

SKETCH OF AGUSTINE BIRRELL, ESSAYIST AND EDUCATIONIST

Mr. H. W. Massingham Discusses the Former British Minister of Education—A Witty Man and a Gracious Character—His Love of Literature and Politics.

The greatest of modern English critics, who was also the most enlightened of English educationists, has not lived to see the education bill of 1906. I do not know what he would have thought of it, or whether it would have modified his notoriously unfavorable opinions of Dissenters. But I am sure that he would at least have asserted them with a qualification in Mr. Birrell's favor. The latter is, on one side of him, a Dissenter. His father was a famous Dissenting minister. His mother was a Dissenting minister's daughter. He himself went to a great Dissenting "academy." And he departed from it to enter the doors of our nearest substitute for a Dissenting university. Yet I will make bold to say that Mr. Birrell would have been excluded from Matthew Arnold's school of sweetness and light to the Nonconformist character. Light he could hardly refuse to the author of "Obliter Dicta"; sweetness he must yield to the statesman who delivered the speech on the third reading of the education bill.

NOT A BRILLIANT BOY.

Not that Mr. Birrell's association with Dissent is that of birth alone. Here, indeed, the ties were close. His father, the Rev. Charles Birrell, was a man of note among the Nonconformist divines of his day, and in his own city of Liverpool, and he was the editor of an edition of Bunyan's "Life and death of Mr. Badman." His rather austere features are rather strikingly revived in those of his son, redeemed in the case of the younger man, from severity by the smiling eyes and pleasant curves which tell of good nature and good humor. The son and grandson of a minister, Mr. Birrell carried the "dissidence" into his school life, for he was a pupil of Mr. Ebenezer West, of Amersham Hall, in Oxfordshire, then a favorite "academy" for young Nonconformists. Mr. West was a man of culture, an enthusiast in seventeenth century literature and history, and his library is kept in a room which is a veritable shrine of the London scholarship for proficiency in the English language. Mr. West seems to have imparted some of his special strain of learning and interest to Mr. Birrell, whose early affection for Puritan worthies has not deserted him. His youthful spirits, indeed, rose to singular heights of hero worship, for I am told there are letters belonging to his younger days in which he signed himself "Augustine Birrell Birrell." After the stout, but not impeccable, judge, who helped to secure the Petition of Right, he does not appear to have been a brilliant boy; at least, he was not a great prize-winner. Mr. Birrell, in distributing his prizes, playfully recalled his earlier failures. "Never mind," he said to the prizeless ones, "you may not come to be a great judge like my friend, Cozens-Hardy. You may not be sent to a great province like my friend, Birrell." After the stout, but not impeccable, judge, who helped to secure the Petition of Right, he does not appear to have been a brilliant boy; at least, he was not a great prize-winner. Mr. Birrell, in distributing his prizes, playfully recalled his earlier failures. "Never mind," he said to the prizeless ones, "you may not come to be a great judge like my friend, Cozens-Hardy. You may not be sent to a great province like my friend, Birrell."

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the House of Commons by their humor, their strain of sincerity, and their copious powers of expression. Mr. Birrell is not an orator of precision or style of phrasing. His Dissenting forbears have also laid one burden on him, a suggestion of the cadence of the pulpit, such as sounded, many a time and oft, in my own youthful ears. His voice is a little harsh and untunable. But he and his speech have the supreme attraction that belongs to a human and gracious character, and an intellect not too spoiled by the narrowness of the politician, the lawyer's pedantry, or the mean cynicism of the "man of the world."—H. W. Massingham, in London (England) Reader.



Mum's the Word. Bradford (telling a story)—And as soon as I got out of the dock I rushed to the assistance of a man who was almost dead. I extricated him from the tangle and when he was able to speak I asked him if he was badly hurt in the wreck. What do you suppose he replied? Williams—Couldn't guess. Bradford—He said: "Hurt? Wreck? What wreck? Young man, I am not hurt. There is a wreck. I am president of the road."

ON GETTING UP IN THE MORNING

A MAN WHO SAYS ANYONE CAN WAKEN WHEN HE WANTS TO.

"Curious about getting up in the morning," said a man who has to rise early. "I find that I can make my brain serve as an alarm clock if I so will."

"I say to myself, or my other self, or my brain, or however you mind to put it, that I want to wake up at 6 o'clock, and at that hour I wake up. This is a mental alarm clock which from the time I set it the night before has kept right on running, steady and true while I slept, to wake me practically if not exactly on the hour."

"But I find that this silent alarm clock is a very sensitive clock, a clock that refuses to do its part of the work unless I do mine. I said that it will wake me if I so will; that is to say, if I really mean it. But I find that if I don't actually obey the summons when it comes, if I turn over for another five minutes nap, and sleep maybe half an hour, and I do this a few mornings in succession, then my mental alarm clock won't work; it appears to resent working for anybody that won't perform his part of the contract faithfully. In short, our mental alarm clock appears to be a very delicate piece of machinery which will not bear any trifling with. Form the habit of responding to it promptly and truly, and it will wake you at any hour for much or for less, and it will not let you get up, though you could sleep till 7, as you'd lazily like to do, if thus temporizing with duty, you should let yourself get up a few mornings you would soon get so that you wouldn't hear the alarm clock at all; it might bang its head off and still you wouldn't hear it."

"On the other hand, if you are resolute in your intention to get up, you will sometimes wake up a minute or two or three—about before the clock goes off. Here, you see, our mental alarm clock comes in to reinforce the clock of metallic wheels and springs. "You may have given no thought what to setting it when you did set the mental clock, on which you were relying; but if you really will that you would very likely set it, of its own accord, for the same hour, and it would wake you then. Very much the same, and helpful is the human brain to those who deal fairly with it and treat it right; a truly wonderful thing it is, in fact."

"Here is a little pointer in alarm clock practice that is, in the treatment of an ordinary metallic alarm clock—something that may interest you. Perhaps you know it already, but there may be others who do not—I know I had to learn it myself from somebody else. "When your alarm clock goes off in the early morning it makes, in the stillness of the hour, a frightful racket; enough, it seems, to wake up everybody else in the house, if not all the neighbors, and while you had to have it sound like that in order to wake you up, yet you now sympathize with the rest of the world, and think it wasn't so loud; and still you can think of nothing to do except to let it hammer away until it has run down. Now, here is the pointer about this. "If while the clock is ringing you will grasp the alarm cord firmly with your hand you will find that you deaden the sound of the hammering instantly, and very materially reduce its volume. Truth is, the time of the year it is pretty chilly work standing just out of bed in a cold room holding an alarm clock until it has run down; and the really proper thing to do is to jump up and seize the clock and stuff it under your pillow and press the pillow down on and around it good and hard. This will stifle the sound of its hammering even more effectually."

ONE WAY OF GETTING A TIP.

We were not thirty miles out of Beirut when the plump, copper-colored official, whose duty it is to record tribal, studied his bullet head into our compartment. Some of us explained matters truthfully, others stated that their tekerrah had been paid for and forwent the trouble of truth and falsehood was one and the same to the Turkish official. He impressed us with the fact that he could stop the train and put us off, and then departed. Half an hour later he returned in the guise of a humanitarian. Having discovered a poor family in one of the third class compartments, who were destitute of food or tickets, he was going through the first class carriages, taking up a subscription. We each reached for our silver. I led with a franc piece. Seven others in the compartment followed suit. We expected, of course, that he would go around again. In fact, it was our plan to keep putting in franc pieces until our friend, the official, voluntarily desisted from his cleverly disguised demand for backsheesh. To our astonishment he looked into the hat and disappeared wreathed in smiles. An expenditure of eight francs had saved us sixteen dollars in hard cash, and undue annoyance.—Alex. Hume Ford, in Appleton's.

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God's Judgment in Destroying Jerusalem

By A. Lincoln Moore, D.D., Pastor Riverside Baptist Church, Manhattan.

And when He was come near he beheld the city and wept over it.—Luke xix. 41.

This outburst of grief occurred as Jesus rode down the leafy slope of Olivet. Jerusalem in all its glory burst full upon His view. Below Him in the deep valley rolled the Kedron, gleaming in the gray sunbeams like a sheet of burnished gold. Right in front, cutting the western sky and crowning the steep crest of Moriat with white and gold, rose the magnificent temple, which had been enlarged and completed by Herod the Great.

To the southwest, the highest of the four hills on which the city lay, towered the rocky Zion, bearing upon its rugged shoulders the royal palace of Acre, bearing the gardens and palaces of the upper city. A panorama of indescribable loveliness spread out before the Savior's view, and He could not have been insensible to its surpassing beauty.

But the sentence of doom had been traced by a mysterious hand upon the city. This sight of Jerusalem affected Christ's heart, and through His tears He sobed out the words of lamentation and judgment:

"If thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee that shall compass thee about, and compass thee about, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and they shall bring thee down to the ground; and they shall not leave thee one stone upon another; because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation."

Jerusalem had neglected the day of her visitation. Impending doom hung over the city. "He wept over it." When Christ's grief was greatest at the grave of Lazarus. He wept in silence, but now He sobed aloud in His agony. These tears are more eloquent than speech; they tell us better than words of the extreme agony of his soul for the doomed city. He wept because of the sin and iniquity of the people in rejecting proffered salvation. Neglecting salvation always brings judgment upon individuals and nations. It did upon Jerusalem. In less than forty years all that Jesus foretold came to pass. Titus, in command of the

Roman army, besieged and captured the city.

During the siege of ninety days 1,100,000 Jews perished and 97,000 were taken prisoners. Some were sent to toil in the mines of Egypt, others were kept to grace in captive bonds the chariot wheels of the Roman conqueror in the triumph accorded him at Rome and to amuse their cruel captors by entering into gladiatorial contests in the arena to make a Roman holiday.

What a fearful retribution for that mad cry, uttered some thirty-seven years before at Pilate's judgment hall, "His blood be upon us and our children!" What a vindication have we here of God's truth.

When God says a thing He will surely bring it to pass. He is never at a loss for instruments to fulfill His decrees. He maketh the wrath of men to praise Him. Many persons seem to think and act as though God would not prove true and faithful to His promises of blessing, but that He will fail to perform His words of threatening and doom.

His judgments are not utterances of passion, soon to pass away, as the storm from the bosom of the deep. He would cease to be the faithful God, the same yesterday, today and forever, if He fulfilled them not. The very same principle which binds Him to perform His words of judgment.

You think of Christ on the Mount of Olives, overlooking Jerusalem. He is attended by a jubilee throng. He is giving pardon and life eternal to all who believe in Him. "Give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish," and you say, "that is just like Jesus. God is faithful Who has promised."

You behold Him weeping over the city and calling down divine judgment upon it. "Thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and lay thee even with the ground, and they shall bring thee down to the ground, and they shall not leave thee one stone upon another." You behold the city encircled by the Roman army as in the coils of a mighty serpent. Then famine, pestilence and bloodshed. Jewish blood ran so deep down Zion that burning buildings were quenched in the crimson stream. A thousand crosses dot the hillsides, each bearing a writhing victim. Beholding all this, you are compelled to cry out, "God is faithful who has threatened!"

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