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WILMINGTON, N. C.

SUNDAY, JUNE 19, 1898.

A GREAT WRITER "CAVIARE TO THE GENERAL"

If any one were to look into any manual of English literature of a date so far back as 1870 or 1875, he would hardly find the name of Edward Fitzgerald. If he were, informed fairly well as to this author he would be astonished at the strange omission. The explanation is found in the fact that a man of genius and a scholar of unusual attainments had failed to impress the British mind at large however high the appreciation of him by a few great men and some accomplished men of letters who had been drawn to him. In fact a genius of the most delightful and rarest quality, but erratic, singular and unique had lived, moved and had his being in England and had only curiously moved a very few of the best cultured and most richly endowed. It is a strange fact in literature. In the last few years, and particularly within the present year, there has been an awakening as to the marked merits of Fitzgerald. The man whose closest personal friends the greatest admirers were the three greatest authors of their time—Tennyson, Carlyle and Thackeray, was of distinguished personality and splendid gifts. Thackeray was asked whom he loved best among the men he knew. He said promptly calling him lovingly—"Dear old Fitz." He also said that Tennyson was the wisest and greatest man he ever knew.

Fitzgerald had a fine genius that was not readily discovered. It is described as "elusive," and yet it was genuine. Mr. Joel Benton lately wrote of him in the New York Times' "Saturday Review," that he had "a strikingly high and commanding intellectual attitude yet his achievements are often not visibly, spectacularly, nor vulgarly outward." The truth is he lived most of his manhood a life of a literary recluse far away from "the maddening crowd," and cultivated letters, and amused himself with writing the most delightful letters to his few choice friends, and now and then dashing into poetry or discussing something in a literary way. He was born in 1809, on March 21, in Suffolk county, the year that gave to the world Tennyson and Gladstone and Darwin among English men, and Abraham Lincoln, the Southern born child of miraculous fortune, and Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes. He was a reader of the best books. Among other books he read Shakespeare's "Sonnets," that few men of passing culture ever read, and fewer still ever understand. But by common consent of the foremost critics they are of strange beauty and excellence and are full worthy of the most exalted and majestic genius of the entire world of letters. When Fitzgerald in 1832 had first read the Sonnets he was fairly enraptured. He was twenty-three and wrote:

"I believe I am unprejudiced when I say I had but half an idea of him. Demigod as he seemed before, till I read them carefully . . . I have been truly lapped in these Sonnets for some time; they seem all stuck about my heart, like the ballads that used to be on the walls of London . . . I could talk for an hour about them."

From his university life to its close he and Tennyson were the warmest, most familiar of friends. He criticized the great poet with utmost freedom, and he prophesied great things of the young genius. After a visit from him in 1835, he wrote "that the more I have seen him the more cause I have to think him great." In 1849 he wrote Thackeray's "Vanity Fair" and the great impression he made by it. He said the author was "courted by Dukes and Duchesses and wits of both sexes." We are pleased to see lately that he liked "Pendennis," saying "it was quite delicious" and to him "so mature." It is the healthiest, breeziest of the great novels of a supreme genius. It is full of life and vigor and dash and wit and great human interest, and it is now known that he incorporated into it no little of himself in his hero.

We think Fitzgerald failed of appreciation in what he wrote of Tennyson's "The Princess" in 1848. It is better liked now. Indeed it is the most beautiful poem of its length written in a half century, and possibly, much longer. The exquisite songs in the poem are almost of unrivalled beauty and melody and perfection of form. Of Tennyson's "prose sayings" he thought them wonderfully clever, the finest of any man he knew. He failed, too,

strange to say, to value "In Memoriam" as the soundest, most judicious critical minds have valued it since and now. He admitted it was "full of finest things," but he evidently fell short in admiration and true discernment of its magic qualities of thought, style, music, philosophy, uplifting power. He did not like the stranza used nor the "monotony." He was so enamored of the poet's "bright sayings," that at one time he kept a note book of them, and in late years regretted he did not continue to take them down as they were "decisive verdicts as well as illuminating." Among Americans he had two attached friends and admirers in James Russell Lowell and Professor Charles E. Norton.

In 1894 his "Letters and Literary Remains" were published in three volumes. They were edited by an accomplished English author, William Aldis Wright. They have been read by the chief literary men of Great Britain and the North, but are not generally known. There is but one opinion as to their remarkable interest and excellence. The literati of the English speaking world have placed a high mark of superiority upon the letters, and, so far as we are informed, they are accorded a place among the best epistolary productions of the centuries, from Cicero's letters to Atticus unto the present. Mr. Benton who is a sane critic, says this:

"The correspondence alone would take rank at once with the best things in the literature of English letter-writing. This I do not hesitate to say deliberately, while remembering Walpole's letters so much quoted by Emerson; Cowper's, which stand in altitude with his best verse, though unfortunately known to so few; Matthew Arnold's, clothed with his incomparable touch and charm; the Carlyle-Emerson epistles; and, to be brief, the whole namable list. There could not be, it is easy to see, anything less than a distinctly rich personality in one who held on level terms the rosary of friends these letters represent."

When Fitzgerald lay dead his friend Tennyson, not knowing of the sad bereavement awaiting him, wrote a little poem dedicated to him. They were never read by the eyes that flashed forth genius nor reached the tender, sympathetic soul that kindled at his coming. Writing of the letters Mr. Benton says engagingly as he quotes immortal lines probably the coinage more of Fitzgerald than really a version made by him from the Oriental Omar Khayyam:

"The letters are in fact, literature and biography in matchless wedlock—shedding on so many things human, and on high discourse a tenderly warm and lambent light. May it not be said of them in a paraphrase drawn from their writer's and Omar's words:

"Iran indeed has gone with all his Rose,
And Jamschid's Seven-ringed Cup
where no one knows;
But still a Ruby kindles in the Vine,
And many a Garden by the water blows."

We had purposed in this connection dwelling for a little while upon the Englishman's most famous work—that which has probably given him immortality, his translation or paraphrase as it is called, of an Eastern poet known as Omar Khayyam whose stanzas, or Rubaiyat were rendered into verse that not only rescued the Oriental from oblivion but made his interpreter forever famous. It is more an original work than a translation on the part of Fitzgerald. Professor George Saintsbury, whom we have found to be one of the safest of living critics, as he is one of the best interpreters of genius, says of the translation or version or paraphrase of the "Rubaiyat," remarking upon the great liberties the Englishman took with the original, and saying that in spite of this want of liberality and faithfulness to the original, that "yet the total effect is reproduced as perhaps no other translator has ever reproduced it." He says farther on: "But the beauty of the poem is unmistakable and altogether astounding. The melancholy richness of the rolling quatrain with its uncouth rhymes, passion and playfulness, the abundance of imagery, the power of thought the seduction of the rhetoric, makes the poem actually though not original or English, one of the greatest of English poems. We compared some of the original Persian translated literally into English with the marvellous work of Fitzgerald and it was easy to see how he had injected a new interest, introduced a new power and fascination that were not found in the original. Edmund Gosse, critic of delight and replete with verbal felicities, says of the version: "It appears that he took Dryden's license, and carried it further; that he steeped himself in the language and feeling of his author, and then threw over his version the robes of his own peculiar style." We may recur to Fitzgerald and quote more at length from Gosse, with something from Andrew Lang. This rich genius died in 1833 on the 14th of June, in his 75th year. He was at Trinity College, Cambridge University, with Tennyson and Thackeray. Just think of three such friends, not to name three or four others of the set who were highly endowed, as these immortals, at one college at one time—Alfred the Great, Thackeray the Great and Fitzgerald the distinguished and marvellously endowed. Since jotting this down we find that at Cambridge there was no acquaintance between Tennyson and our author.

He published his great poem on the 15th of January, 1837. It was long before its distinguished merits were recognized by literary men, save by a very few. He married the daughter

of Bernard Barton, the poet-Quaker and friend of Lamb, but of her we know nothing, nor how long their wedded life continued. Of some others, of his writings we may write again.

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RELIGIOUS EDITORIALS FOR SUNDAY

The sincere, evangelical, consecrated, earnest Bishop of Liverpool, Rev. Dr. Ryle, author of some very useful tracts that forty years ago were widely circulated and improvingly read, still lives loved, esteemed, venerated. He is now in his 83rd year, and the oldest of all English bishops. He is vigorous for his years and diligent with pen and speech. He is a church dignitary to confide in, to admire, to love, for he is good and faithful and lovable.

The aged "General" Booth, of the very useful Salvation Army, was lately preaching to 400 ministers in Philadelphia. It is said he quickly woke them up, when he fired point-blank at close range in this wise: "You won't let a man drown himself, why let him damn himself?" They were moved. But he did not rest with this direct shot. He went on:

"Are you satisfied to amuse people on their way to hell? You say you believe that their souls are in danger, and yet your service is to tickle them with entertainments, to preach milk-and-water trawdle or waffle over their heads. The fact is you don't believe your belief!" And the crowd of ministers laughed and applauded! "It is safe to say," says the Universalist Leader of Boston and Chicago, "that in all his long experience, in the worst phases of our life, General Booth never met more incorrigible sinners than these ministers of the Gospel who laughed at their conviction as dishonest and inhuman."

That is the way the Universalist organ looks at it. Is it far off in what it says? Is it not close shooting, both that of the preacher and the editor? Is General Booth clean out of it? Who with open eyes can believe it? The editor says farther:

"Is it not a fact that theoretically they believe that the multitudes with which they laugh and joke upon the street are lost? And yet they give them no warning, and amuse them on their way to hell! When the general gets all the rest of the world into the Army, he has a fine field for service among the orthodox ministers."

There is verily serious food for thought in that arraignment. Think of "a lost soul." What it imports, and what should be done to save a soul from being lost.

"All unrighteousness is sin," says the New Testament. "Sin is the transgression of law," is another Scripture. "For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." If these declarations of God amount to any thing, sin is very deceitful and very grievous, and it is no easy thing to be a genuine Christian, a true disciple of the Crucified and Risen Lord. The results of sin are seen in this life and in death, in time and in eternity. "Know yet not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God?" If these and a great many other Scriptures bearing upon sin and its consequences are true then it is a very difficult thing indeed to live for God and walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called. The way is narrow indeed that leads to eternal life in glory. The chief end of man is to glorify God, and his chief aim should be to get home to Heaven. It requires great circumspection, exceeding prayer, constant effort, unyielding steadfastness "to make the trip" and reach the goal and win the crown. The condition of eternal salvation is perseverance unto the end. Those who weary in well doing and cease to strive to enter in shall never enter in. That is God's teaching and is in the blessed Word of Life, plain, clear, unmistakable. No man with ordinary sense can mistake the way or fail to understand the truth. God is willing to save, but it is conditioned upon sincere repentance, true faith and a godly, consecrated, faithful life. No perseverance, no crown.

One of the most deceptive of all false sayings is that man may do evil that good may come of it. It is as fallacious as any of the devil's cunning coinages, and is stamped with the insignia of hell. It beguiles and disappoints. It destroys all morality and truth. The end does not justify the means. A religion based on such vain philosophy as that—to pursue evil ways and commit all manner of sin that out of it may come some good is not one whit better or purer or wiser than any of the exploded religions of the past. It is really no better than Mohammedanism or latter-day Mormonism. The religion of Jesus Christ is one of purest morality, purest life. It is to live indeed the Christ-life, to emulate the perfect pattern of the Master, the Divine Son. Any one who will read the Sermon on the Mount will see what is required to be a disciple of the Saviour as He expounds it. Read the various letters of Paul, Peter and John and you will see how exalted the Divine standard is, and how all manner of sin is shut out from the Kingdom of Heaven. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." Again, God saith,

"A new heart also will I give you," and again, "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation." A holy life admits of no sin, and no doing of evil that possibly somebody in some way may be blessed by your transgression! That is not God's way and no god man's way.

A very able Baptist paper, The Chicago Standard, says that it accepts "the supreme importance of the appeal to conscience, the keener sense of God and hotter hate of sin and more strenuous fight for holiness" that marks the preaching of those who are most successful in winning the allegiance of men to Christ." The pulpit must preach a higher Christian life. It must preach holiness as the Bible now teaches it—as Paul, the inspired, taught it. The bars are far too low now. If a man is indeed a Christian, a real disciple of the blessed Redeemer, he will be taught of the Holy Spirit, and be led by the Holy Spirit. Then this must follow as a sure, fundamental principle—the Holy Spirit will never lead man into open sin or to adopt questionable, much less sinful and immoral practices—will never so long as the world stands guide a man contrary to the true, revealed Word of God. He will never be taught or influenced by the Holy Spirit to do evil of any kind that good may perchance come. God is never inconsistent and never makes mistakes, and God cannot teach you incorrectly or influence you to go into evil courses. Do not sin and say, God did it or God allows it. Do not lie.

Of all the tributes paid to the great, the most illustrious Gladstone, we have seen none so touching, so impressively noble in fact, as the one paid him by an English map of letters who said he was a great religious force in his country, and a great power for Christianity in the world. He was all through his political life a sincere, deeply earnest Christian statesman, of most sincere and pure convictions and principles underlying that made him truly great. He made the Bible his guiding star and upon its impregnable truths he stood as a rock. His life was pure, his devotion great, his piety sincere and constant, his conduct ever shaped and controlled by God's immutable laws. He was in character a marvel among statesmen, the greatest of England's public men and the most thoroughly Christian. The London Westminster Gazette, reviewing him as a "Churchman" at the close said this of him:

"Politics were no consideration, and Dr. Benson was said to have found a letter offering him promotion on his return from voting for the Tory candidate for Cambridge. The good of the church was his one and only consideration. He was not to be found at church congresses or at public meetings, except those of rare importance; but his silent influence, his knowledge of detail, and his unsparing work in behalf of any cause which he espoused, have had much to do with not only church legislation—the less of which, in his opinion, the better—but in developing the component parts of church life, as to weld into an homogeneous whole complicated interests and diverse opinions. That so devout and enthusiastic a churchman should at once have retained the affection of members of his own communion, and yet been equally held in reverence by Nonconformists of all classes, is one of the most striking phenomena of the day, and a testimony to his many sided character and transparent sincerity."

BREVITIES.

People will not attend primaries. In Chicago McKinley received 200,000 votes. The republican primaries lately held could muster but 36,000 voters. On March 5, 1898, Barbee and Smith telegraphed Senator Bate, of Tennessee, that the statement was false that Stahlman was to have a "fee of 40 per cent, or any other fee, in case" the claim was paid. The Atlanta Journal of the 14th instant, published the correspondence between Senator Bate and Barbee and Smith and says "All this gives the matter a very ugly look, and places Mr. Stahlman and Messrs. Barbee & Smith, the agents of the church, in a position where some explanation of their conduct is necessary if it can possibly be made. At present these parties stand in a very bad light."

It is said three of Lieutenant Hobson's seven men were Irish—Murphy, Kelly and Montague. "Erin Go Bragh," hurrah! It is no new thing as to Irish pluck and dash.

A recent statement from abroad is that the great statesman, now Pope of Rome, Leo XIII, "had the highest admiration for Mr. Gladstone, whom he regarded as the greatest Englishman of modern times, and during the illness of Mr. Gladstone his Holiness followed the daily bulletins with the keenest sympathy. His death is the occasion of a great grief to the Pope."

A war correspondent of The London Times says the American uniform is the "ugliest in record," and says it is better "suited to the comic opera than to the army." He praises "the discipline and fighting qualities of officers and men of our army."

In the war upon the south the War Department issued an order (No. 100) dated 24th of April, 1863, saying that "bombardment is justified even without notice." If the Spaniards should reach Boston, or New York and set upon that order No. 100, what a howl and uproar will be heard. People will say—"Served them right."

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