

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

THE UNAPPRECIATED.

It falls to the lot of some to be appreciated too highly. They have a factitious greatness, owing to peculiar circumstances which have thrust them before the public. As in a flood the lightest and cheapest articles often swim on the surface, while the weightier and more precious are concealed from view by the inundation; so, amid the excitements of human society, the least worthy are sometimes thrown to the top and made conspicuous, while genuine worth remains unseen.

Overestimated men owe their prominence to some want of balance in the social forces. Their wealth, or their rank, or the influence of relatives and friends, who push them forward, secures what never would have been accorded to their ability and character. Or their seeming success is due to a brazen self-confidence and self assertion, aided by the ignorance and credulity of the multitude to whom they appeal, and who cannot distinguish between impudent pretension and real merit. We notice this frequently in the way in which a certain class of small politicians attain to positions for which they are utterly disqualified; and also in the platform-success of men of mere words, who captivate uncultured audiences with tricks of high and lofty tumbling in rhetoric. There is a sense in which we are all overestimated; at least, at times, by those who do not know us as well as we know ourselves. We occasionally gain a credit from friends, or from the public, for some motive or trait of character, or degree of power, or extent of learning, or measure of goodness, which, we feel, exceeds our just desert; and the praise accorded brings to the cheek a blush of shame, rather than of pride.

But however this may be, there is a class of men who are underestimated, and still another class who think that they are, and who take all the discomfort of the feeling. Perhaps there is hardly a more frequently quoted stanza, at least in the secular poetry of the English tongue, than those familiar lines of Gray:

"Full many a pearl of purest ray serene,
The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

These dainty words have been the consolation, no doubt, of a vast multitude of aspiring but unsuccessful souls, who, fated to a common-place life, yet dreamed that all that was needed to make them distinguished was the fitting outward occasion, or a wiser appreciation on the part of the public. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the world has had as able men who did not become famous, as were those whose names were on every lip. The same opportunities did not come to the one class as to the other.

It is not always a morbid state of mind, in which one feels that he is unappreciated in comparison with some who win applause and receive favors. A man may be healthfully conscious of his own powers and attainments. Humility surely does not consist in believing a lie respecting one's self, by holding, contrary to the plain proof, that one is inferior to others who, in many important respects are beneath him. Humility is neither blindness nor delusion. It is simply the opposite to pride. Pride seeks undue exaltation for selfish ends; while humility contents itself with passing only at real worth, sensible of and confessing its actual deficiencies. It happens, therefore, at times, that a man in the simplicity of self-knowledge will perceive that, in point of talent, education, and character, he is in advance of some who have been more fortunate in their friends and opportunities. This need be no temptation to jealousy or repining. It should rather stimulate an honorable ambition, and lead to a wise use of providential occasions. It is hard to have such a consciousness of ability and well-doing, and to think that one has missed his due, from the ignorance, or prejudice, or enmity of others. This is the rough path which reformers often tread, as their efforts to remove abuses and wrongs produce antagonisms, and bring a cloud over their fair fame. For many years, able men among the opponents of slavery knew themselves to be unappreciated in church and in state; and they saw the places of influence and the posts of distinction given to men far their inferiors. But those of Christian temper accepted this lot as part of the price that somebody must pay (and why not they?) for the ransom of the slave. They "counted all things but loss," that

they might do this allotted work for Christ, and thereby might not only aid to free the slave, but to purify both church and state. And they have had a noble reward, even in this world.

In these sensational days there is danger that a mere surface brilliancy will be overestimated, and that genuine ability, manifested in deep thought, sound judgment, and continual usefulness, will fail to be appreciated. This error has brought loose doctrine into many a pulpit, and barrenness into many a church; while the neglect put upon faithful ministers, in the ambition to secure a "smart man" for a preacher, has done much to discourage young men from entering the ministry. There is nothing so valuable, and yet so little appreciated, as straightforward fidelity in the ordinary spheres of life. There is no worldly *et cetera* attending the patient discharge of the duties of a wife and mother; yet she who performs them, in all their variety and severity, with quiet, unobtrusive self-denial, through twenty, thirty, or forty years, is the equal or superior of any lady who glories in publicity, or of any heroine lauded in book or newspaper. A similar remark may be made of a faithful but little appreciated Sunday-school superintendent or teacher. It is indeed trying to one's natural sensibilities to lack appreciation; for human praise is sweet and stimulating; but more precious by far is the consciousness that we are simply seeking to please God, and the assurance that He appreciates whatever we do from love to Him, and that He will at last say, "Well done! good and faithful servant."

But most bitter and unrewarded is the experience of him who, through inordinate self-esteem, wounded pride, and disappointed ambition, morbidly imagines that his ability is underestimated, and that his services are unappreciated. Such men are sometimes found in the ministry and in other public spheres of spiritual labor, and then jealousy of the prominence and usefulness of others makes their discontent chronic, and like an ulcer it is eating into the soul. Their criticisms and complaints reach the ear on all occasions, but from the well-understood motive they harm themselves rather than any one else. It is sad when Christian men make an idol of a coveted reputation, and thus put their happiness into the hands of others. Besides, serious injustice is not long done to any man who has in him real worth and a well-balanced character. The unappreciated person, usually either mistakes his own ability, or fails to allow for some uncomfortable peculiarity of character by which it is accompanied. Commonly, water finds its level, bubbles are pricked, shams are detected, rockets that went up in a blaze come down in darkness, and men are appreciated according to their merit.—*S. S. Times.*

FEARFUL INSOLVENCY.

We have had signal instances of unexpected failure. Men whose solvency has been undoubted have gone down. Houses supposed to be beyond the reach of fatal peril have sunk. Their business and their accumulated gains shewed not like the fabric of a vision, but like a structure as solid as it was fair and stately. But when the flood came, it toppled.

Many go through life with every outward sign of success and safety. They have not prospered. Their money, their flocks, their substance, may have multiplied, but they themselves are poor, in all the proper wealth of an intelligent and responsible spirit. Their business may be solvent, their estates may be handsomely settled, while yet they are bankrupt "on personal account" in the chancery of heaven. "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Numerous as the instances unhappily are of this kind, there is a more lamentable insolvency still. The scriptures assure us, and observation confirms it to the view of the most charitable, that a man may have an unchallenged repute for religious soundness, and yet find himself at last among hypocrites, and unbelievers. It is easy to "obtain a hope," and to have it recognized by fallible men, and in the comfort of it to abide for years as a visible adornment of the church. But underneath all this there may be the rottenness of an unrenewed heart. When that "crisis" comes, of which the hardest commercial "shocks" are too faint to be admitted as comparisons, the unreality of such apparent religiousness will be revealed, to the eternal confusion of the soul. The "fair and flourishing professor" becomes the "man of despair." We are taught that "judgment must begin at the house of God." *Who may abide it?*

EARNESTNESS IN MINISTERS.

Speaking at the meeting to inaugurate the new session at Cheshunt College, Dr. Newth gave utterance to certain truths which we were glad to hear from such a quarter. The following passage has a true ring about it:

"And first of all, as it seems to me, the times in which we live demand from the Christian minister a very intense earnestness of soul. In all departments of human life men are demanding this in those whom it will honor and respect. With one consent they are taking up the words of the preacher, and are proclaiming upon the housetops to all who aspire to power, or fame, or wealth, 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.' And he only can make himself greatly felt in commerce, or politics, or science, who is truly and manifestly in earnest. Emphatically is this so with regard to religion. A large part—perhaps the largest part—of the indifference and practical unbelief which prevail in the land derives its support from the absence of the marks of reality in the religion of those who come most prominently before them as the representatives or advocates of Christianity; and it is impossible to look around our churches and not to feel how much there is to foster such indifference, and how many, even of those who are sincerely trusting in Christ, have so little spiritual energy, that 'the communication of their faith' does not 'become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing that is in them.' So feebly do they move towards Christ, and the fire of a holy affection burns so faintly, that their profiting 'does not appear.' There is thus within the Church a large amount of undeveloped faith and affection which needs to be drawn out into active and healthful exercise. And along with this, and to some extent resulting from it, there is round about our churches a large amount of incipient religious life which needs to be quickened into conscious existence. In view of this three-fold need, it is a primary requisite in the Christian minister, that he have an intense earnestness and vigor of spiritual life. It is by the warmth and glow of a soul enkindled and possessed by the love of Christ that he will stir up the dormant life around him. Argument or rebuke is here of little avail: as little as that rebukes for his carelessness will avail to restore the circulation of the frozen and insensible traveller. Here, as elsewhere, it is life that quickens life; it is activity that calls forth effort; it is love that awakens affection; and he who would now serve his Lord by efficiently serving his day and generation, must be one who possesses so much of the spirit of the Saviour, takes so true a delight in the service He appoints, and pursues it with so resolute a purpose, that he can say, not as the language of empty rhetoric or of excited feeling, but calmly and reverently, as one who is standing in the Holy presence, 'It is my meat to do the will of Him who hath sent me.'"

THE CRAVING FOR DRINK.

No one (says the *Medical Examiner*) who has watched a typical case of drink-craving can deny for a moment that it is a disease. The subject of it is, perhaps, a man of honour and intelligence, or a woman of pure and modest feelings. At most times—at any rate in the earlier stages of the disease—the patient can act his part in life with credit to himself and with the respect of his fellow-men. He may even be for the time a total abstainer from alcohol. But the paroxysm of the disease comes on, and everything is made to bow to its imperious necessities. The whole will is dominated over and tyrannised by a single longing, which for a time becomes its sole motive power. Nothing is allowed to stand in the way of its gratification. Honour, honesty, modesty, virtue, the teachings of experience, and the precepts of morality must all yield to the new despot. The powers of the mind succumb as readily before it as do the powers of the body before the invasion of small-pox or cholera. The craving often comes on at definite periods, every six weeks or two months, and then the sufferer's dread of its advent is no less distressing than is his unconditional surrender to it when it comes. He begs to be preserved against himself, to have the weakness of his own will made up for by the compulsion of others; but he finds that the law does not allow it. The state will punish him as a drunkard, but will not take charge and cure him as a dipsomaniac, and so he passes on from bad to worse, losing hope, and honour, and force of will, until he at length dies in the prime of life, to the unspeakable relief of every friend and relative. The case is still more painful when the subject is a woman. Self-