

A MOST GIFTED SOUTHERN JOURNALIST

By DR. T. B. KINGSBURY.



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Prior to 1861 there were some few well known and distinguished Journalists in our Southland. Writers of eminence were well known, because the present system had not come into vogue of suppressing the real writers, and putting publishers who never wrote to the front as the real contributors. Virginia excelled, so far as I remember, and Edward William Johnston, (brother of General Joseph E. Johnston, the great soldier), John Hampden Pleasant, John M. Dapell and Roger A. Pryor were the best known, and were really of very marked gifts. Forty years ago I knew the names of almost every really eminent Journalist in New York city. Today I do not know by name one who is conspicuous for his qualities as a writer, and yet New York has 4,000,000 inhabitants, while in 1860 it had not more than 800,000, if so much. The writers on the leading newspapers are absorbed, and have no personal acquaintance with outsiders.

I wish to write of a Southern Journalist who "perished in his prime," now nearly or quite eighteen years ago. I refer to Henry W. Grady, a native of Georgia, and of good North Carolina descent, as I have seen it stated that his parents were born in this State. He was the son of Governor-elect Hoke Smith. His death came as a great shock, and was much lamented all over the South. At the time of his death he was probably the most brilliant of our gifted men of his own age in our favored section of the American Union. It was an "Union of States" that was formed and not a Nation. He was a born orator, and a born Journalist. If I have studied his record, correctly, he had both readiness and amplitude of power as a writer and the gift of eloquence beyond all rivals of his own age who edited and in a most marked degree. I never met him, but I greatly admired him, and read all his productions for the press that I saw. He edited the Atlanta Constitution when I was his constant reader, and he made it very attractive, influential, potent. His journalistic career was approved and enjoyed and distinguished throughout by a remarkable blending of the brilliant with the practical, the thoughtful with the imaginative. He was capable of producing an article of uncommon rhetorical finish and beautiful for sentiment. He could turn to the driest, most business-like of topics and surpass the Dry-as-dust plodder in his own narrow chosen field. He was always discussing questions that looked to the development, the enrichment and the glory of his native South. Whatever concerned the happiness, the progress, the renown of his own people, he so well understood and admired, concerned him, and the whole Southland was included. For he was governed by "no pent up ill."

He had that very rare power that comes of the birthright of genius, or of magnificent gifts that are of near akin. He possessed in a most marked degree that wondrous gift of saying old things in a new way, and investing them with the charm of originality. He had the Midas touch by which the dross of inaneness and common-place could be transmuted into the gold of rich, perhaps genuine poetic sentiment. He possessed that noble art of making the old appear in the attractive fivory of the new. He had the uncommon combination of judgment and skill which enabled him to seize the right idea, and by the winning power of rhetoric or speech present it with such grace, felicity and earnestness as to convert by enthral the hearer. He had the gift of eloquence in a high and refined degree such as is bestowed by God upon but few of the aspiring children of men. He could avoid, by happy intention, the dangers that lay in the track of his argosy of speech, and by graceful tacking and ingenious steering could pass successfully and safely between Scylla and Charybdis. His was an astonishing and yet noble endowment. Gracious and friendly. Muses must have stood by his cradle in the birth-hour, and the one who could bestow the high gift of fertile, felicitous and fascinating speech smiled benignantly.

while the other who could endow with the rare qualities of a ready and fruitful writer and a vocabulary responsive to every demand, rich and select, looked with benignant favor and withheld not her hand.

"His words were like the notes of dying swans, Too sweet to last."

Although "his tongue dropped manna," and he could even "charm the wildest temper," and win applause from the people of Boston of a frigid, unympathetic clime, and by happy and tender words even compel the enemies of his own people to bestow their praises in no unstinted way, he could not stay the biting, unfriendly winds and the nipping and cruel atmosphere of winter or drive back the deavouring disease that came from them to lay him low in the full flush of manhood's perfect prime. He died from an attack produced by exposure while addressing the people of Boston in mid-winter. What a sad bereavement it was! What an untimely death, viewed from the standpoint of "ath!" And yet his work was done. His fame sufficed. He had given his heart to God. He had accepted Jesus Christ as his savior. He had placed his hopes upon the fullness of the efficacy of the Atonement of the blessed Son of God. The man of youth and strength, of gifts and accomplishments, of aspirations and hopes, of heart and sympathy had to meet so soon the inevitable summons, and to lie so far as the body was involved in "the alabaster arms of death." The South sorrowed over the enforced early departure of the "young Marcellus"—possibly its most gifted among the young of his age, who was sounding the depths of fame, and riding so successfully, so bravely upon the high crest of popular favor and admiration—another illustration of the truth spoken by the poet, that—

"The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

I have said that Henry W. Grady was eloquent, but he never used his noble gifts for an ignominious end. He was mainly of speech. Once, as I recall, under the enticements of the occasion, in a speech in the North, he conceded too much, as I believed, and went too far to conciliate the inimical temper of the North. I think I wrote in the current phrase of that day, that he even "gushed." Others far "ss gifted and elevated, of the South, have gone farther since, and "gushed" more unbecomingly. But sychophancy never pays and is sure to rear. Mr. Grady was young, but he soon outgrew any "gushing" propensity to conciliate and bow. He developed into a bolder, more aggressive advocacy of the right, and later in one of the most remarkable speeches that I ever heard delivered in this country, since 1861, he presented the Southern side of a most difficult and perplexing question with masterful art, with high persuasive eloquence, and with that intrepidity born of conscious integrity of purpose and love of truth and justice. He gave his hearers an example of Southern fervid eloquence at the best, saying only what was necessary to be said, and wooed by no syren of wrong or selfishness to utter one word

of falsehood, or that smacked of time-serving and prostitution of gifts. He showed that he was an orator whose eloquence was natural and fervid, and arose ex re nata from the subject created, the occasion, the environment.

If the life of Mr. Grady had been extended until now I have no doubt as to the splendor of his public success. He would probably have been sent to the U. S. Senate, and it is not improbable that he might have been nominated for the Vice-Presidency in 1896 or 1900 or later. That he would have been Governor of his own native Georgia, I may be sure. He would have won in all probability a wider fame in the American Union and been a man of more conspicuous mark. If there had been a Democratic President he would have been chosen as Minister Plenipotentiary to Great Britain perhaps, and what an admirable and charming official he would have been. But this was not to be. He fell when his earthly sun was rapidly ascending to the zenith of its glory. He went to his grave even before his noble intellect had fully flowered. But God knows all and doeth all things right. He called his servant from the earthly rivalries and the earthly coronals and the earthly aspirations to a higher and nobler sphere, to a brighter, more glorious scene, to a far dearer, sweeter fruition, to a more triumphant and splendid coronation. He was taken from a wild of madness, temptation and rebellion to the City of God where the blessed Redeemer is, to wear a robe that in richness and magnificence outshines all the united gems of earth. He entered upon the higher and more perfect life of ecstasy and song where the "sacramental hosts of God's elect" are enjoying the endless, perfect peace and rest of Heaven. In going he left for the young men of the South a rich legacy in a pure, consecrated and devoted noble life. He had shown them that the duty of a true man is to glorify his Maker and to serve, love and honor his Father and his God. He had shown them that man who walks reverently, obediently, steadfastly in the ways of morality, filial service and true religion and piety is indeed glorifying his Creator, Preserver and ever-blessed Benefactor, and shall receive all the applause here that it is good for him to receive, and in the glorious life beyond the welcome of the redeemed and saved and the applause of God Himself. "Well done thou good and faithful servant."

The South lost a great and gifted son and Heaven opened its doors to the incoming of a saint—redeemed and cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. He was a true member of the Southern Methodist Church.

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Henry Grady is in Heaven. He is with his Crucified, Risen and ascended Redeemer.

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."

The adorable Saviour said to the thief on the cross, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Study the Book of Revelation in chapter second and last chapter, and learn where "Paradise" really is.

It is remarkable that in a few months three of the Bishops in the Southern Methodist E. Church should have died. They were Bishop Coke Smith, Bishop John J. Tigert and Bishop John C. Granbery. I think the first named was born in South Carolina, the second in Kentucky and the last in Virginia. They were born in question men of rare and admirable gifts. Bishop Smith was a pulp orator of rich, singular gifts. Bishop Tigert was a strong, thoughtful preacher, and of distinguished learning and ability and highly endowed as a writer. Bishop Granbery, who died last, and on April 1, 1907, was born in Norfolk, Va., on December 5th, 1829. Of him I wish to write briefly. I never knew him personally. I heard him preach in the First Presbyterian Church in Wilmington some ten years ago, perhaps it was. I was disappointed. It was calm, thoughtful, well written, but without passion, oratory or any semblance of eloquence. I was expecting a higher grade of preaching from him. I have since learned that he was in no sense an orator in delivery. But he was learned, finely equipped by study, and of most uncommon piety. In 1859 I read two sermons from his pen that appeared in that very precious volume of that year known as "The Methodist Pulpit South." There are twenty-six sermons in the most of which are indeed of very superior quality, and rich in Scriptural teaching—sound, genuine, faithful, Biblical all through. Two of these admirable sermons are by Bishop Granbery, the other contributors numbering twenty-four, furnishing one each. I noticed in 1859, that there were no better, abler sermons in the volume than the first sermon by Bishop Granbery on "Christianity Reasonable in its Doctrines and Demands." His other sermon was on "All Things Work for good" and is of very high quality, and of the very best in the important volume. I have read both sermons many times since, and am reading the last again. In 1906 I wrote a letter to him, and he replied to me in a most engaging and impressive piety. Distinguished editors and writers accentuate the depth of his piety and the graciousness and attractiveness of his religious character. Bisop O. P. Fitzgerald, Rev. Dr. Wilbur F. Tillett, Bishop Galloway and other divines of distinction, refer most admiringly and tenderly to the beauty and profundity of his Christian life. Dr. Tillett, in a choice tribute to him in the Nashville Christian Advocate of 14th April, referred particularly to his deep religious spirit, and said that among all his acquaintances in the Christian ministry "there is not one who emulated more perfectly in his personal character the qualities and attributes of an ideal Christian than John C. Granbery." Bishop Fitzgerald, one of his most intimate friends, writes that "he bore the image of his Lord; his consecration was thorough. The Church never had a more faithful servant." Bishop Galloway wrote of him: "His absolute integrity of spirit and life could bear the fiercest search-

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The men of the Keeley Institute were so kind to me that I can recommend them to any man who will go and be cured. No treatment can be better than what you get there. I consider it a blessing to any man to be able to go to the Greensboro Keeley Institute, where he may be freed from the power of alcohol and made a new man. God's richest blessings upon the Keeley Institute.

Respectfully yours, (Signed) A. W. GRIMSLEY, Farmville, N. C., Oct. 22, 1906. For further information, address

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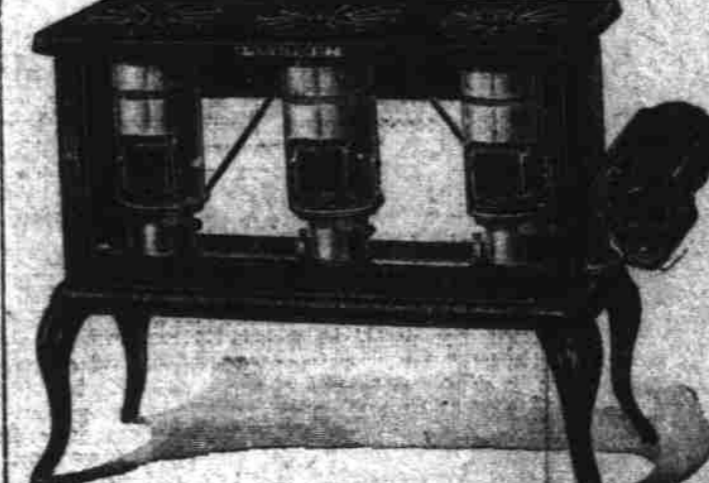
light." If I had known him long and personally I would delight to write of such a pure, exalted, saintly life—of such a discipline, whose life was hid for reading it again. "It is marked well written, and with exceeding clarity and force." The first sermon I place second to no sermon I ever read or heard by a Southern preacher of any denomination. I recall that forty-seven years ago my old school-mate and friend, Rev. Dr. Rufus T. Heflin, the first editor of the Raleigh Christian Advocate, wrote to me that it was the best sermon in the volume. Repeated readings assure me that it is surely second to none. The greatest, most distinguishing quality of the departed Bishop was his profound, most engaging and impressive piety. Distinguished editors and writers accentuate the depth of his piety and the graciousness and attractiveness of his religious character. Bisop O. P. Fitzgerald, Rev. Dr. Wilbur F. Tillett, Bishop Galloway and other divines of distinction, refer most admiringly and tenderly to the beauty and profundity of his Christian life. Dr. Tillett, in a choice tribute to him in the Nashville Christian Advocate of 14th April, referred particularly to his deep religious spirit, and said that among all his acquaintances in the Christian ministry "there is not one who emulated more perfectly in his personal character the qualities and attributes of an ideal Christian than John C. Granbery." Bishop Fitzgerald, one of his most intimate friends, writes that "he bore the image of his Lord; his consecration was thorough. The Church never had a more faithful servant." Bishop Galloway wrote of him: "His absolute integrity of spirit and life could bear the fiercest search-

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