

waxed so hot and lasted so long that the good lady of the house was tempted to wish Calvin had never been born. But the open-eyed, eager boy in the chair by the fire had no such desire. He reveled in the debates between Arminians and Calvinists, and longed for the hour when he, too, could enter the lists, and strike a blow on behalf of the beliefs which crowded thick and fast into his mind. The passion for preaching seized him early in his teens. So brightly did the fire burn that silence became impossible. "Let me tell the fact," he writes, "that, wanting in my very soul to preach, I simply went out and preached. It was very irregular, I know; but I really can not help being irregular." He did not enter a pulpit, for the good reason that he could not find one open to him. But on the village green, at the woodwright's door, and in the blacksmith's shop, he thrilled groups of men and women with his boyish eloquence. Echoes of his words traveled all the way to London, and he was invited after a time to become assistant to a prominent divine. All the week he studied hard, tearing the heart out of great books, and thinking after the sages their thoughts. On the Sabbath he preached sermons full of such promise as to lead discriminating hearers to prophesy enthusiastically. The assistantship did not last long. Parker was too individual in his methods of thought and conduct to be bound down by a master, so he determined to go his own way. A call to Banbury Independent Chapel took him, in 1853, to the provincial town where, for five happy years, he did conspicuously good work. The small, old-fashioned building soon became inadequate for the crowds that gathered to hear him. The Secularists bulked largely among the working-classes of the town, and they were noisy in asserting the superiority of their creed over Christianity. Parker boldly challenged their champions to public debate. They responded at once, with the laudable in-

tention of so crushing the audacious young minister that he would never dare hold up his head in Banbury again. They stalked on the stage like Titans, but they left it like Lilliputians. The storm of pitiless sarcasm and withering logic was more than they bargained for. Their favorite arguments were torn to tatters, and their vaunted superiority turned out to be a bubble only too quickly pricked. That victory won for Parker a place in the estimation of the people which grew larger as the years rolled on.

After Banbury came a Manchester pastorate of ten years for Dr. Parker. It was marked by a definite advance in power of thought and expression. The bombastic rhetoric of earlier sermons changed into speech clear and cutting as a knife; while a somewhat grandiloquent philosophy descended into the arena of every-day life, with words of cheer and inspiration for toilers. One secret of Parker's strength is that he is always growing. A competent critic said of Spurgeon that he never excelled a sermon he preached at twenty-one. That could not be said of Dr. Parker. A whole Atlantic sweeps between his sermons at twenty-one and sixty-one. In Manchester he touched life at many points, and came to know how to comfort men's hearts as well as convince their minds. A leader in every movement in favor of social righteousness, he was in the habit of delivering platform addresses on the questions of the day, which are still remembered because of their imaginative glow, passionate eloquence, and incisive force. Public admiration of his gifts found expression in an address and a check for \$7,000 which were presented to him at one of the most enthusiastic assemblies Manchester ever knew.

London is the Mecca of all clever English ministers, so to London Joseph Parker was sure to go, sooner or later. His attached congregation did all in their power to keep him, but in 1869 he was persuaded to take charge