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A TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF F. B. ASHCRAFT

Mr. Beasley Sees in His Life One of the Finest Examples of Christian Manhood and Usefulness—A Man in Whom There Was No Guile and No Shadow of Turning.

(By R. F. Beasley.)

A private letter which the writer has received referring to the death of Mr. Ashcraft says: "It is a great loss to the community, as no estimate can be correctly placed on the value of the life of a good, upright man to all those around him." This is true, and possibly because we take such a man as a matter of course. We become so accustomed to him that we fail to think and measure and estimate him. He becomes like a great rock or hill beside which we have passed our lives. While living he is fixed and permanent, and lesser things and influences move around him. This impression of strength and fixedness and solidity was the most marked characteristics of the deceased.

Our subconscious mind often reveals to us things of which we were not fully aware before. A week before Mr. Ashcraft's death I was in Monroe and was told that he was sick, threatened with pneumonia, but was thought to be not in danger. The information made little impression upon my mind, and the news of his death came as distinct a shock as if I had not heard that this lack of serious impression came not from any lack of interest in the welfare of a man whom I had admired since my boyhood days and whom I always knew to be a sincere friend and wise counsellor. But from that unconscious impression of solidity and permanence which emanated from his character and life. He had been sick before, many times, and in due course was just as he had always been. Something like this—the accepted status of a man like Mr. Ashcraft was—one of the permanent and solid facts of community life, so unobtrusive, so sound and persuasive, and natural as to call for little analysis and discussion.

Like others who have lived in Monroe I knew Mr. Ashcraft from my boyhood. I cannot remember how far back I began to know him but I can remember instances that must have been nearly thirty years ago. In all those years of business, social, private and public intercourse I never heard him express a disingenuous word or to withhold a frank opinion when it was necessary for him to speak. It did not make any difference what or where the occasion was, the only question with him was what was right. And so clearly was his sincerity manifest that his expression, even if contrary to one's own opinion, left no wound or sting. I am aware that some who did not know him well might not have at times felt this way, but the better he was known the more certain was it that his real character was best appreciated. He once taught me a lesson which I will never forget. And it was done with such simple and natural dignity that I doubt if he was aware of it or intended it as a lesson. He was making a collection for some object which I have forgotten. When he called for my contribution I, like many people do thoughtlessly, showed some irritation at being called on for "so many things." "Look here, Rowland," he said, "that is no way for you to be talking." I was heartily ashamed of myself and never forgot the incident and I never felt the slightest irritation toward him. Rather I felt thankful for a needed lesson. He made me ashamed of unworthiness. And his manner was never that of "Look what I am." This is the attitude which always rubs the wrong way and raises the question of sincerity. It is the attitude which causes unthinking men to say that church people are hypocrites, or that religious men are insincere.

Comparisons are said to be invidious and hence few should be made, and what I am about to say is not a comparison, but a simple truth. I refer to it not to praise but to illustrate the character of the man we have lost. It is this: For years and years he was the backbone of the Baptist church of Monroe. He was thought of about like the church house itself—always there, just so, as a matter of fact. He fell into this relation not because he sought it or perhaps because he was even conscious of it, but because he was there

and accepted the responsibility that will always gravitate to the man who will not dodge or complain. He never sought anything, it just fell upon him and he never tried to stand from under. This was the way that the places of responsibility in the life of the community outside of the church relation fell to him. For instance, he served several years on the county board of education. He was put on the board without his knowledge, never turned a finger to get on or off, but served as faithfully and as naturally as if it had been his life's ambition. It was the same way with other positions in the community. He never asked to be put forward and never asked to be excused. And no one ever heard an accusation against his usefulness while he was serving. Could there be anything finer than that?

He was a positive man, but positive without being dogmatic or offensive or self assertive. He was positive with a calmness and wholesomeness that was admirable. Real positiveness is not self assertive or argumentative, it is calm, sure, unfringed by trifles.

He was a good man. Not simply sentimentally good, but sensibly and solidly good to the bone every day in the year.

He was a kindly man. There was not the gruffness and roughness that often covers the heart of gold and by that token to be overlooked, but kindly with the heart of gold and the pleasant smile as well.

He was a growing man. It seemed to me that he was as vigorous and enthusiastic the last time I saw him as he was many years ago. Many men lose their usefulness by simply failing to grow with the times. They fail to expand and blossom themselves and to feel that all the world is growing; wrong because it changes. Not so with Mr. Ashcraft. He was always on the lookout for the better, always ready to welcome an improvement, always ready to take larger and more comprehensive view of things. Hence he never became an old man. It is said that a man is as old as he feels. He certainly is old when he ceases to grow and young so long as he does grow.

He was a liberal man. Few people know how liberal he was with his means. He was also liberal in his thoughts, not in the sense that any lad which came along might attract him or any sinful thing might hide under the guise of breadth and liberality, for that is not real liberality. He was liberal in the sense that he tolerated differences of opinion and recognized honesty and goodness and right motives in those who differed from him.

Like most men of his age in the South who had some educational advantages, Mr. Ashcraft had some little experience in school teaching in his younger days. Had he followed it he would have been a great teacher because he would have moulded the character of his students along the lines in which he himself excelled.

A strong and lovable man has left us. His life in the community will be missed but his influence will last. He lived truly and wrought well. He stood unflinching before men and humbly before God. The toilsome course of progress has always leaned heavily upon such men and always will. They are like the "shadow of a rock in a weary land."

Bavarian Premier and Minister of Interior Shot.

Copenhagen, Feb. 21.—Kurt Eisner, the Bavarian premier, was shot and killed by Lieutenant Count Arco Valley, as Eisner was on his way from the foreign ministry in Munich to the diet, says a Munich dispatch. The shooting occurred in the Prannerstrasse, and death resulted from two shots fired from behind into his head.

Eisner's body was carried into the foreign ministry, where it lies in the porter's lodge.

Soon after the shooting the judicial and police authorities arrived to investigate the assassination. There was great excitement in the streets of the city.

The diet, which was holding its first session today, adjourned indefinitely.

Herr Auer, Bavarian minister of the interior, has been shot.

The shooting took place during a session of the landtag, while Auer was alluding to the assassination of Kurt Eisner, the Bavarian premier.

Auer fell wounded in the left side and Deputy Osel was killed and two other officials were seriously wounded.

The shots were fired from the public gallery and caused a panic among the deputies.

The diet building now is being guarded by the military.

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THE "WHITE WOMAN" WHO HOUNDS KAISER WILLIAM

Peasants Have Revived Rumors of The Ancient Curse of the Hohenzollern Family—The Countess of Brandenburg Beheaded by An Ancestor of William.

(Literary Digest.)

Reports of the Kaiser's mental breakdown and of the doubling of the guard around the castle of Auenrothen, where he is staying, have revived rumors of the ancient curse of the Hohenzollern family, the "White Woman of Brandenburg."

Let cynics scoff at the idea that this ancient Countess, beheaded hundreds of years ago, is playing Nemesis to "the last chieftain of the old German robber clan in his castle of refuge in Holland"; the people of Paris know, and particularly the soldiers from the eastern departments know, that the old curse has been fulfilled before, and will be fulfilled again. Miss Louise Arden, a Red Cross nurse in Paris, writes of the common rumor as well as of the strange legend on which it is founded, in a letter published by the New York Evening Sun.

I don't know whether the interesting story that the ex-Kaiser has escaped the vengeance of the allies only to find himself haggard in the "White Woman of Brandenburg," who, you may remember, is the hereditary ghost of the Hohenzollerns, has reached New York yet, but it is common talk among the French soldiers here, particularly among the contingents from the eastern departments. They tell it in the most matter-of-fact way to explain and justify the report that the Kaiser is losing his mind.

"Et bien!" one old poilu said to me when I told him that the guards had been doubled around the Kaiser's place of refuge to keep out kidnappers, "but they can't keep out the White Lady of Brandenburg."

Of course I had heard the story. Everybody has who has read Miss Mullbach. But I asked le vieillard what he meant.

"The White Woman of Brandenburg is after him and will get him," he said. "If the allies won't make him pay for his crimes, she will."

A few days later I ran across the story from another poilu, who told me that he had heard that the ghost had appeared in broad daylight while his ex-Majesty was chopping wood, searing Wilhelm out of seven years' growth.

The story of the White Woman of Brandenburg, or simply "The White Woman," as she is more often called, is one of the oldest and best known of the countless legends that grew and flourished about the House of Hohenzollern during the generations it lorded it over Prussia and the Mark of Brandenburg.

She was the Countess of Cunnigunda von Plassenburg and Orlamunde, and when but a girl was married against her will by the orders of her parents to the old Count Sigmund von Plassenburg. A few years after that she died, leaving her rich, beautiful, and the mother of two children. Incidentally she was deeply in love with the good looks of Albert, Burggrave of Nuremberg, surnamed after the custom of those days, Albert the Handsome, and the ancestor of the Hohenzollern family.

For a long time the Countess Cunnigunda courted the Burggrave, but in vain, for he was in love with Beatrice, Countess of Hainault. At last Cunnigunda sent messengers to Albert offering her own hand in marriage, together with the rule of Plassenburg and her other possessions.

The Burggrave did not care to offend the Countess, so he took refuge in the fact that his parents did not approve of her as a daughter-in-law and sent back the cryptic reply that he would be glad to marry her, but that "four eyes now in existence prevented."

He of course referred to his parents, but the Countess believed, so runs the old tale, that he hated the children of the old Count von Plassenburg, and wanted to be rid of them before he consented to their marriage.

So as her soul was set on the Burggrave, she determined to rid herself and her lover of the youngsters, and one night after the return of the messengers with the answer from the Burggrave the children were slain in a manner that left no outer sign of violence. Then, the story says, she went back to bed and "did sleep soundly, seeing her way clear."

The four eyes that troubled are troublesome no longer," the story makes her say, "now let us be wed."

Instead, the Burggrave, who seems to have lacked the full flavor of the kultur attained by his great-great-great-grandson Wilhelm, had her seized and tried and condemned for the murder of the children.

When she entered the room to die, the Burggrave and the officials of his court were there, and she paused on her way to the block long enough to curse him and all who came in contact with him, "his friends and relatives and children forever and ever. When you come to die I shall be there," runs the tale, "and no member of your family but shall know me."

She was beheaded with true German thoroughness and medieval dispatch. The Burggrave, a true Hohenzollern, confiscated her estates and happily married Countess Beatrice of Hainault.

This is the story Miss Arden says is being repeated after many years by Frenchmen. Her letter continues:

"Of course the whole this is grotesque, but really I have heard so much of it of late that I have become obsessed with the glamour of it all, and when you come to think of it, it is strange that we should be repeating seriously in the year 1919 the tales they told more than one hundred years ago."

The Influenza in 1807.

(Charlotte News and Courier.)

It is rather curious, in all the circumstances, that some one has not brought to light before now data respecting the epidemic of influenza which ravaged this country following the close of the American Revolution and that which swept far and wide in 1807.

Dr. David Ramsey's "History of South Carolina," tells the story clearly and comprehensively. Dr. Ramsey, who wrote in December, 1807, was himself a physician of standing and that part of his book which related to the medical history of the state not unnaturally was especially full and interesting. Well worth reading now is the following, taken from pages 50 and 51 of the second volume, edition of 1858:

"Influenza in like manner, though a serious and frequent epidemic, has seldom been a subject of record.

Many persons remember that the influenza, after traversing the United States in 1789, reached Carolina and spread extensively. It was very fatal on the plantations near the northeastern line of the state, especially to prime, full-grown negroes. William Alston lost about 30 of that description. The whole mucous membrane was most grievously affected. Deafness, loss of taste and smell for a long period were among the consequences.

More have reason to remember the influenza of 1807. This disease originated in New York in the month of August and spread from that centre in all directions. It reached Canada in October, and had extended to the Western and Southwestern states, and even to Havana in the course of three months. Members of Congress on their way to Washington, where they were summoned to assemble on the 26th day of October, while traveling from their respective homes, met the disease in every state. Its progress was so rapid as to outrun the slow movements of contagion, and must have arisen from some morbid condition of the air. This is more probable from the circumstance that it was caught at sea by persons approaching the coast of America from distant countries.

"Gradually advancing from the Northern States, it reached Charleston early in September. It spared neither age nor sex, though children oftenest escaped altogether or if attacked got through the disease with the least inconvenience. The reverse was the case with aged persons. I soon became so general that in some large families there was not a sufficiency of persons in health to attend on the sick. In a few weeks it is supposed that 14,000 persons, or half the population of Charleston, had been afflicted with that disease. Of these 45 died, 13 of whom were white persons and 32 negroes. The former were generally aged persons. The disease spread on all sides into the country. The mortality in Georgetown and Beaufort was considerably greater than in Charleston. The disease in many cases was so mild as to preclude the necessity of application to a physician. In dangerous cases, when medical aid was required, bleeding, blistering, emetics, cathartics and sudorifics were chiefly resorted to.

"The influenza in its commencement resembled the yellow fever with a pain in and over the eyes, and with red streaks over the whites. A sharp acrid serum was discharged from the eyes, and sometimes from the nostrils. In such cases a hoarseness and soreness of the throat was usual. The sense of smelling was sometimes impaired, the hearing was frequently injured and in a few cases the powers of vision were diminished. A tightness and stricture across the breast, with a dry cough, was common. The matter expectorated was occasionally tinged with blood. The whole mucous membrane lining the fauces, nostrils and bronchia was uncommonly stuffed with phlegm. In the aged the disease assumed the form of a peripneumony; in the young and plethoric, that of a pleurisy. Persons of a consumptive diathesis, or who had been subject to old coughs or diseases of the breast, suffered most and oftener relapsed. Spitting of blood and other serious precursors of consumption attacked such patients after the disease had in their cases vanished and generally disappeared. An uncommon increase of consumption followed in the year 1808, which exceeded anything ever before known in Charleston."

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