

MISCELLANEOUS SECTION.

THE HYMNS OF BISHOP COXÉ.

By REV. JAMES H. ROSS, A.M.,
ROXBURY, MASS.

ARTHUR CLEVELAND COXÉ, of the diocese of western New York, died July 20th, shortly after his noon meal and a protracted conversation, while eating it, on the resurrection of believers. In 1884 he had written an Easter hymn, which was suggested by, and partly translated from, the well-known Easter chorus in Goethe's "Faust," and published it in a volume of his poems entitled "Hallowe'en and other Poems." Evidently the theme has been a favorite one with him for more than half a century, because of its prominence in the New Testament, in the ecclesiastical year of the Episcopal Church, of which the Bishop was an observer and a historic expositor, and because he was nearing his three-score years and ten, having been born in 1818. The first line of his Easter hymn, supplementary to the eighty-seventh stanza of his "Hallowe'en," is:

"Christ is arisen."

The Rev. F. M. Bird was the author of the article in Julian's "Dictionary of Hymnology," published in 1892, relating to the hymns of Bishop Coxé. He enumerated and annotated nineteen of them, including a translation of one from the Latin. On the other hand, the Rev. W. G. Horder, an English hymnal compiler and specialist, only three years earlier, referred to the bishop as "known in England by three hymns." He is known in America by at least six very meritorious ones. The Rev. Lyman Abbott, D.D., in his "Plymouth Hymnal," 1894, included four of them. Some are classics upon such commanding themes as "The Christ," "The Church," "The Communion," and "Missions." Hence they are not liable to become obsolete for a long time to come; not until they

are surpassed by better hymns on the same great subjects.

The hymnist is born, not made, and he is not born so often that the displacement of these hymns by new and better ones is liable to occur very soon. To be the author of one hymn, well known among English-speaking peoples, is an honor that Providence confers but rarely. To be the author of three hymns well known in England and of six well known in the United States, among all denominations, is distinction enough for a memorial article.

Most of his hymns were written in his young manhood, when he was in the early twenties. His experience in this respect is one of many illustrations that the poetry and hymns of youth may deserve something better than sneers and indifference.

"Oh, where are kings and empires now?"

is the first line of his hymn relating to the growth and perpetuity of the Church of God "a thousand years the same," when compared with the appearing and disappearing kings and empires of old, the kingdoms of the world. The hymn is selected from his "Chelsea" ballad, published in *The Churchman*, 1839, in ten eight-line stanzas. Bishop Coxé, in later life, became a convert from Presbyterianism, was a churchman indeed, an ecclesiastic of the High-Church type. What he wrote has, however, been appropriated unhesitatingly by numerous compilers, regardless of denominationalism, as is true now of all compilers in the selection of all hymns.

This hymn was the occasion of a memorable and well-known incident when the general conference of the Evangelical Alliance was convened in New York city in 1873. An eye-witness described the scene and placed his account at the disposal of the Rev. Samuel W. Duffield:

"It was at the time," he wrote,