



PHILLIPS BROOKS, BISHOP OF MASSACHUSETTS.

PHILLIPS BROOKS,—THE MAN, THE PREACHER, THE AUTHOR.*

A BOOK just published in Boston under the above title gives an account of one who was truly a great man. The whole American nation claims him, and has not yet ceased to mourn over his sudden and unexpected death. As a Bishop of the Church he was in a high and commanding position, but his plain name of "Phillips Brooks" did more for him than anything else could do. It is said of him in the introduction of the book above referred to, "He probably performed as many hours of important labour in his fifty-seven years as most men do in seventy. He was in every way a large man. Even his commanding physical presence was a palpable advantage to him in his pulpit work. He was unconscious of the fact, but others were not. Culture did what it could for him; birth did more. Culture in the family, the Boston school, Harvard University, the Theological Hall at Alexandria, the toil of his life, did not make his size, nor his symmetry—they did not unmake them."

His preaching is thus described,—the description having been written when the Bishop was still alive:—

"He is like a colossal reservoir that seems full almost to bursting, and well nigh unable to restrain what it contains. He takes his place in the pulpit and without any accompaniment of manner (whatever may be the case with the

matter), specially appropriate to an exordium, just begins—right in the middle, as it were. The parting of his lips seems like the bursting open of a safety-valve by the seething thoughts and words behind, and out they rush, so hot in their chase the one of the other, that at times they appear to be almost side by side; and from then till the moment when he stops, with equal abruptness, he simply pours—pours—pours! out—out—out! It seems as if he could not possibly say enough, or begin to express what he has to utter. Great torrents and waves, as it were, of appeal and aspiration and eloquence and thought rise and fall, and whirl and eddy throughout the church, till they seem to become almost visible and tangible and to beat upon the eyes and foreheads of his hearers, as they do against their hearts. The audience, caught in the rush and swing of this fervid oratory, feel as if they were rocked upon the impassioned bosom of an ocean of inspired speech."

This writer, however, adds:—

"In point of fact, coolly considered, Phillips Brooks exhibits as a preacher well nigh every fault of delivery; but he does not leave you time to criticize," and this leads him to speak thus of preachers in general,—

"Of the English clergy and their sermons, the verse runs,

'They make the best and preach the worst.' Charles Kingsley in the pulpit rested his arm upon or grasped the cushion, meaning to avoid gesticulation; but as he became aroused his eye kindled, his whole frame vibrated, and with his right hand he made a curious gesture—which he seemed unconscious of and unable to restrain—the fingers moving with a hovering motion like a hawk about to swoop upon its prey. Cardinal Newman in the pulpit resembled a tall, unimpassioned, though piercingly earnest spectre from another world, with a silvery voice. Of Whitefield, indeed, Southey said, 'His elocution was perfect'; he used to preach each sermon over and over again, till every inflection and gesture became perfect. Franklin said he could always tell on hearing him, from the stage of its finish, how new the sermon was. Bossuet's delivery was dignified, yet vehement. Jonathan Edwards stood motionless in the pulpit, one hand resting on it, and the other holding up to his eyes his little, closely written manuscript, from which he read. The first sermon Whitefield preached after ordination to the diaconate drove fifteen people insane with fright. When Edwards preached the congregation at times rose to its feet, unable to remain sitting, and people fainted. Great men are great *in spite* of their faults. Kingsley had an impediment in his speech,—which disappeared, however, as soon as he began to speak in the pulpit. Whitefield had a cast in one of his eyes. Bossuet's voice was too shrill. All these men succeeded as

* Such is the title of a handsome and interesting book just published by J. K. Hastings, Boston, Mass.