

its vacant pulpit, and having come to America about that time, ostensibly to make a lecturing tour under Major Fond (tho it was generally believed that there were other reasons which induced the visit), the pastor of the City Temple was invited to preach to Mr. Beecher's pastorless flock, but failed to make an impression sufficiently favorable to lead to a call. The lecturing tour was a failure in other respects than this, for the doctor was the subject of some severe criticisms, and returned to England without leaving a very enthusiastic coterie of admirers.

Having heard so much about his temperament and style, I was prepared for something striking when I went that Sabbath evening to hear Dr. Parker, and I was, of course, not disappointed. The service was a unique one from beginning to end—the music, the prayers, the reading, the sermon, the order of exercises, the audience, and all. It was the last Sunday of July, and yet the Temple was crowded, packed, with an interested, evidently earnest and enthusiastic congregation. We took pains to reach the church fully three quarters of an hour before the service, and had difficulty in getting a desirable seat even then. As I sat waiting for the service to begin, I found it interesting to study the gathering audience, which was more or less heterogeneous in its character, tho predominantly representative of the middle class; and equally interesting to watch the great volunteer chorus as they came in, one by one, and took their places. This is one of the features of the Temple service, and adds greatly to its attractiveness. Their rendering of the hymns was inspiring, and especially their chanting of the opening confession of the Common Prayer-Book. It is unfortunate that America can not make the success with a volunteer choir which England does everywhere in the non-conformist churches. The hymns were not announced, neither was the Scripture lesson, but these were indicated on the printed bulletins

which were distributed through the pews.

Dr. Parker's prayer was a gem. I thought that I had never heard a better. It was unconventional, brief, and decidedly dramatic, but reverential and impressive and thoroughly uplifting. I have often read the prayers which he publishes in connection with his expository lectures, and have found myself admiring and praising them, but when I heard him pray and noted the personality that breathed itself out through his prayers, I felt that I had never before been able to appreciate their worth or to pass judgment upon their excellence.

The sermon was on the necessity and certainty of the Judgment, its argument being drawn from the law of consequences, its illustrations culled from every-day happenings, and its applications directed to the ordinary routine of life. It had evidently been committed word for word, and was delivered as an actor would render a play—with studied gesture, inflection, expression of face, posture, and variation of tone and manner, all of which was strikingly, at times somewhat offensively, dramatic. His epigrams were choice, his illustrations forcible, his antitheses strong, his applications pat and pertinent. Occasionally there was burst of passion, but oftener, perhaps, an interjection of wit or humor, which strengthened rather than weakened the discourse. One young English girl who sat next to me was so overcome with laughter at some of the bright things which the speaker said, that she did not recover till after the sermon was over and the congregation rose to sing the closing hymn. It was very easy to see what basis the public have for criticizing Dr. Parker, as they so commonly and universally do. He is not popular in England, and, strange to say, not in London, tho he does attract so large an audience. He is charged with conceit, with a haughty consequentialness, with recklessness of statement, and even with insincerity of purpose. But he is an exceptional man, a great man. His writings show that, his ability to draw and hold around him so loyal a following is another proof of it, but its best demonstration is the eloquence, magnetism, and power of his preaching. I shall have a higher admiration for Dr. Parker now that I have heard him, and I am sure that others hearing him under favorable circumstances would have a similar experience.