoubtedly Martineau's influence was on the side of a breaking away from the homiletical motive which makes the hymn a good substitute for a sermon or a fitting supplement to it. We are not, however, compelled to believe that the didactic spirit is inevitably alien to "poetry in its essence," and can but borrow its style. Certainly it is never likely wholly to disappear from our hymnals, wherein, as it may be urged, it has in due measure its rightful place. Even the versified precept, so that it be not too commonplace or of a too pedestrian quality, may be very serviceable, and perhaps not far removed from poetry itself.

Nevertheless, Martineau's protest and his affirmations were singularly useful, coinciding as they did with a movement to subject English hymnody to the literary motive. The best hymns were to reveal some gaining of the spirit and the utterance of lyrical poetry, and to contrast favourably with the all-too-prevalent plodding strains of an earlier day. A literary standard was to become increasingly operative, and in our own time it is interesting to note that Dr. Percy Dearmer regards the hymns of Robert Bridges as "the advance guard of a movement which will lead the Englishman of the future to read hymn-books for the poetry that is in them."

Of the seven hundred and eighty-two hymns in *Hymns of Praise and Prayer*, one hundred and ninety-six appear in *Hymns of Worship* (1927), a collection specially prepared for the group of churches with which Martineau was associated, and which constitute the Unitarian movement of to-day. That so many have been rejected for present usage is not surprising, since half a century separates the two compilations (a half century vastly productive of good hymns), and Christian piety, as Martineau himself pointed out, ever "speaks in other tones than those which were natural to our fathers."

XI

SAMUEL LONGFELLOW

1819-1892

LOUIS F. BENSON, in *The English Hymn—its Development and Use in Worship*, says: "It is obvious that New England Unitarians led the advance in elevating the literary standard of American Hymnody, an office for which their culture and free spirit naturally fitted them." And in speaking of *A Book of Hymns* (1846) prepared by Samuel Longfellow and Samuel Johnson while they were yet fellow-students at the Harvard Divinity School, he says: "A breezy freshness and literary charm pervaded the book, and gave it distinction and importance even in a remarkable series of hymn-books." The *Book of Hymns* was both warmly welcomed (in two years the first edition was exhausted) and severely criticized, especially in respect of editorial alteration and amendment of hymns. An intimate friend of Longfellow's thus satirized the editorial propensity so freely condemned:—

There once were two Sams of Amerique
 Who belonged to a profession called clerique,
 They hunted up hymns and cut off their limbs,
 These truculent Sams of Amerique.

The unrepentant Longfellow, thinking the lines worthy to be illustrated, drew a pen-and-ink sketch showing the two young men with large shears cutting up rolls of paper. "The likeness of Johnson, who was very handsome, with the air of a high-caste Parsee of Assyria, was unmistakable." The book itself was frequently called the "Sam-Book" or "Book of Sams," and was followed, eighteen years later, by *Hymns of the Spirit*, a collection aiming at the exclusion of all hymns "which attributed a peculiar quality and special authority to Christianity, and recognized a supernatural element in the personality of Jesus." In their preface to these *Hymns of the Spirit* (1864), the editors said: "It is believed that this Book of Hymns will be found to embody the most earnest religious faith, united with the largest hope and the most advanced thought of the time." There was, however, but a very limited public for it, as may very well have been anticipated; nevertheless its influence was far from negligible, and the new contributions of the editors were valuable.

The hymns of Longfellow, and those of Johnson as well, have, for the most part, lost little of their first appeal. *Hymns of Worship* (1927) contains twenty-six hymns by Longfellow, there being no reduction to the number included in the *Essex Hall Hymnal Revised* (1902).

It is, to be sure, a little difficult to be certain when a hymn is wholly his; we are confronted

by his facility in editing, re-writing, and imitating the hymns of others. Or, as might be, he would be struck by one or more lines in a hymn, and appropriate them for use in an almost entirely new hymn. In *Hymns of the Spirit*, a number of hymns since assigned to him were not so assigned, and presumably because of his desire not to affix his name to any not wholly his. For example, one line of *God of the earth, the sky, the sea!* was not his, and it was indexed "Anonymous."

But when the most has been said that can be said about this difficulty, we may yet see how very considerable was Longfellow's own contribution to Unitarian hymnody. We may picture him as just full of zest for the provision of hymns appropriate for the faith that was his. As early as November 1846 he wrote to Johnson: "I have six or eight manuscript hymns, some of which you have seen. . . . Do let me have some *original* ones; such as will embody the true ideas, without all the plague of alteration; such as will just suit our sermons. I wish we had done this at first, instead of altering old hymns. 'Take your sermons, Sam, and write a hymn for each one. This is the way Doddridge made his book.' And neither of these young men had yet been ordained to his first congregation.

Eighteen years later, in 1859, Longfellow inaugurated at his Brooklyn church a series of Vesper services, and for them prepared a little

book of services which appeared in many editions. He utilized several hymns from the Roman Breviary, and very notable were his paraphrases of two of them, of which one is the following :—

Again, as evening's shadow falls,
We gather in these hallowed walls ;
And vesper hymn and vesper prayer
Rise mingling on the holy air.

May struggling hearts that seek release
Here find the rest of God's own peace ;
And, strengthened here by hymn and prayer,
Lay down the burden and the care.

O God, our light, to thee we bow ;
Within all shadows standest thou :
Give deeper calm than night can bring,
Give sweeter songs than lips can sing.

Life's tumult we must meet again ;
We cannot at the shrine remain ;
But in the spirit's secret cell
May hymn and prayer for ever dwell.

In that hymn alone is the assurance that the name of Samuel Longfellow will not be quickly forgotten by those who meet together to worship God. It has been widely adopted for hymnals other than Unitarian. Tender, devout, reflective, are his writings, whether in prose or in verse ; neither the man nor his work revealed the " truculent Sam " of the friendly satire. He was generous and warm-hearted, bright and cheerful, often radiantly optimistic. " There was a nameless calm, a gentleness mingled with earnestness and strength, a fine poetic spirit." A vital

sense of spiritual realities and a transparent honesty enabled him to find a way of peace in this life and yet be effective in his service to his fellow-men. " One could not for a moment imagine him vexed, or petty, or ungenerous. Few men have led a life of such unbroken calm and cheerfulness. At the same time, he was equal in strength of character to any emergency, and would have borne himself firmly upon the rack when more boisterous men failed." In such words did Colonel T. W. Higginson pay his tribute to an old friend.

Samuel Longfellow was born on 18 June, 1819, at Portland, Maine. He was the youngest child of a family of four sons and four daughters. Of that family life he has given an intimate picture in his memoir of his brother, the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Samuel passed through Harvard University as a matter of course, and in 1842 entered the Divinity School as a student for the ministry. And already he had had fore-warnings of that " burden of suffering and debility which became an important element in his experience, and which weighed so heavily upon his ability to discharge the active duties of life." He was ordained and installed as the minister at Fall River in February 1848, and remained there for three years. It is surmised that his anti-slavery preaching impeded him in his work there. From 1853 to 1860 he ministered to a recently formed congregation at Brooklyn, N.Y., to which he

preached a "John Brown sermon," causing thereby the loss of some members. Even if the preacher was "speaking the truth in love," what was said was too straightforward and unambiguous not to give offence to some. On the other hand, Longfellow had qualities which endeared him to those who knew him well, both young and old. He excelled as the pastor of his people. One who had known a heavy affliction said: "He came to me when I was utterly prostrated, weeping bitterly with my fatherless boys. He said not a word, but drew them to his side, with his arms about them. He did not ask us to pray—I only knew that he was praying. He seemed to lead me with my children into the presence of God, and bring about us his protection. I felt no longer wholly desolate; I knew that love was about me still."

He preached only intermittently between 1860 and 1878, during which time he visited Europe three times, on each occasion making a prolonged stay. From 1878 to 1882 he had charge of a congregation in Germantown, Pa. The remaining ten years of his life he spent in Cambridge, Mass., where he died on 3 October, 1892.

XII

SAMUEL JOHNSON

1822-1882

"HE was a man of buoyant nature, charming and lovable; an enthusiast over the beautiful in nature and art and literature; versed in science; deeply sympathetic with humanity in its aspiration and its struggle for right and justice. His service of God and humanity was the service of a pure soul, divinely instructed, most religiously self-consecrated. An accomplished writer and speaker, he cared only for the truth. He was indifferent to the arts that win popularity. His books brought him no remuneration, only the praise of liberal scholars and appreciative friends; but his serenity and happiness were never disturbed. His life was one of many sacrifices, prompted by an heroic spirit and a loving heart."

The foregoing is not part of an obituary notice, but an appraisal made more than a quarter of a century after the death of the author of the hymn:—

City of God, how broad and far
 Outspread thy walls sublime!
 The true thy chartered freemen are,
 Of every age and clime.

One holy Church, one army strong,
 One steadfast high intent,
 One working band, one harvest-song,
 One King Omnipotent !

How purely hath thy speech come down
 From man's primeval youth !
 How grandly hath thine empire grown
 Of Freedom, Love and Truth !

How gleam thy watch-fires through the night,
 With never-fainting ray !
 How rise thy towers, serene and bright,
 To meet the dawning day !

In vain the surge's angry shock,
 In vain the drifting sands ;
 Unharmed upon the Eternal Rock,
 The Eternal City stands.

This is the hymn which more quickly than any other written by Samuel Johnson was utilized by compilers of Unitarian hymnals, and seems destined for a long-continued serviceableness in most sections of the Christian Church. It was sung at the consecration of Liverpool Cathedral on 19 July, 1924, and has found its way into most modern hymnals.

Associated with all religious movements, with all denominations of churches, and perhaps especially with the Unitarian movement, there have ever been those who sat loosely to ecclesiastical affiliations of any kind whatsoever. Very intensely do they feel their oneness with humanity as a whole and their kinship with every human soul that anywhere lifts up heart and voice to worship the God and Father of us all. In matters of religious

faith no exclusive allegiance can be theirs. And yet, by birth, by education, by all the traditions that are dear to them, by that which they hold most precious, by the thought that is theirs, by what they most truly are, they may be, and often are, more representative of the highest and the best in some particular religious denomination than are the most of those to whom a close and perhaps narrow allegiance comes easily enough. We think this to have been true of Samuel Johnson, and also of others who, brought up in and closely associated with the Unitarian tradition, could find no wider fellowship, yet found the Unitarianism of their day scarcely wide enough. It seems to have been especially true of the poets, the prophets, the seers. It was true of Emerson ; it was true of Theodore Parker. If they and others came to be not very much *in* the Unitarian movement, they were, nevertheless, quite clearly *of* it. And the influence upon it of such men was apt to be very much more considerable than that of those who sat more tightly in their allegiance.

Samuel Johnson, the son of a physician, was born at Salem, Mass., 10 October, 1822. At the age of twenty he graduated from Harvard, and subsequently entered the Divinity School there, although his earlier inclinations had been away from the ministry. Before taking a pulpit he travelled in Europe. After a brief but somewhat unfruitful ministry at Dorchester, Mass., he became the pastor of a free church newly

organized in Lynn—a church with the motto *Holiness and Progress, Prayer and Labour, God and Humanity*. It ceased to exist at the end of Johnson's ministry there, which covered the years from 1853 to 1870.

We then hear of a sermon to Theodore Parker's old congregation, and of his preaching to Octavius Frothingham's people in New York, but within twelve months of giving up the regular work of the ministry he had had but three Sunday preaching engagements—these representing all the invitations that came his way. Five years later he writes: "I have no invitations to supply pulpits, and am quite content without this public work, to which I am more and more unsuited these days." He is quite happy in the larger freedom to pursue his studies, but there were surely some regrets. Would he, if it had been otherwise, have written of being "quite reconciled to being left out and dropped from preaching-desks and lecture-stands"? He had had to become quite reconciled to it.

Johnson, in common with many others of the American Unitarian hymn-writers of the nineteenth century, was to the Unitarians of his day an ultra-radical. His religion was profound and intense, but in this, as in all else, he was the apostle of individualism. With organized religion he had little sympathy; subscription to a creed and allegiance to a sect were to him equally repugnant. There came a time when the word

Christian seemed inadequate to indicate the all of highest aspiration and sublimest thought.

After the death of his father in 1876, Johnson made his home at the ancestral farm at North Andover, which had been bequeathed to him and his younger sister. Here he spent the remaining years of his life, continuing faithful to his studies in Oriental religions, giving some attention to the management of the farm, and occasionally preaching in the Unitarian church the services of which he was wont to attend, "rejoicing to find there an independent ministry of breadth kindred to his own."

Samuel Johnson does not seem to have been a hymn-writer in the sense that implies a natural and almost inevitable turning to that form of composition. Nor apparently did he find therein, as many have, either solace or recreation. We have already noted, in the account of Samuel Longfellow, his share, with Longfellow, in the compilation of the *Book of Hymns* (1846) and *Hymns of the Spirit* (1864). But it was not Johnson who sustained the greater part of the labour involved. Thus does Longfellow write to him in 1846: "The hymn-book is so far advanced now that we must gather in all our materials as soon as possible. I must beg you once more to send some hymns of your own." The hymns of Johnson which belong to that earlier period are the work of a young man barely twenty-four years of age. Nevertheless, they do,

for the most part, give the impression of the long-practised hand, the finished work of a master. *God of the earnest heart* was written for the Harvard Divinity School "Visitation" at the time of his graduation (1846), and *Father, in thy mysterious presence kneeling*, belongs to the same year.

Father, in thy mysterious presence kneeling,
Fain would our souls feel all thy kindling love ;
For we are weak, and need some deep revealing
Of Trust, and Strength, and Calmness from above.

Lord, we have wandered forth through doubt and sorrow,
And thou hast made each step an onward one ;
And we will ever trust each unknown morrow,—
Thou wilt sustain us till its work be done.

In the heart's depths a peace serene and holy
Abides ; and when pain seems to have its will,
Or we despair, oh, may that peace rise slowly,
Stronger than agony, and we be still !

Now, Father, now, in thy dear presence kneeling,
Our spirits yearn to feel thy kindling love ;
Now make us strong : we need thy deep revealing
Of Trust, and Strength, and Calmness from above.

This is indeed a remarkable hymn to have been written by a young man in the early twenties. Did we not know the truth we should attribute it to a more matured experience. Clearly, Samuel Johnson, while yet very young, had gained an insight and an assurance which are long awaited even by many devout souls. We are not surprised that one of his hearers, at a later day, could say : " The feeling he always gave me, in listen-

ing to his prayers, was of one in reality holding converse with God himself." Of the hymn, the Rev. John White Chadwick, himself a notable hymn-writer, said : " I do not know any hymn that has helped me so much to comfort aching hearts."

There came a time when Samuel Johnson found himself very dissatisfied with the *Book of Hymns* (1846), and he wrote to Samuel Longfellow : " Do you find it still represents your theological standard ? I shudder to say that there are almost a half-hundred hymns in that book which my tongue refuses to utter. The hymns about Jesus, especially, look weaker and thinner every year." The book was entirely re-cast during a rainy month at Nice. All hymns ascribing supernatural qualities to Jesus were resolutely discarded. What remained, together with new additions, constituted a purely theistic collection, which was published in 1864 as *Hymns of the Spirit*. Amongst others by Johnson it contained his well-known *Life of ages, richly poured*, a hymn which Longfellow thought would surely, in the new Church to be, take the place of Toplady's *Rock of Ages*.

It has been pointed out by the Rev. Octavius B. Frothingham, an intimate friend, that Johnson illustrated the individualism of the American Transcendentalist. Whilst Channing trusted in social combinations and Freeman Clarke in organized religion, Samuel Johnson " had a clear eye

to the integrity of the separate soul. He attended no conventions, joined no societies, worked with no associations, had confidence in no parties, sects, schemes, or combinations, but nursed his solitary thought, delivered his personal message, bore his private witness and there rested." "He made it a principle to act alone, herein being a true disciple of Emerson, whose mission was to individual minds."

This does not mean that he kept himself aloof from his fellow-men or played the part of the solitary and the recluse. "Samuel Johnson," says Chadwick, "was one of the most loving and most lovable of men. He had great gifts for friendship. If the story of his fraternal tenderness could be written, it would be the fairest laurel we could lay upon his tomb. There never was a kinder or more sympathetic heart. And, now that he is gone, I seek in vain for one who is his equal as a witness to the power and glory of *religion*, whatever the *religions* have been in the past or are to-day."

XIII

STOPFORD AUGUSTUS BROOKE, LL.D.

1832-1916

WRITING to Mrs. Humphry Ward, in his fifty-sixth year, Stopford Brooke said: "Make what you think lovely, that is the winning way." Later still, when he was nearing his three-score years and ten, he made the following entry in his diary: "The world of imagination is the only world worth living in. There the sun always shines, and one is always young, and love has no apathy or ennui, and joy no stealing shadows, and there is no winter, and the streams are always clear, and so is the heart." To these words of his own there may be added those of his biographer: "Brooke trod the way of the poets. He was a mystic, his intellect being the servant of his imagination, shaping his vision, guarding his intuition—the defender and not the author of his faith."

Of such maybe is the Kingdom of Heaven, but of such are neither the rank and file nor the leaders of those very human institutions which, providing for services of corporate praise and prayer and for exhortations to righteousness, lay stress on a way of life which is to be judged by

its moral significance, believe discipline to be more important than sunshine, and imaginative gifts to be the none too certain allies of religious faith. Brooke did not think that moral excellence was achieved by a direct striving for it, and thought that such striving might, by the very nature of the preoccupations associated with it, lead to a real impoverishment of the deeper springs of the life of the spirit and might completely dry them up. "Make," said he, "the service of God rush like a gay river of joy."

Thus we are confronted by a man by no means entirely as others are, a man akin to ourselves, yet set apart, one who—so it would appear—would be hardly likely to find an altogether satisfying spiritual home in any one of the Churches of Christendom, catering, as for the most part they do, for those for whom the world of imagination is often not very real, for those whose most apparent need is that they *should* make some very direct pursuit of moral excellence.

For a long time Stopford Brooke was closely associated with the Established Church. It was in the rectory of Glendoen, near Letterkenny, Co. Donegal, that he was born on 14 November, 1832. In October 1850 he became a student at Trinity College, Dublin, and in 1859 was appointed to the curacy of St. Mary Abbots, Kensington, of which Archdeacon Sinclair was then vicar. Four years later he went to Berlin as chaplain to the British Embassy. At Kensing-

ton he was convinced of the necessity of the Church of England expanding itself and widening its dogmatic boundaries; at Berlin he felt that his own spiritual life was deteriorating. In 1866 he became the preacher at St. James' Chapel, which he leased from Lord Carnarvon. In the following year he was appointed Chaplain to Queen Victoria.

During his nine years' ministry at St. James' Chapel "he was far from that indifference to theological disputation which marked the last period of his regular ministry and deepened into positive dislike in the closing years of his life." Writing to his wife in July 1872 he said: "It strikes me almost painfully that my sermons have been more Theistic than Christian, and that Christ has nearly altogether disappeared from them. If there is any real reason for this, it is better to look it in the face." In 1880 he seceded from the Anglican Church, but continued his ministry at Bedford Chapel, a considerable number of his congregation remaining with him.

His sermon preached at the Annual Meeting of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association in 1884 was entitled, *What think ye of Christ?* Therein he assumed freedom from any doctrine of the Deity of Jesus and from the legendary miracles which support that doctrine, but said: "In proportion to our emotion towards Jesus is, I think, our emotion towards the Father." And "the deepest source of our love to Jesus *was what*

Jesus told us about man." This latter was a shrewd knock at the then common teaching, to be found among Unitarians as well as others, that "the chief source of our love for Jesus arises out of what he revealed with regard to the character of God." Of his feeling towards Jesus he says: "It has none of the qualities of the emotion that men feel towards God in worship. It is intensely human. It is the passionate love of servants to a Master; of soldiers to a Captain, of men living in and by and through the truths of one who has revealed their own powers to themselves, of men who are convinced that their Brother is alive, and that he is daily impelling communion with them; of men who look to clasping his hand hereafter in holiness, and being brought by him to God the Father."

Already in 1865 Brooke had published the *Life and Letters of F. W. Robertson*. In 1874 there followed *Theology in the English Poets* (lectures given in St. James' Chapel), and two years later the *Primer of English Literature*, of which some half-million copies have been sold.

As early as his sixteenth year he had sent home a poem, *Boadicea*—his first effort. When he was twenty-four he wrote: "I have given up poetry, I did not write well enough to please myself, nor anyone else." The abstention does not appear to have been prolonged, for during the period 1870-1880 "the creative impulse was urgent, and he was constantly writing verse."

In the latter year, 1880, his drama *Riquet of the Tuft* was published, and in 1888 a volume entitled *Poems*. "The *Poems* are pitched in many keys and range over a great variety of themes, but all are alive with his passionate humanity and love of nature. Many spring from the romantic side of his temperament, or show his affinity with the Early Renaissance; some, which are probably the best of all, reveal him as the sympathizer with the sufferings of the poor, and especially as the champion of poor women." (He had considerable interest in, and sympathy with the Domestic Missions established by Unitarians in some of the poorer parts of London.)

It was perhaps inevitable that Brooke should write hymns also. And he seems to have had a rather unusual delight in long hymns. To the Rev. V. D. Davis he wrote: "I do not agree with you about *length* of the hymns being an undesirable thing. If necessary, verses can be left out, but that is not my point. My point is that all the Nonconformist clergy are thoroughly mistaken, and none more than the Unitarians, in making their hymns short. I deliberately made them long. I believe congregations like long hymns. They like to have their part in the service; they like to sing. There are a number of old conservative fellows in every congregation on whom the ministers have for a long time imposed the notion that hymns should be short, and who, if you give them a long hymn, make a

noise about it. But the mass of people who come to church like to hear their own voices, like to join in a rush of song, and like to have it long. I find no objection made to ten or even twelve verses when the air is a carrying and a joyous air." So we are not surprised to find several of his own hymns consisting of from forty to fifty lines. Shortened forms of these are most usually found in hymnals other than the *Christian Hymns*, which he himself compiled while travelling with his daughter among the cathedral cities of France.

Stopford Brooke retained no copyright in his own hymns. About them he said: "They are free, as I think all hymns ought to be, for the use of any one who may care for them."

In them there is revealed a very real sensitiveness to the joy of life, and Brooke makes it evident that the spirit of mirth was not alien to him. A sombre outlook might at times be his, but he never acclaimed it the better way.

For heaven is round us as we move,
Our days are compassed with its love,
Its light is on our road:
And when the knell of death is rung,
Loud alleluias shall be sung
To welcome us to God.

If prayer was natural to Stopford Brooke, the spirit of praise was not less so. In his hymns the rejoicing in God is a frequent theme.

Let the whole creation cry
Glory to the Lord on High!
Heaven and earth, awake and sing—
"God is good and therefore King."

Praise him, all ye hosts above,
Ever bright and fair in love!
Sun and moon, uplift your voice,
Night and stars in God rejoice.

"Praise him in dances and in sports," from another of his hymns, lacks nothing in appropriateness, and is memorable because in the days when it was written it would seem to strike a new note in hymnody—one that still remains comparatively rare.

Just as the greater part of the old Psalmody rests on a devotional basis, so also do many of the hymns of Stopford Brooke, of which some are loose paraphrases of certain of the Old Testament psalms. In his own compositions the homiletical tendency is almost entirely absent. He had little use for the didactic hymn, or, at least, he would keep it completely in its place.

When the Lord of Love was here, A little sun, a little rain, Arm, soldiers of the Lord, Immortal Love, within whose righteous will, and It fell upon a summer's day, are hymns of Stopford Brooke's which have gained a well-deserved popularity.

His prose works included *History of Early English Literature*, 2 vols., *King Alfred, Tennyson: his Art and Relation to Modern Life*, *The Poetry of Browning*, *Studies in Poetry*, *Four Poets*, and several volumes of sermons. Dr. L. P. Jacks, in a Foreword to a selection from these sermons (*Die to Live*, 1926), writes: "For my own part, I feel constrained to say that I know of nothing in

the published literature of the modern pulpit that surpasses the best of Stopford Brooke for force, for fire, for copiousness, for sustained adequacy to the height and majesty of the theme. Such qualities can hardly be superficial. They have their roots in a certain greatness of soul. Those who knew him, now a diminishing band, will bear witness that his speech on these high matters, at times almost torrential in the vigour and rapidity of its movement, was a true expression of the quality and measure of the man. He was not of those who speak from the lips outward. In the intimacies of private life, as well as in his public office of a helper to those who would live in the spirit, he is to be reckoned among the Great Companions."

Stopford Brooke died on 18 March, 1916. The funeral service was read at his residence, "The Four Winds," Ewhurst, Surrey, by his son-in-law, Dr. L. P. Jacks. The body was then cremated at Brookwood, and the ashes were interred, as he had desired, close to his favourite seat in the grounds of his house, overlooking the Surrey Weald.

XIV

JOHN PAGE HOPPS

1834-1911

"No one could have bridled his tongue or dried the ink from his pen." Page Hopps was the keen and skilful controversialist, a persistent advocate of the causes which to him seemed most worth while. He was copious in the written word, and in speech the persistent and intrepid fighter, giving no quarter when opponents were raised up against him. And so when he died it could be said of him: "The sword and the shield fell from the tired hand, and the old warrior laid him down to rest."

On the walls of the church at Croydon in which the Rev. John Page Hopps preached from 1892 to 1903 there is a brass memorial tablet commemorating him as fearless in thought and speech, original, eloquent, one who stood for truth and progress. Gladly we avail ourselves of a picture of him as he was in those Croydon days, when he was drawing ever nearer to his three-score years and ten.

"The slight figure with the student's stoop; the massive head with its crown of silver hair; the fine, rugged, thoughtful face, all furrowed and

lined with years of strenuous work, but which at some touch of pathos would break up and struggle with emotion; the gleaming eye, which would flash at denunciation of some hypocrisy; the quiet, penetrating voice; the sweet, winning smile which would break out at times like sunshine; the quaint humour—all went to make up surely one of the most winning personalities that ever went forth to battle with the wrong and point to weary, world-pressed souls, something better—something brighter.”

John Page Hopps was born in London on 6 November, 1834. He was trained for the Baptist ministry, but after a short pastorate at Hugglescote, Leicestershire, left it to become assistant minister to George Dawson at the Church of the Saviour, Birmingham. Thereafter he was called to Unitarian congregations at Uppertorpe Chapel, Sheffield, the Old Chapel, Dukinfield, and St. Vincent Street Church, Glasgow; and in 1876 to the Great Meeting, Leicester, where he remained for well-nigh sixteen years, some of which he described as the best, the happiest, and most useful of his life, and the record of them the only memorial he cared to have.

For a short time, whilst at Dukinfield, he issued a small octavo monthly, entitled *Daybreak*, the editorship of which he relinquished to James Burns, under whom, though changed in form, it long continued as *The Medium and Daybreak*. For a period he was President of the Manchester

Progressive Spiritualistic Society. Page Hopps' interest in Spiritualism dated from his earliest days. In his book *Death a Delusion* he reveals his mother as a vigorous-minded woman, not sentimental, but more agnostic than anything, and yet a kind of medium, pouring out at times torrents of what we now call automatic writing. At the age of fourteen he was interesting himself in the writings of Swedenborg, whilst later on he was “seriously impressed” by conversations with William Crookes and Alfred Russel Wallace. In the closing years of his life he was regarded as “one of the pillars of the London Spiritualistic Alliance.” After his death some memoranda concerning Spiritualism were found among his papers, and from them the following words are extracted: “I advise the superior people who are free from superstition and delusion to leave a little room for discovery, to avoid the bigotry of unbelief which is often little better and not much wiser than the bigotry of ‘orthodoxy,’ and to be patient with all seekers in this direction if they can. The world, before now, has been greatly indebted to its ‘impostors,’ its ‘idiots,’ its ‘dreamers,’ and its ‘fools,’ and it is just possible that it is destined to be indebted to them again.” *Light*, the best known of the periodicals of the Spiritualists, was indebted to him for many contributions during a number of years, and shortly before his death contained a long notice of him together with a fine portrait.

For Page Hopps there was an ever-present consciousness of the unseen ; he had a none-too-common awareness of spiritual realities ; he saw death as but the semblance thereof.

“ This man meant what he said with all his heart and mind when he spoke of God and of the soul. His religion was absolutely real. He lived by it and trusted in it to the last. He had no dread of death. He looked forward with eager joy to what God had in store for man beyond the gates of death. He was certain, beyond all other certainties, that death was only the beginning of a new and higher life.” These foregoing words, spoken by the Rev. Henry Gow at the funeral service of Page Hopps, indicate that life of the spirit and that basis of assurance which were never obscured, however absorbing might be the controversy or the conflict in which the great fighter was engaged.

Wherever he laboured there was a force to be reckoned with, a power to be felt and recognized. Though he did not seek notice, he was not intimidated by it. With zest he could pass through the bitter and exciting contest which resulted in his election, in 1873, as a member of the first Glasgow School Board. At Leicester he did not hesitate to take the chair for Charles Bradlaugh, whose name had become peculiarly offensive to the orthodox in both religion and politics. Before the Boer War he was among the speakers at a meeting of protest held in Trafalgar

Square. The cause of peace enlisted his persistent advocacy, as, indeed, did any good cause which did not seem to him to be getting fair play or a fair hearing. And it is to be observed that he was not so much the notable orator as one with an instinctive knowledge of how to hold the attention of his audience. His success in addressing working men and women was largely due to his gift for clear and direct exposition. There was, also, “ the simple picturesque language which wins the crowd.”

For several years, in Leicester, he held meetings, first in the Temperance Hall and then in the Floral Hall, to which he continued to draw audiences of from two to three thousand people on each Sunday of the year.

The spirit of the man is finely revealed in what is perhaps the most popular of his hymns.

Father, let thy kingdom come,
Let it come with living power ;
Speak at length the final word,
Usher in the triumph hour.

As it came in days of old,
In the deepest hearts of men,
When thy martyrs died for thee,
Let it come, O God, again.

Tyrant thrones and idol shrines,
Let them from their place be hurled ;
Enter on thy better reign,
Wear the crown of this poor world.

Oh, what long, sad years have gone
Since thy Church was taught this prayer ;
Oh, what eyes have watched and wept
For the dawning everywhere.

Break, triumphant day of God,
Break, at last, our hearts to cheer;
Eager souls and holy songs
Wait to hail thy dawning here.

Empires, temples, sceptres, thrones,
May they all for God be won;
And by every living soul
Father, let thy will be done.

If there was the Page Hopps militant, there was also the Page Hopps who "was tender as a child, lovable as a woman, kind and considerate to all—a brave, noble, affectionate man." It was the man who wrote *Beside the Still Waters* and a volume of *Personal Prayers*, and compiled *The Children's Hymn Book* and *The Young People's Book of Hymns*. It was the man who did not forget the children in the hymns he wrote, commanding simplicity in language, whilst escaping the utterance which is merely childish. One of the best known of his hymns for children is :—

Father, lead me day by day,
Ever in Thine own sweet way;
Teach me to be pure and true,
Show me what I ought to do.

His output as a writer of hymns was not large, but of hymnals he compiled many. The fifth of these, *Hymns, Chants, and Anthems for Public Worship* (1877), was utilized by several congregations. The *Hymns for Special Services*, prepared for the big meetings in Leicester of which mention has already been made, ran into six editions. But Page Hopps was not so much the student of

hymnody engaged upon a labour of love as one quickly selecting hymns according to his need, his sole concern being for what he believed to be appropriate holy songs for eager souls to sing.

In addition to his hymnals, he published a volume of *Pilgrim Songs*, a book of ethical and religious verse, whilst some of the collected sermons and addresses are interspersed by short poems of which he wrote a considerable number.

Almost incessant must have been the flow of his pen; small books and pamphlets beyond enumeration were insufficient outlet for it. From 1863 to 1887 he edited *The Truthseeker*, and from 1891 to 1911 *The Coming Day*, these monthly periodicals being largely written as well as edited by himself. *The Coming Day* continued to appear until very shortly before his death on 6 April, 1911.

There was a controversial element in most of what he wrote, but there was something else as well, or he had not been heard so gladly nor read so widely. In 1883 he preached the Annual Sermon for the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, and therein said: "The fighting mood is not a fruitful mood. There must come something else ere we can hear the spirit say, 'Their soul shall be as a watered garden, and they shall not sorrow any more at all.'" The whole sermon, based on Ezekiel ii. 1-2, was a fine utterance, with a strangely modern note in its concluding section: "Bear with me if, before I close, I lay this at the door of the hearts of any of

you who are drifting into carelessness and neglect, who are more and more ready to turn away from the humble chapel, from your minister and from your fellow-worshippers—ay ! perhaps even from your own children, whom you send, but from whom you part. Stand upon your feet, you in whose soul the lamp of faith is dying, you from whose spirit the love of religious comradeship is departing. Stand upon your feet, and let the spirit speak to you.”

XV

JOHN WHITE CHADWICK

1840-1904

THE quaint old town, one-time fishing village, of Marblehead is situated on a rocky peninsula off the coast of Massachusetts, and in near proximity to the spacious harbour of Salem. There John White Chadwick was born on 19 October, 1840, and there his remains lie buried to-day in one of the old cemeteries where the sound of the sea is always heard. Chadwick's parents, although in humble circumstances, were of a hardy and honourable stock. His father, one of the last survivors of the ancient fishermen of the town, employed himself, in the brief and sometimes inevitable interruptions to his sea-faring life, in the making of shoes in order to augment the family's slender resources. The young John's early education was meagre enough, but at the age of eighteen it became possible for him to attend the Normal School in Bridgewater ; and no long time afterwards we find him entered as a student in the Divinity School, Cambridge, with his thoughts definitely turned towards the ministry. Whilst at Bridgewater he had read and been impressed by

a sermon of Samuel Longfellow's; and he had doubtless, at an earlier date, made the acquaintance of Samuel Johnson, who ministered to a congregation in Lynn, a town only some four or five miles from his own home in Marblehead. The two "Sams," whilst yet students in the Divinity School, had published in 1846 their *Book of Hymns*, and in 1853 there had appeared from the press *Hymns for the Church of Christ*, edited by the Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Harvard, Frederic Henry Hedge, in co-operation with F. D. Huntington.

Doubtless Chadwick perused these books from end to end and made his eager appraisal of their contents. He knew the authors of many of them, and there stirred within him the ambition that he also might contribute something of worth to Christian hymnody. One of his contemporaries has told us that Chadwick's aim was to write a hymn that should be the equal of Sears' *It came upon the midnight clear*. There is, however, a wide gap between the will to write a good hymn and the accomplishment of the task. Quickly did Chadwick learn to bridge the gap. In 1864, for the graduation exercises of his class, he wrote:—

Eternal ruler of the ceaseless round
Of circling planets singing on their way.

As we read the four stanzas it is easy to believe that there was before John White Chadwick a career of high worth and extensive usefulness.

His first and only settlement was with the Second Unitarian Church in Brooklyn, N.Y., of which he remained the pastor for all but forty years. To his work there he ever gave of the best that was in him; there came a time when by his own writings he could have maintained himself in an independent position, but we may doubt whether he experienced the slightest temptation to forsake a work of the value of which he never doubted. If human testimony is worth anything at all, he failed not as the pastor of his people. When his life was ended, his friend, William Channing Gannett, speaking at the funeral service, said: "I have never read nor heard of a man so fond of his people as your John. I have never known a minister who went into so many homes and left such a sweetness of his presence. He was love. The sick knew it, and his heart went out to the ailing child." But let us read also a few words from the minute whereby the congregation put on record their irreparable loss: "He was not only a man of large and active intellect, but of warm and sympathetic heart. He was our minister and our friend. Our sense of personal loss is beyond words, for he touched our lives at innumerable points."

During the first twenty-five years of his ministry he published *A Book of Poems* (1876) and *In Nazareth Town and other Poems* (1883).

We may suppose that not often did the gift of lyrical utterance come to him unsought, but

rather that he turned to it, at times with relief, finding pleasure in experimenting with verse forms. That he had genuine poetical gifts is beyond doubt, but it was within a limited range, and in many of his pieces there is a noticeable lack of that "inevitability" of utterance which is our ultimate satisfaction, whether in prose or verse. For the most part Chadwick's is a modest muse; correct and pleasing it often is, and he can sing with rare felicity of the mountains and the shores which he loved so well. Through the medium of his verse he tells to his people, in yet another way, of his joy in every story of human heroism, and reveals that he is possessed of a woman's tenderness of heart, a characteristic less apparent in the masculine vigour of his prose.

The time will come when his poems will be as forgotten as they are now neglected, but far away is the day when the world will let slide into oblivion the best of his hymns. "When Chadwick donned his singing robes," says one who knew him well, "his feet sometimes got entangled with them, but in his hymns he walks securely in the places of high song."

For the beginning of the year 1873 Chadwick wrote *Another year of setting suns*. It is not amongst those of his hymns which have found widest acceptance, but it is instinct with a hopeful joy and a sense of blessings manifold to come, as it passes from things of nature to the deeper satisfaction of human intimacies and the ample fruit

of "thinker's thought and prophet's dream." *It singeth low in every heart* was written for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Dedication of the Second Unitarian Congregation, Brooklyn. In this hymn more than in any other written by Chadwick is to be found his clear title to rank high among hymn-writers. To quote it in full is better than vainly to attempt to set forth its particular merits, such as the simple beauty of its diction, and its lasting impress for those who, losing their beloved ones, have tried to pierce the veil dividing us from that which is beyond our earthly life:—

It singeth low in every heart,
We hear it each and all—
A song of those who answer not,
However we may call;
They throng the silence of the breast,
We see them as of yore—
The kind, the true, the brave, the sweet,
Who walk with us no more.

'Tis hard to take the burden up,
When these have laid it down:
They brightened all the joy of life,
They softened every frown.
But, oh, 'tis good to think of them,
When we are troubled sore;
Thanks be to God that such have been,
Though they are here no more!

More homelike seems the vast Unknown,
Since they have entered there;
To follow them were not so hard,
Wherever they may fare;
They cannot be where God is not,
On any sea or shore;
Whate'er betides, thy love abides,
Our God, for evermore.

It is not possible to enumerate even those hymns which, written by Chadwick, have been included in the most recently issued of the Unitarian hymnals. Of one more only will we make mention, and that because it intimates his own joy in the faith, his conception of its content, and his earnest hopefulness that it might prevail. *Our fathers' faith, we'll sing of thee*, will long have its place in our hearts and utters what may well be the inspiration of us all :—

Oh, may that faith our hearts inspire
To earnest thought and labour;
That we may share its heavenly fire
With every friend and neighbour.

Chadwick was an omnivorous reader. Everything came as grist to his mill, and what he read he used. He devoured innumerable books and kept in close contact with current periodicals. Probably there was untold pleasure in the doing of it, but he always read with a purpose. His sermons, whilst being the very stuff of his inmost thought, were the vehicle whereby he interpreted to his congregation, and to a much wider public, the best thought of the day. He was amongst the first of those who, accepting the results of the higher biblical criticism, declared them openly from the pulpit. Science and philosophy he approached, I imagine, with something of diminished zest and a less penetrating appreciation, though he was by no means ill-versed in these fields of thought and investigation.

In all contemporary literature he was engrossed, and through it, rather than by constant and immediate contact, he had a wide, if in some respects superficial, acquaintance with the great literatures of the world. But his alert and, for his purpose, discriminating mind, his capacity for lucid and measured phrase, the elevation of his thought, and his fundamental honesty, gave to him an unusual fitness to present to his day and generation the basic truth of religion, not in language outworn, but in a manner to appeal to men and women of intelligence and culture, or, indeed, to any thoughtful and inquiring mind.

In 1894 Chadwick published, under the title *Old and New Unitarian Belief*, a course of lectures which had been given to his own people. For those interested in the development of Unitarian thought they are worthy of perusal. Nearly forty years have gone by since they were written, but for the period covered—nearly three-quarters of a century—they form the only compact summary available, and are sufficiently comprehensive for all ordinary needs. In the biographies of *Theodore Parker* (1900) and *William Ellery Channing* (1903), Chadwick made his most lasting contribution to the literature of the Unitarian movement on the western side of the Atlantic.

He died on Sunday, 11 December, 1904. But a few hours before he passed away he was busy writing a review of *The Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*. The memorial service, in his own

church, concluded with the singing of his own hymn *It singeth low in every heart*, to the tune of *Auld Lang Syne*. His mortal remains were taken to Marblehead, and laid to rest by the side of the father whom he had loved so well, and whose memorial may still be read in the son's little book *Cap'n Chadwick*. Not far away is the little shop where together they had cobbled shoes.

XVI

HENRY WARBURTON HAWKES

1843-1917

THE Rev. H. W. Hawkes was born 26 October, 1843, at Kendal, where his father, the Rev. Edward Hawkes, M.A., was for more than thirty years minister of the Market Place Chapel. His uncle, the Rev. Henry Hawkes, B.A., F.L.S., was for thirty-nine years minister of the High Street Chapel, Portsmouth. His education, so it has been stated, he received from William Henry Herford, the Unitarian Minister at Lancaster. At the early age of sixteen he went to Liverpool to embark on a business career, allying himself with the Renshaw Street Chapel, of which the Rev. John Hamilton Thom was the revered minister. For many years Mr. Thom had been the secretary of the Liverpool Domestic Mission, and we may well believe that it was his influence which led the young Hawkes to give both time and labour to the work of the Mission. In 1867 the Rev. Charles Beard succeeded Mr. Thom as minister at Renshaw Street, and he it was who invited Hawkes to make of that work his life's vocation. In 1859 the North-End Domestic Mission was established,

and in 1871 Henry W. Hawkes became its Missionary Minister.

“ Strangers visiting the Mission have often said : ‘ Why, it looks like an old warehouse from the outside.’ And in 1871 the inside was not much better. Whitewash and black varnish, the wash not very different from the varnish in many places, formed the favourite scheme of colour. Gradually the young and artistic enthusiast changed all that. Life, music, colour, joy began to express themselves, until towards the end visitors were delighted with the beauty and harmony of that chapel—the top storey of a warehouse. That is typical, and takes us to the secret of his (Hawkes’) genius. Love of music, love of beauty, brightened and made melodious his love of truth. His character was charming through his happy spontaneity. He believed in sudden inspiration, and in what he called possession by sympathy. . . . Now, take a personality such as this, spiritual, poetic, musical, with a passion for fellowship, and give him the privilege and blessing of entering the poor man’s home, and what happens? A change must take place : transformation, conversion, rebirth—something must happen. The strong, determined, happy warrior must win. He won all along the line. Church-people, Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, Atheists (we had a few who called themselves that in those days), Spiritualists—all felt the charm of his character. Courts, cellars, attics, gave him welcome as he came with

his offerings of flowers or fruit. His imagination, moved by love, was not only used for his Mission people and his intimate ones ; it was fully and beautifully exercised in every instance. He made a new programme every day. The divine auto-cruacy of the lover belonged to him : ‘ Ye are my friends. . . . Ye did not chose me, I chose you.’ And the democracy always responds to the lover. Bring this winsome daily experience with you into the Sunday School, the religious service, the funeral service, the baptism ; and what is the result? Power that comes through certainty and sincerity ; the beauty of holiness, and the holiness of beauty. . . . Every Annual Meeting was like a new consecration, which made him very humble for the time and yet gave him fresh strength to go on his way rejoicing.”

Henry W. Hawkes remained, throughout his life, a bachelor and, being without family ties and responsibilities, was able to give himself very completely to his people. But, unfortunately, his health was never robust, and he had always to exercise particular vigilance over certain troubles to which he was predisposed. It was owing to a breakdown in health that in 1887 he resigned from his post at the Mission, after sixteen years of faithful service. He was then but forty-four years of age, and had yet thirty years of life before him.

His poems reveal that, in the year 1885, he had visited Italy ; now he is to travel still further afield. He accepted an invitation to co-operate

for a time with an American Unitarian Mission in Japan. There is no available record of the time during which he was thus engaged; it has been stated that he worked as a "voluntary missionary." In later years it was his delight to relate the experiences that had there been a joy to him.

In 1890 a newly organized Unitarian congregation had commenced to hold meetings in the Bootle Town Hall. Hawkes, returning to England in the following year, was called to be its minister. Under his able leadership the congregation soon became well established, and in 1895 had the gratification of opening their own church building. The greater part of the money required was raised by the zeal and energy of the minister. In 1900, after nine years' service, he resigned this charge, but continued as a member and supporter of the congregation. Although but fifty-seven years of age, he believed that his life-work was finished, but after a few years of comparative rest he placed his services at the disposal of the Liverpool District Missionary Association, and formed a Unitarian Church in West Kirby, becoming its first minister in 1906, and continuing there until 1913.

He had now reached his three score years and ten, and might well feel that his labours were over, but in 1915 the Rev. Walter Short of the Bootle congregation left his charge for active service in the Great War, unfortunately never to return. Henry Hawkes resumed the oversight of his old

congregation, and it was whilst continuing his work there that the last call of all came to him. He died on 8 April, 1917. He had been "one of the most genial and lovable personalities in the Unitarian ministry."

In the later years of his life Hawkes loved to sit at his little American organ "and play hymn-tunes of his own setting, a pile of which, in neat manuscript, always lay on the floor beside the instrument." Three of the tunes in *Hymns and Choral Songs* (1904) are of his composition. He had also considerable literary aptitude, testimony to which may be found in his *Gathered Fragments from Many Years* (1914). Therein are pieces Epic, Legendary, Dramatic, and Miscellaneous, Serious and Trivial. As we read these fragments—some of them very considerable fragments, the narrative poem *The Man of Nazareth* containing some twelve hundred and fifty lines—we cannot but wish that the firmness of faith and the loftiness of inspiration were wedded with even more of poetic power. These *Fragments* are surely doomed to neglect, and yet seem worthy of a better fate. But Hawkes did not deceive himself as to the truth:

I, who thus dimly see what Poets are
And what the height and depth, the boundless range
Of their domain, claim not to rank myself
As one of their fraternity. . . .
If thus I am so blest that my poor words
Meet needs which greater minds have failed to help,
I am content.

Perhaps he guessed, as he may well have hoped,

that it would be the words of his hymns which would do most to help and to inspire his fellow-men. And to the writing of those hymns he brought a pen which had known discipline and had found freedom too. Having, as early as 1882, compiled *Hymns of Help and Songs of Praise* for use by his own congregation at the Domestic Mission in Liverpool, he issued, in 1891, *Hymns and Sacred Songs for Church and Home*, which, seven years later, was enlarged and reprinted. The 1898 edition contained about one hundred of his own hymns and adaptations. He printed forty only in the *Gathered Fragments* (1914), and of these probably not more than fifteen have found their way into the hymnals more recently compiled. *Hymns for School and Home* (1920) utilized nine and *Hymns of Worship* (1927) contains ten of them, six being common to both books.

Heavenward lift your banners has an easy road to popularity by being sung to Sullivan's *St. Gertrude*, and compares not unfavourably with Baring-Gould's *Onward, Christian Soldiers*. It was one of the earliest of the hymns written by Hawkes. There are two litanies which have found acceptance; they are *Father, thy dear name we own*, and *Lord of Life, for ever nigh*. But the hymn by Hawkes which is probably sung more frequently than any other is :

Amid the din of earthly strife,
Amid the busy crowd,
The whispers of eternal life
Are lost in clamours loud;

HENRY W. HAWKES

When, lo ! I find a healing balm ;
The world grows dim to me ;
My spirit rests in sudden calm
With Christ in Galilee !

I linger near him in the throng,
And listen to his voice ;
I feel my weary heart grow strong
My saddened heart rejoice.
Amid the storms that darkly frown
I hear his whisper sweet,
And lay my heavy burden down
At his beloved feet.

My vision swiftly fades away,
The world is round me still ;
But Jesus seems with me to stay,
His promise to fulfil.
And toil and duty sweeter seem
While he abides with me ;
My heart is rested by my dream
Of Christ in Galilee.

Mention must be made also of the *Peace ! perfect peace ! the gift of G* which, sung to *Pax Tecum*, has also the of a well-known tune. The reading of formed a fitting conclusion to the add Memorial Service to its writer.

XVII

AMBROSE NICHOLLS BLATCHFORD

1843-1924

IN more senses than one Ambrose Blatchford belonged to the west of England; he was born at Plymouth, moving thence to Tavistock; he ministered at Lewin's Mead, Bristol, for all but half a century, and it was said of him that he would not have been at home in any other of the great cities of England. Finally he retired to Bideford in Devon. To our own Unitarian congregations, other than those in the Western Union, he was little known. Even for holidays he did not travel far, and it is believed that he never left England: for the best part of forty years he spent his holidays at Seaton (Devon), where he had his own house and his own boat.

His life was well filled up with a wide range of activities: he was a doer. And yet we gain the impression that it was what he *was* that influenced others most of all. Says one such: "I am glad to be able to look back over the half-century with thankfulness for the friendship of one of the brightest and most lovable of men." For those who felt the impact of his personality

and those who noted the number and the variety of his engagements, the hymns which he wrote were but one of many invaluable things that he managed to get done, and would not seem to have a particularly large place in the measure of his achievement.

Ambrose Blatchford loved his fellow-men, and delighted to mingle with them. Children were a joy to him, and, indeed, most of his hymns were written for Sunday School Anniversaries at Lewin's Mead Chapel. He himself had ever the heart of a child, and the authentic man seems to be there when we read his own words:—

To thee, Lord, all are children—
 The wisest, strongest, best—
 Alike we need thy presence,
 Thy pity and thy rest.
 The children's prayer we offer,
 While sinks the day's fair light,
 And pray amid the silence:
 God bless us all this night.

Born 11 December, 1843, at Plymouth, Blatchford was the only child of James Blatchford, a corn-merchant of that city. Consequent upon the death of his father, when Ambrose was but a few years old, removal to Tavistock ensued. Though James Blatchford was a churchman and a Conservative, his widow had come from a Unitarian family, and the boy's education began under the Rev. James Taplin, then the Unitarian minister of the Abbey Chapel in Tavistock. Later on he entered the Tavistock Grammar

School, becoming one of the pupils of the Rev. Edward Spencer, M.A., in respect of whom he admitted a lasting debt of gratitude. In 1860 he became a student for the ministry at the Manchester New College, London, and in 1866 became assistant minister to the Rev. William James at Lewin's Mead. Ten years later, on the death of his senior colleague, he was invited to the sole charge of the congregation. Not until 1915 did he resign from the one and only pastorate that had been his.

There was no narrowness in his interpretation of the work which he accounted himself called to do. To many he was the wise adviser and trusted friend. He had a particular interest in education, and for many years was a governor of the Stokes Croft Endowed School. In his earlier years he took a prominent share in political life, and was eagerly sought as a speaker on the Liberal platform. There is testimony of his power to rouse an audience to great enthusiasm. The Bristol and West of England Newspaper Press Fund frequently claimed him as a speaker at its annual banquet, and he became known as the "Press Fund Chaplain." Few excelled him as an after-dinner speaker. "There was no man better known in Bristol, no more popular man than Mr. Blatchford; everybody knew him."

But Ambrose Blatchford's popularity was not something of the moment: it stood the test of time; it was based on qualities which endeared

him to those who knew him well and on personal characteristics which gained him the suffrage of all who came into contact with him. A man of unusual vitality and extraordinary recuperative power, his public work was an addition to, rather than a substitute for, his labours as pastor of a congregation. He put immense energy into his pulpit work. "His annual Sunday evening lecture on *The Dead Year, its Memories and Lessons* was an event looked forward to by the general public as well as by the congregation. Citizens of all types and callings and of very various religious associations gathered in such numbers that sometimes not only were the body of the spacious chapel and its three large galleries crowded, but both vestries were filled, while numbers gathered round the pulpit or sat upon its steps." Special courses of sermons would extend over periods of three and four months. The subject-matter of many of them indicates that he was a man of the study as well as an enthusiast in the practical affairs of life. One such course, entitled *Church Councils and their Decrees*, appeared in book form, published by the Lindsey Press in 1909.

One who knew him well has put it on record that Blatchford's hymns were the result of "brain-sweat" as well as of fulness of inspiration. "In 1897 he published a collection numbering fifty-six pieces, with the title *Songs of Praise for School and Church*. A larger collection, entitled *Ministry*

in Song, was issued in 1916. It contained seventy hymns, twenty-two being new." The output does not seem large when we think of the hundreds written by many hymnists, and how few of those that are written continue for very long to be the chosen hymns of the people.

Softly the silent night, written in 1875, is probably the most popular of Ambrose Blatchford's hymns, and the one that is most widely known :—

Softly the silent night
Falleth from God,
On weary wanderers
Over life's road ;
And as the stars on high
Light up the darkening sky,
Lord, unto thee we cry,—
Father above !

Slowly on failing wing
Daylight has passed ;
Sleep, like an angel kind,
Folds us at last.
Peace be our lot this night,
Safe be our slumber light,
Watched by thy angels bright,
Father above !

And when the gleam of morn
Touches our eyes,
And the returning day
Bids us arise,—
Happy beneath thy will,
Steadfast in joy or ill,
Lord, may we serve thee still,
Father above !

This hymn is included in Horder's *Treasury of Hymns*, as also is that with the opening lines :—

Peacefully round us the shadows are falling,
Glad be our praises and trustful our prayer !

Apparently Blatchford liked writing evening hymns : as well as the foregoing, we note *Stars aloft are fading, fast the shadows fly ; While fades the golden day, and silver stars gleam bright ; Once more the shadows fall, and wrap the world in peace ; On weary hearts descending be peace and trust to-night ; Night clouds around us silently are stealing*—these being the opening lines of half a dozen other of his hymns which have found their way into one collection or another.

In spite of such excellences as his work reveals, he had not the same mastery of the technique of hymn-writing as had Hosmer or Tarrant ; he was not so inevitably a hymn-writer as were they. Blatchford loved to hear the children sing and to make provision for their song, and in a quite notable way he did it ; and however it may be in the future, he was in his own day of a singular usefulness to those concerned for the worship of the younger ones.

The sea and the stars most often provide the imagery he required, and the hymns are rare in which there is mention of neither. So the love of God guides us "like a fadeless beacon star," and the life of Jesus is likened to "a star on darksome way." Our present life is "this rocky shore of time" or "a wide and restless ocean." Death is but our remove to the bright, the distant, the blessed shore.

With what gusto have many sung the words :—

For our home is o'er the waters,
 On a fair but distant strand ;
 And the Saviour is the pilot,
 Who shall bring us safe to land.
 Where the waves shall break in music,
 And the rough wind blow no more,
 And a blissful welcome wait us
 From the loved ones gone before.

These similes and metaphors suggested by the sea came easily to Ambrose Blatchford. Mention has already been made of how for well-nigh forty years he spent his holidays at Seaton, Devon, where he had his own house and his own boat. Several years ago the Rev. H. Shaen Solly related how Blatchford had told him that he began the long series of visits "to rescue a fisherman from habits of intemperance, and that he continued going there largely to give the man the support without which the rescue might not have proved permanent." It was said of him that "he knew the water, and he knew the shore, and all the men upon the beach were his friends. If one of them went wrong, it was a grief. One sees him standing on the beach in his rough sailor's blue jersey, his oilskin sou'wester, and his long sea boots—a fine figure of a man, a typical sailor, a joy to look upon ; a seaman, captain of his ship and of his soul."

Yes, he was the captain of his soul ; and if he had felt the rigour of the moral law, he had not failed to capture a gladness in the way thereof.

It is easy for us to suppose that his especial message to his fellow-men would be : "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous : Yea, shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart." Ambrose Nicholls Blatchford died at Bideford, Devon, on 24 April 1924. Two years later a tablet was unveiled in Lewin's Mead Meeting commemorating the ardent advocate of civil and religious liberty, the fervent exponent of the truth as it is in Jesus, and the earnest upholder of his fellow labourers in the West of England.

XVIII

FREDERICK LUCIAN HOSMER, D.D.

1840-1929

“FUTURE historians of religious thought in America, if they are wise enough to realize that hymns afford one of the best indices of the popular faith of an era, will find in Hosmer’s hymns a noble expression of the most enlightened religious idealism of the closing years of the nineteenth century.” The foregoing words formed part of the utterance of Dr. H. Wilder Foote at a memorial service to Dr. Hosmer, who died on 7 June, 1929, after having been regarded, for many years, as the greatest of living hymn-writers. His title to so high a rank rested not on the merit of some one or two of his hymns, but on the fact that he had an unrivalled mastery of the technique of hymn-writing. But that alone would not account for the wide popularity of his work. He had also the greater gifts of the spirit. He brought to his task, or rather to his labour of love, a rare insight into the problems and the aspirations of the human heart, a high idealism, a cultured and thoughtful mind, a profound spiritual experience, and lucidity of utterance.

Hosmer was born in Framingham, Mass., on 16 October, 1840. His life-long friend, William Channing Gannett, was born but a few months earlier in the same year, and John White Chadwick three days later. Together, or each alone, they have made a very worthy contribution to American Unitarian hymnody.

In 1838 Emerson had delivered his Divinity School address, and in 1841 Theodore Parker put forth his stirring manifesto, *The Transient and Permanent in Christianity* at the South Boston ordination service. And it came about that Hosmer, Gannett, and Chadwick, in the earlier days of their respective ministries, were known as ultra-radicals. They were well versed in science and philosophy, knew their way about the tangled and thorny paths of Biblical criticism, and were well read in world literature. Both Gannett and Hosmer, so it has been said, and on good authority, were soon classed as atheists, “although of all Unitarians, East or West, there were none who lived in the thought of God more habitually and intimately than they.”

Hosmer graduated from the Cambridge Divinity School in 1869, and ministered, successively, to congregations at Northborough, Mass.; Quincy, Ill.; Cleveland, Ohio; St. Louis, Missouri; and Berkeley, California. He continued to live at Berkeley after his resignation of the pulpit there in 1904. His successor, then a young man just ordained to the ministry, has said of Dr. Hosmer :

“ Always the soul of courtesy, never intruding his own point of view or the plans which he had cherished for his beloved church, and yet ready to help in any way when help was sought, I found him the type of friend that helps and encourages and never embarrasses. His smile was contagious wherever he went, and his ready wit made him the best of companions. It is perhaps little known that this one, who could search the depths of the soul, was also the author of some excellent nonsense verse, which those who knew him best delighted to hear him recite.”

In the year 1885 Hosmer and Gannett published what is now known as the first series of their poems, under the title of *The Thought of God*. A second series appeared in 1894, and in 1918 a volume containing the first and second series, together with a third, the old and original title being retained. In a review of the 1918 edition, the late W. Garrett Horder, for many years among the foremost of our English hymnologists, said: “ It is precious beyond words . . . far more inspiring and beautiful than Keble’s *Christian Year*.”

As early as 1877, Hosmer had published *The Way of Life, a Service Book for Sunday Schools*, at the request of friends engaged in Sunday School work. Three years later (1880) *Unity Hymns and Chorals*, under the joint editorship of Hosmer, Gannett, and J. V. Blake, made its appearance. For the revised and enlarged edition

(1911) Hosmer and Gannett were alone responsible. There are in it a dozen of Hosmer’s poems which were included in *The Thought of God* (first series); there is, also, ample testimony of the care he bestowed on all his work before it was given to the public.

The total number of hymns in the latest edition of *Unity Hymns and Chorals*, is three hundred and thirty-five. In explanation thereof the editors’ preface says: “ Many churches will, of course, prefer a wider range both of hymns and tunes. But familiarity and association have much to do with hymn-love and tune-use; and few congregations use more than three hundred hymns, or can sing more than one hundred tunes with success and enjoyment.” In further reference to tunes, the editors say: “ The feeling has grown that the great tunes are comparatively few; and that certain old and noble tunes, even if oft repeated, make worthier settings than many of the new ones provided in such variety by the large hymn-books.”

The first poem in the first series of *The Thought of God* is Hosmer’s well-known “ One thought I have, my ample creed,” and we may well quote the fourth stanza, for it completely indicates the, as it were, essential trend of its author’s mind:—

I ask not far before to see,
But take in trust my road;
Life, death, and immortality
Are in my thought of God.

Hosmer scans the farthest stretch of human

thought, faces the ultimate questions of life, makes his song fit measure of man's full stature and his immortal life. We miss something of the significance of his hymns if we pass by the many indications that when he thinks of man his thought is bounded only by eternity. This is perhaps the more significant when we have regard to the fact that he has been accounted as belonging to the radical wing of a movement which, in the main, during the last two or three generations, has ever tended to fix its gaze on the brotherhood of man here on earth, has seen its first work to be very near at hand, and almost failed to stress adequately the hope of immortality and its significance in interpreting this life :—

The soul's horizon widens,
Past, present, future blend ;
And rises on our vision
The life that hath no end.

On reading Hosmer's hymns we do not think of them as written for special occasions ; but it is nevertheless true that many of them, perhaps most of them, are linked up with some event—a church dedication, an ordination, a religious festival, or even a national holiday. He receives a telegram calling him to the funeral of a young friend at whose wedding he had but recently officiated ; out of his own grief and his sympathy with the bereaved comes the wonderfully tender hymn, *Father, we look to thee in all our sorrow*. He hears the news of the wreck of the S.S. *Schillier* and the

loss of all on board, and whilst yet on the train he writes *O thou in all thy might so far*.

But surely we are not wrong in believing that Hosmer is at his best in the hymns that have been born, not as a response to some call from without, but have come spontaneously from out deep wells of thought and feeling. How much of simple faith and trust there is in that outpouring of the heart when he had just heard of the young friend's death referred to above :—

When fond hopes fail and skies are dark before us,
When the vain cares that vex our life increase,—
Comes with its calm the thought that thou art o'er us,
And we grow quiet, folded in thy peace.

Nought shall affright us on thy goodness leaning,
Low in the heart faith singeth still her song ;
Chastened by pain we learn life's deeper meaning,
And in our weakness thou dost make us strong.

Nor must we omit to make mention of the *O beautiful, my country!* written in 1884. In this hymn, Hosmer has put into words the ideals and the aspirations of every true-minded citizen, of whatever country he may be. It is said to have been suggested by lines in Lowell's *Commemoration Ode*, and ranks high among American national hymns.

For not a few reasons it may be anticipated that Hosmer's hymns will be sung by many generations yet to come. They are, not seldom, so simple in both their language and in its phrasing that, so far as their literary form is concerned, they bear no marked impress of any age ; nor do these

hymns sing the faith of any particular epoch, but utter forth the few deep convictions which, throughout the ages, have given courage to upward-struggling man.

In 1908, Hosmer gave a course of lectures on *Church Hymnody*, in the Harvard Divinity School, and at the Pacific Unitarian School in 1912. He was not only a hymn-writer, but was also the student of hymnology. He had not thought meanly of the writing of hymns; he found it an art worthy to be closely studied. Hymns are, or should be, poems, but poems suitable for use in public worship. There should be nothing diffuse in the thought set forth; if there are depths of meaning, the language must, nevertheless, remain simple and easily intelligible, and be so phrased that it almost sings itself. "The hymn," says Hosmer, "with its rhythm and music, wings thought and feeling and blends the many voices in one as no read words can do, whether in the so-called 'responsive readings' or in prayer. Moreover, the hymn, if it be a real hymn, carries within it the strains of aspiration and prayer. This can make the singing of it the moment of highest uplift and thus vitalize the whole service." And the sum of the matter is: "The choir may lead, but congregational singing is the natural, valuable part of the liturgy. It atmospheres the entire service."

XIX

WILLIAM CHANNING GANNETT,

D.D.

1840-1923

"If he 'hitched his wagon to a star,' he always had a real wagon, with wheels on the earth and with earthly work to do. And there was always a real star, that twinkled and danced and charmed and pulled." As spoken of William Channing Gannett, no words could get nearer the truth, so long as we remember that the "real star" symbolizes a light which not only charmed and pulled, but also revealed the way of discipline and restraint. Gannett was born in Boston, Mass., on 13 March, 1840. His father, Ezra Stiles Gannett, was the colleague and successor of William Ellery Channing in the ministry at the Federal Street Meeting-House, and it was Channing himself who baptized the young William Gannett, that great and notable preacher dying less than two and a half years later.

Boston, together with the neighbouring town of Cambridge, was the centre of very much of the best of New England culture and thought. What was soon to be the quickly rising tide of immigra-

tion had not then very appreciably impaired the influence and the potency of traditions which were a sacred heritage and widely cherished. It was the Boston in which Nathaniel Hawthorne was "murdering so many of the brightest hours of the day" at the Custom-House, *The Scarlet Letter* not yet written; less than two years earlier Emerson had delivered, in Cambridge, the notorious and then famous Divinity School Address. Thoreau was in retreat by Walden Pond; Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was the young Professor of Modern Languages at Harvard; Theodore Parker, out at West Roxbury, was very soon to deliver his epoch-making sermon, *The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity*. In the years when William Channing Gannett grew to manhood "all the great writers of the New England galaxy were at their zenith—the poets chanting as 'the morning stars sang together,' the prose-writers and historians adding their soberer accompaniment. The Transcendental movement was in full swing, with Emerson at its head. The Anti-Slavery movement, with William Lloyd Garrison as its prophet, was filling the land with the lightning of its moral passion and the thunder of its fierce denunciation of iniquity. . . . It was a goodly heritage, and William Gannett entered into it all.

"Baptized with water by Channing, he was baptized in the spirit by Emerson. Theodore Parker also laid a spell upon his youth, and gave

him the courage, the radicalism, and the deep human tenderness that marked him all his years." So in 1862 he goes off, in the first Freedman's Relief Party, to Port Royal, to labour for the uplift of the emancipated slaves. Later, when Savannah had been taken by the Union armies, he transferred himself to that city in the service of the Freedman's Bureau. Three years he devoted to this work.

Already in 1861 he had had, subsequent to his graduation, a few months' study in the Harvard Divinity School, and in 1867 he re-entered for two years' further preparation for the Unitarian ministry, in which he was to labour for nearly forty years. Early pastorates were at East Lexington, Milwaukee, St. Paul, and Hinsdale, but his most considerable work was done at Rochester, N.Y., where he ministered from 1889 to 1908 and was Minister Emeritus from 1908 to 1923. And wherever Gannett had been there was left behind a precious and long-remembered influence for good.

In thinking of him as poet, mystic, and seer we have to think also of a man with earthly work to do and doing it. A striving for the Kingdom of God here and now was ever an essential part of his activities. In him the ethical impulse was strong and persistent; along with it there was tenacity of purpose and executive power. His interest in practical issues was never confined to the social work, which, by external agencies, ameliorates the common lot; he gave much thought

to the domestic virtues and to what may be achieved in the home itself. Four of his small booklets are entitled: *The House Beautiful, Of Making Oneself Beautiful, The Little Child at the Breakfast Table, The Household Altar*. His sermons *Blessed be Drudgery, Wrestling and Blessing*, and others are said to have reached hundreds of thousands of readers.

For many years Gannett was a prolific writer. He helped to found the weekly journal *Unity*, and contributed extensively to its columns. His biography of his father contains what is still the best and most complete account of the first half-century and more of New England Unitarianism. Capacity for scholarly research was revealed in *The Childhood of Jesus*, a book presenting graphically the conditions of life and the human environment in the Palestine which Jesus knew.

Of Gannett's hymns the most widely used is that which follows; it was written in 1873, and printed for the use of the Free Religious Association Festival, 30 May, 1874, and was included in the first edition of *The Thought of God*, a collection of poems and hymns by Gannett and his friend Frederick Lucian Hosmer:—

He hides within the lily
A strong and tender care,
That wins the earth-born atoms
To glory of the air;
He weaves the shining garments
Unceasingly and still,
Along the quiet waters,
In niches of the hill.

We linger at the vigil
With him who bent the knee
To watch the old-time lilies
In distant Galilee;
And still the worship deepens
And quickens into new,
As, brightening down the ages,
God's secret thrilleth through.

O Toiler of the lily,
Thy touch is in the Man!
No leaf that dawns to petal
But hints the angel plan.
The flower-horizons open!
The blossom vaster shows!
We hear thy wide world's echo,—
See how the lily grows!

Shy yearning of the savage,
Unfolding thought by thought,
To holy lives are lifted,
To visions fair are wrought;
The races rise and cluster,
And evils fade and fall,
Till chaos blooms to beauty,
Thy purpose crowning all.

There speaks the prophet of Transcendentalism and of immanence as well; the four verses are the proclamation of a profound belief. Like most of Gannett's hymns, it challenges thought; it is fine in the beauty and the splendour of its imagery; poetry has become the handmaid of the glad evangel. There is radiancy of both thought and imagination, and the thought outruns the utterance. Perhaps Gannett lacked something of the simplicity for which we look in the best hymns, and the easy-flowing cadences are apt to escape

him, but for literary excellence there are among hymn-writers few to place before him.

Bring, O morn, thy music! of which two verses may here be quoted, was written in 1893, and printed in *A Chorus of Faith*, that volume being an account and résumé of the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893 :—

Bring, O morn, thy music! Bring, O night, thy silence!
Oceans laugh the rapture to the storm-winds coursing free!
Suns and planets chorus,—“Thou art our Creator,
Who wert, and art, and ever more shall be!”

Light us! lead us! love us! cry thy groping nations,
Pleading in the thousand tongues, but naming only thee,
Weaving blindly out thy holy, happy purpose,—
Who wert, and art, and ever more shall be!

These are lines both felicitous and vigorous. The occasion would be such as to appeal to Gannett, for it has been said of him that “the world was his country and all humanity’s concerns were his.” Combined with this wideness of outlook and all-embracing sympathy was a sensitiveness to those near at hand. He was not of those who love Humanity but forget men. He was the good citizen of every community in which he lived; in Rochester he was, for many years, a leader in the social work of that city. He was the beloved pastor of his people, and had a rare gift for friendship, which could tide the affairs of many years. Such friendship had he with both Hosmer and Chadwick. All three were born in the same year, 1840. Together with Chadwick, he had part in

the writing of a Harvest Thanksgiving hymn (*Now, sing we a song of the harvest*) which may well be destined for wide usage. It provides a sacred song less rousing, perhaps, than one or two of the more popular harvest hymns, but it has a greater inclusiveness :—

For all that the bountiful Giver
Hath given to gladden our days.

It takes note of

The harvest eyes only can gather
And only our hearts can enfold,

and also of those

that eye cannot see;
They ripen on mountains of duty,
Are reaped by the brave and the free.

Gannett’s hymns were mainly written for special occasions. His output, whether of hymns or poems, does not appear to be very considerable, but it is not unlikely that this is due, in part, to a fairly high degree of fastidiousness in his judgment as to what was worthy to be printed.

Those who knew him speak of a life of rare beauty and gentleness, though of great strength and power. “No man was more uncompromising than he, yet no man more sympathetic in his understanding of his opponents or more gracious in his treatment of them.” Another testifies that “none saw the heavenly vision more clearly than he,” and it was said of him that he acquainted men

with Deity "by his presence as well as by his poems." He died 15 December, 1923, full of years and full of confidence. Had he not himself written the lines :—

Eternities past and future
Seem clinging to all I see,
And things immortal cluster
Around my bended knee.

XX

WILLIAM GEORGE TARRANT

1853–1928

WILLIAM GEORGE TARRANT is assured of a place among the foremost of English Unitarian hymn-writers. It is easy now to suppose him to have been the most notable of them all, especially in respect of range and variety of output. Nevertheless, we are too near to him to be quite sure about the survival value of many of his hymns which to us seem so adequate, and fit exactly our notions of what a hymn should be. It is necessary to remember that earlier generations of hymn-singers and hymn-lovers would have given the same commendation to many hymns now discarded and forgotten.

Quite clearly happiness and joy were for him an essential outcome of religious faith : he loves the blithe and happy spirit ; he has a very special liking for the hymn that is primarily a sacred song. We are to sing because our hearts are glad. Our faith is not to be something dour and grim, but that which brings to us sweetness and light. And our song may be not only the expression of our joy, but that whereby we recapture it when it is

threatened or already lost. Here are his own words :—

The heart will break that sings no more,
Come, sing with me ;

Though faith should falter, Love is strong—
The music of a manly song
May help to lead the world along,
Come sing with me.

And he makes his own confession :—

The tide that bears my life along
Moves to an everlasting Song.

Many hymns reveal the spirit of prayer rather than the spirit of praise ; it is because, as Tarrant recognized, the latter is the greater achievement. Both prayer and aspiration are *comparatively* easy to most of us ; they are directed to what we are sure will be an enlargement and enriching of our own spiritual life. In our worship, in our praise, we seek for nothing at all, we ask for nothing at all ; consciousness of self and its needs has left us ; we are giving utterance to our consciousness of God. We are finding expression for the lyric of our own spiritual life—for our intense personal recognition of God as “ the centre and soul of every sphere, yet to each loving heart how near.”

Tarrant's little book entitled *Songs Devout* has a Prelude of which the first stanza contains these words :—

Songs devout, may such be mine,
Prayers that blossom into praise,
Little sheaves of light divine
Harvested on sunny days.

A few pages further on we find the affirmation :—

Sweet is the music of my life
And full of praise my prayer.

It is just because of this that some of his hymns are so readily sung. They create an atmosphere of joy and gladness ; the music of our lives is sweetened and enlivened too. In this respect some of the hymns for children are noteworthy :—

With happy voices ringing,
Thy children, Lord, appear,
Their joyous praises bringing
In anthems sweet and clear ;
For skies of golden splendour,
For azure rolling sea,
For blossoms sweet and tender,
O Lord, we worship thee.

And is there anywhere another hymn of which the words trip along so jauntily, yet without offence, as do those of the following hymn ?

The heart that is singing a melody sweet
Is ever the blithest another can meet ;
Though secret the music, it ripples along,
And mortals, unknowing, are glad of the song.

As dancing the streamlet of melody flows
It makes the grass greener wherever it goes,
The wilderness blossoms, a garden of spring,
And souls that were silent take courage and sing.

If darkness should gather, of pain or regret,
The song in the shadow is beautiful yet,
In secret the music flows cheerily on
Till shadows are lifted, and sorrow is gone.

Give me, O thou Fountain of music divine,
In my life, though lowly, an echo of thine,
Then lowly, but lovely, my singing shall be
A joy to the joyless, to lead them to thee !

Always in these hymns there is implicit the suggestion that a joy possessed is a joy to be shared. The writer is no solitary singer; he never forgets that there are others. And he knows that our attitude towards our fellow-men determines the quality of the song that can be ours. He says: "How sure a test of our moods it is that, when a man inclines to evil, the good songs, the songs of pure joy, of hope, of trust and high aspiration, fade away, and even become unnatural! Let but an uncharitable mood possess you, and in that 'strange land' no song of the soul's true Zion can arise. Let an unforgiving temper prevail, a disposition 'to have it out' to the uttermost farthing, then the sweeter voices of the heart die away. As when thunder broods dark above the forest, the bird-music dies, so dies the sunny music of the soul when we shut out love, for then we shut out God, who is Love. Find me a man who thinks harshly of his fellow-men, one that judges quickly and severely, and suspects much, a man that counts the heart to be 'deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,' shall we hear the 'Lord's song' from him? Will he lead little children in happy ways, help young men and women to grow wise and gracious, cheer the faint-hearted and get the world's work along, or make the widow's heart to sing for joy? Indeed, my brother, it cannot be."

William George Tarrant knew how to cheer, to help, and to lead his fellow-men. Though of an

eager and active mind he never seemed bookish; though very much at home in the study, he was not less ready for personal contacts of many kinds. Such gospel as was his he tried out in the affairs of life.

He was born on 2 July, 1853, in the military barracks at Pembroke. In the following year his father fell at the siege of Sebastopol, and in 1859 he lost his mother also. Leaving school at the age of fourteen he served an apprenticeship of seven years as a silversmith. In 1879 he became a student for the Unitarian ministry, and four years later, having taken his B.A. degree at London University, settled in Wandsworth as minister of the recently formed congregation there. Here he maintained an arduous but remarkably successful and influential ministry for nearly thirty-seven years. His "cheerfulness and understanding sympathy were infectious. Young children as well as elderly people instinctively felt his friendliness, and became immediately responsive to his kindly thought and word."

This is not the place in which to make more than brief reference to the great variety of work extraneous to the Wandsworth ministry which Tarrant undertook. As a committee-man he had few equals, and in this respect how generously he gave both time and thought! He never allowed himself to be blind to possibilities of service, and the list of the Societies and Institutions which, through long years, had the benefit of his counsel

and advice indicates a range of preoccupations that would seem to leave little opportunity for anything else besides. Nevertheless, for two periods of about nine years each (1888-97, 1918-27), he edited with conspicuous success *The Inquirer*, the most important periodical of the Unitarian movement in this country. One way and another, his literary output was very considerable; but for the most part it took the form of that which was immediately serviceable rather than of that which would gain for the writer a wider reputation and the tribute which was his due. To serve his own day and generation seemed to be his utmost wish. He was one of the editors of the first and subsequent editions of the *Essex Hall Hymnal*. The first contained none of his own hymns, though some of those which are now amongst the best known had already appeared in print, but in the last edition (with supplement) there were ten hymns under his name. The later *Hymns of Worship* contains the same number (and an adaptation of the hymn—*Christians, awake!*), whilst *Hymns for School and Home* (1920) contains fifteen, of which eight are not included in the *Hymns of Worship*.

During the whole of his ministry at Wandsworth, he taught and worked in the Sunday School. For many years he was on the Committee of the Sunday School Association, for which he edited two annual volumes of *The Helper* (1901-2) and published the two small volumes

Home Prayers for Young People (1914) and *For Girls and Boys* (stories from the *Inquirer*, 1924). A number of his hymns were written particularly for children, and are such that they have been gladly and widely used:—

If I were a blackbird and lived in a wood,
I'd make it the happiest place that I could;
I'd whistle, and carol, and warble all day,
Till all the world's trouble I warbled away.

This hymn is in the same vein as those of which mention has already been made, but it would be a mistake to suppose that to William George Tarrant the gospel of cheerfulness and joy was everything. There was also a gospel of work, and combined with it the call to comradeship and mutual service, such as is to be found in the hymns *My Master was a worker, With daily work to do*, and *Go, work in my vineyard, my garden and field*. In the little volume of *Songs Devout* a complete section is devoted to poems of "Comradeship," amongst which is one entitled *The Amulet*, with its first stanza:—

When my little day is ended
Be it truly said of me—
Here was one who much befriended,
Tried himself a friend to be.

He was awake also to the growing demand for hymns having relevance to Social Service. The old almost exclusive emphasis on the salvation of the individual soul and on particular kinds of spiritual experience has already yielded somewhat

to an increasing desire for hymns of brotherhood and service—for a hymnody of the Kingdom of God here on earth, a hymnody celebrating and stimulating enthusiasm for humanity. So, for Citizen Sunday, 1905, Tarrant wrote the now well-known hymn :—

The fathers built this city
In ages long ago.

And for the Sunday School scholars there is the hymn :—

Lend a hand ! Lend a hand !
Thousands need you, sinking, falling,
Hear ye not their voices, calling—
“ Lend a hand ! ”

Those who knew the writer best, recognized in him the good friend, the persistent worker, the responsible citizen, and—above all—the man of faith. There was for him the inward sanctuary of the soul, and because of what went on there his achievement was such as it was. It has been said that “ the sermon was not the most characteristic feature of a religious service conducted by Mr. Tarrant. He possessed in an unusual degree the gift of prayer—a gift which is becoming increasingly rare among educated men and women. The listening worshipper could not avoid feeling that here was a man to whom prayer was natural and spontaneous. Here was evidence that the human spirit may commune with the Divine.” And so it is that we feel that there is neither affectation nor

presumption in the title of the little book *Songs Devout* ; Tarrant was himself, before God, a devout and humble soul.

O Heart Divine, that e'en on me
Hast set thy Love's prophetic seal,
In lowliness I come to thee,
Thy grace to know, my need to feel.

The beautiful hymn *Draw nigh to God, he will draw nigh to you*, bears its similar witness and is beloved by many. Perhaps still more widely acceptable is the hymn :—

Long ago the lilies faded
Which to Jesus seemed so fair,
But the Love that bade them blossom
Still is working everywhere.

On the moors, and in the valleys,
By the streams we love so well,
There is greater glory blooming
Than the tongue of man can tell.

Long ago in sacred silence
Died the accents of his prayer ;
Still the souls that seek the Father
Find his presence everywhere.

In the multitude adoring,
In the chamber sad and lone,
He is there to help and comfort,
As they pray, “ Thy will be done ! ”

Let us seek him, still believing
He that worketh round us yet,
Clothing lilies in the meadows,
Will his children ne'er forget.

Till very nigh the close of his life William George Tarrant remained busily engaged in his editorial

work and in the services he rendered to the various committees with which he had been long associated. He died peacefully in his sleep on 15 January, 1928, following on an illness which ran its course with unexpected swiftness. Long had he believed that in God's presence there is fulness of joy and "a fountain of music divine," and few can have been more ready for the summons :—

To sing the songs of victory
With faithful souls above.

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