

THE LATE CYRUS W. FIELD.

BY HENRY M. FIELD, D.D.

ONE of the world's benefactors, a great and good man has just passed away. It was he who projected and carried out the idea of an Atlantic telegraph cable. During the last few years he has had sore, sore, family trouble, but now he rests. The following is from the pen of his brother, Henry M. Field, editor of the New York *Evangelist*, and written at the urgent request of the editor of the *Independent* for that paper. Many of our readers who know something of his name and work will read with pleasure this beautiful tribute to his memory :

To the Editor of the Independent :

You have asked me to give you a brief sketch of my brother whose life has just closed. At first, as you know, I refused. I could not do it. The ties were too tender. We were rocked in the same cradle ; we slept in the same bird's nest of a room, with the same sweet mother's face bending over each little bed for the good-night kiss. Together we trotted off to school. Thus in childhood and boyhood we were inseparable. This close association made me shrink from speaking of what was so personal and sacred ; but on second thought, this very nearness to one who was gone from the world seemed to impose an obligation, and perhaps I owed it to his memory to give a glimpse of those early years, in which the boy was truly father of the man.

Never were two children of the same parents more unlike. I was a sober little chap, fond of books, while he had a preternatural activity, which found vent in out-door exercises—riding on horseback, running a race, skating on the ice, and in all sorts of sports and games. Thus we grew up together, till I, at the mature age of twelve, entered Williams' College ; while he, being older and wiser (he was almost fifteen), came to New York and entered the store of the late A. T. Stewart, with the munificent salary of fifty dollars a year ! Thus he began at the lowest round of the ladder which he was to climb to the top. The young clerks observed that he was a bright little fellow, fond of a boyish prank now and then, but always at his post and prompt in every duty. From that time I saw him but once in the year, when he came home for a week's vacation in the summer. Then our young heads were full of dreams ; but wild as his may have been, they could not have equalled the reality of what was to come. Six years later he set up in business for himself, and was married ! Well do I remember the day (December 2, 1840) that I rode over the hills to the wedding in Guilford, Conn., where began that happy married life which was to continue for half a century ; for they lived to celebrate their golden wedding.

In 1854 I came to New York, and we were immediately thrown together again. It was the year in which he first became interested in the project of an ocean telegraph. As we met every day, I knew the history of the enterprise from the beginning, and followed it in all its stages, from the first impulse of eager hope and expectation, through the long delays, followed by bitter disappointments. I was with him in the midst of the struggle, which continued twelve long years, when he was at times almost in despair. Yet even in the worst extremity, in the face of utter ruin, he would not surrender, but rose up from one disappointment after another to renew the attempt. In spite of disaster and defeat,

something within him said that it could be done, and that he could not die until it was accomplished.

It is a thrilling story, but too long to tell here. The older readers of the *Independent* will remember the attempt in 1857, which failed ; and the first in 1858, which also failed ; and the second, which had a brief success, followed by another failure, which to many seemed decisive that the undertaking was beyond the power of man ! The clouds shut down all around the horizon, and the prospect was darker than ever before.

This was the moment to test the courage of the projector. He had to hope against hope ; and to keep up a brave heart against the ill-suppressed sneers of skeptics. Again and again he crossed the ocean to keep alive the interest in the great enterprise. It was in England that he found his best support, for his resolution had captured the English heart. The English admire the courage and persistency which have made them so mighty among the races of the world, and he became immensely popular. I have been surprised when in England to see how John Bright and Mr. Gladstone spoke of him, with the warmth of personal friendship and admiration for his indomitable will. It was this unique personality which gave him influence alike with statesmen and capitalists, and prepared the way for the final success.

Hardly had our Civil War closed before the attempt was renewed to lay a cable across the Atlantic, with the advantage of having the monarch of the seas, the "Great Eastern," to carry the burden of twenty thousand tons of iron coiled in her mighty bosom safely across the deep. An attempt on such a scale *ought* to succeed ; and it did *almost*, for twelve hundred miles were laid when the cord snapped again, and all was over for another year. One more battle was to be fought, before God gave them the victory. In 1866 the cable was stretched from shore to shore. But even that was not enough ; for hardly was it landed before the great ship swung her head to the sea to search for the lost cable of the year before. "Or one month she dragged the bed of the ocean at a depth of two miles, till the lost treasure was reclaimed, and dragged away like a captive at the chariot wheels. One day that summer a message came to me at my home among the hills, which startled me by its date :—"On board the Great Eastern," for I knew she was still at sea, so that the message must have crossed the ocean *twice*, back to Ireland on the cable which she bore, and then from Ireland to America. The message ran :—

"We are now within a hundred miles of Newfoundland, and expect to land the cable to-morrow."

The next day saw it done, and when the gallant English sailors drew it up the sandy beach of Trinity Bay, there were many who felt somewhat as Columbus must have felt when he had discovered a new world, for next to the discovery of a new hemisphere was that triumph of science and human skill whereby two hemispheres were united together ; so that there was a degree of truth in the splendid tribute which John Bright soon after paid to "his friend Cyrus Field," when he spoke of him as "the Columbus of modern times, who by his cable had moored the New World alongside the Old !"

Such an achievement is enough for any man, and should not be obscured by the recent sadness and gloom. It seems a strange and inexplicable mystery that the last months of a life so honored and so useful to mankind should be overcast by domestic sorrow. But so has it been in the lives