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An Anti-Infidel Champion

(The Christian.)

Known and loved in both old and new worlds, Horace L. Hastings was a diligent servant of Christ, and eternity alone will declare the results of his influence and labor among the men and women of the past generation. Our friend was a descendant of Thomas Hastings, who left the Old World for the New in 1634, and whose family numbered men of great distinction in Church and State. On his mother's side the lamented evangelist and editor, whose career we purpose briefly to outline, had the blood of the Scottish Hamiltons and Knoxes, who also settled in New England in the seventeenth century. Hence the vigor of English Puritanism and the boldness of Caledonian Presbyterianism, in combination with noble traditions, religious and educational, found expression in the lives and characters of men and women of several generations. All these forces seemed to meet in the person and career of the one who has just entered into rest.

Mr. Hastings was born in 1831 at Blandford, Mass., and, from his youth up, was a voracious reader. His mind was early stored with history and poetry; his heart was set upon sublime themes and sober purposes; and there was a strong dash of humor, first in his conversation, later in his public speaking and writing. For four successive generations his immediate ancestors had been preachers, so it was not strange that before he was eighteen he 'graduated' from farm and saw-mill, and entered upon evangelistic work, using voice and pen and printing press ever since.

A man of noble presence and genial personality, with a powerful yet sympathetic voice, he was capable of commanding the attention of large audiences, whether speaking indoors or out. He travelled hundreds of thousands of miles on both sides of the Atlantic, and spoke thousands of times in the chief cities of America and Great Britain, in highways and byways, theatres, steamships, tents, churches—wherever he could find people willing to listen to the words of truth. Avoiding disputes about dead issues, adopting as his motto, 'No creed but the Bible, no master but Christ, no name but Christian,' he found open doors among religious people of all classes, and large assemblies listened to him.

Mr. Hastings began the publication of tracts as far back as 1853, and as the years passed he continued to write and print religious books, for the most part small, handy treatises. He developed a remarkably racy style, which was ever at the command of Gospel appeal, temperance advocacy, and social purity. For over thirty years he edited a monthly paper in Boston, U. S. A., called 'The Christian,' also a series of essays entitled 'The Anti-Infidel Library.' In a statement of his publishing labors recently drawn up, we read that he had issued an unknown number of papers, books, tracts, and pamphlets, of which, during the last forty years, probably eight hundred tons have been scattered in every quarter of the earth.

His anti-infidel pamphlets and leaflets deserve more than a passing mention. Some fifty in number, they included 'Nuts for Sceptics to Crack,' 'Friendly Hints to Candid Sceptics,' 'Was Moses Mistaken?' 'Atheism and Arithmetic,' 'Who Made the New Testament?' and 'Infidel Testimony concerning the Truth of the Bible.' Though these have proved of great service in the conflict with unbelief, they are less famous than the well-known lecture, 'The Inspiration of the Bible; or, Will the Old Book Stand?' This sterling booklet has been translated into a score or more of languages, and attained a circulation of millions of copies. In controversy Mr. Hastings was well at home, but he knew where to draw the line. His controversy was, for the most part, with 'them that are without,' and to such he lectured on God and his claims, and the Gospel with its urgent demands. As regards Christian people, he was in the habit rather of calling them to



THE LATE MR. H. L. HASTINGS.

consistency of life than of 'correcting' them on disputed points of theology. 'No name but Christian' was not a mere precept with him, but a principle by which to be guided in every department of life and ministry.

For some time Mr. Hastings stood forward in another controversy. In 1888, when no one was allowed to preach the Gospel upon the public grounds of the city of Boston, without a permit from a functionary who invariably refused to grant such permits, Mr. Hastings entered upon the work of outdoor preaching on Boston Common. For this he was prosecuted, and sent to prison. Through this bold action on the part of Mr. Hastings, public feeling was aroused, and the government which stood committed to such limitations and conduct was overturned. As a result, to use Mr. Hastings' own words: 'The preaching of the Gospel on Boston Common is no longer entirely prohibited by the mandate of foreign-born rumsellers and their ecclesiastical superiors; and from this imprisonment for outdoor preaching, and other connected occurrences, not only has outdoor preaching greatly increased, but a protest against foreign dictation has been started which has spread across the continent, and produced results both momentous and far-reaching.'

Mr. Hastings was the author of many hymns, which Christians have long read with profit, and in some cases sung with pleasure. The best-known of all is that beginning—

Shall we meet beyond the river,
Where the surges cease to roll?

He has left a wife, who had been a true helpmeet for well-nigh forty-six years. With two sons and a daughter, Mrs. Hastings continues the publishing work in which, during such a long period, she has borne so large a part. Interesting glimpses of her remarkable life, and of the methods pursued by her husband and herself in the Lord's vineyard, are given in a book from her pen, entitled, 'Pebbles from the Path of a Pilgrim.'

One of the most striking tributes to the goodness and industry of the departed laborer appeared in 'The Evangelical,' of Harrisburg, Pa., on Oct. 31, from the pen of the Rev. H. B. Hartzler. We make a brief extract:—

'His constant motto was, "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh." He lived for others. The most intimate friends could know only in part what burdens he bore in silence, what deep soul-travail he experienced in the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ. His was a life of privation, exposure, self-denial, indomitable devotion, and herculean toils. The wonder is that the bent bow did not break long ago.

'Little did I think that we should meet on earth no more, when last we sang together, from his "Songs of Pilgrimage," these words and music of his own composition:—

"Farewell, the parting hour has come,
The sad word must be spoken,
But still our hearts are linked with bond
That never can be broken.
Redeemed in Christ, in Him made one,
Not death nor hell can sever;
The bonds of love that He hath bound,
Have made us one for ever."

Quan Lee.

(By Floy L. Crosby.)

The surroundings presented a curious aspect to the eastern girl. The room was long and low; its walls and woodwork were very dark and the only things that relieved their bareness were a few illuminated texts, and the grotesquely distorted shadows of human heads. Across the room extended a long table on which were several lamps and a number of school books, and around which were gathered a dozen or more sober-faced Chinamen intent upon their evening lessons.

Outside, the wild autumn wind whistled around the old mission building, rattled the open shutters, and, catching trailing sprays of passion vine, tossed them against the lighted windows as if to divert the attention of the little group within.

But the work of the evening went steadily on. One by one the pupils brought their books to the sweet-faced little lady at one end of the table and recited their les-