

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

FAITH'S MESSAGE.

Out in the stormy night,
With not a star in sight,
And moaning winds that wander wearily:
Rocked in his leafy nest,
And vexed, and sore distressed,
A little lonely bird pipes drearily.

And I, within my room,
Who know that morn has come,
In plying love would say, "O little bird,
The night would have no chill,
The rain thou wouldst not feel,
Nor moaning wind, if thou couldst heed my word.

"For close against thy breast,
That seems so dark to thee,
Even now the risen sun has flashed his gold;
And in a moment more,
Exultant thou wilt soar,
And cleave the upper skies with pinions bold.

And thou, O doubting heart,
That shrink'st when winds upstart,
And canst not rest in sorrow's bitter night,
If thou couldst only hear
Faith's message in thine ear,
And calmly wait until the morning light!

For morn will surely come!
Even now the shades of gloom
In her soft rays are fading fast away:
'Tis but a moment more,
And free, thy soul will soar,
And speed, on tireless wing, to endless day!
—By Mrs. M. C. Kittredge.

PULPIT SKETCHES, No. 1.

DR. HOWARD CROSBY, OF THE FOURTH AVENUE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEW YORK.

In 1867, Dr. Crosby was called to the pulpit of the Fourth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, and is therefore to-day one of the oldest ministers in that city in term of service, his official relations with his church having exceeded twenty years. The church is built of a durable brown sandstone. The outlines and features are in the barest, undecorated Gothic. The interior compared with later constructions, seems austere and plain. Decoration has been used with a spare hand, and with little traces of churchly æstheticism. There is not a symbol or embellishment bearing a distinctly religious significance anywhere visible. But for the font at the foot of the platform and the large Bible on the pulpit desk, the legitimate use of the building might possibly remain a matter of conjecture. Roomy galleries fill three sides, one of which, over the entrance, serves as choir and organ gallery. There are no fascinations or allurements of the arts here to trap the senses and kindle the imagination. The singing, led by an unpretentious quartette, is almost rudimentary in its simplicity, and the large congregation join in the plain psalmody with considerable fervour.

FULL OF THE SOLAMNITY OF HIS MISSION,

Dr. Crosby is an old-time parson—not a literateur masquerading in canonicals. Like an ambassador "sent," bearing high commission in the spiritual kingdom, something like a halo of knightly consecration is felt if not seen about him. There is the hush and awe of a great solemnity welling from within, so that when he stands up to speak we think not of the orator, or polemic, or scholar, or great civilian, but mostly of the man of God, come on his Master's business. The voice is deep, with a clinging, ready edge which seizes and holds the ear. The words move in mellifluous, orderly, deliberate rhythm, as if the respiration and heart-beat were sound and rich with life. His elocution is unconsciously complete and tinctured with lifelong refinement and the unmistakable iridescence of a delicate, various culture. Yet see the man of elegance, the man of affairs, the man of steady, deep thought, but, above all, the man of spiritual integrity and whole-heartedness. He handles the Bible only as a Christian scholar comes to finger such a book—with a familiar, caressing reverence. It is a rare treat to hear him read a chapter, as from the Book of the Acts of the Apostles—to catch his clearly cut, brief, sententious comment, flashing light and intelligence all the way along; to see a sudden disclosure of hidden beauty or wealth of meaning in a weakly translated word; now a touch of archæologic or antiquarian wisdom which helps you to a vignette; again, such a pregnant allusion, or illustration from the Greek classics as only comes of consummate scholarship;

or in the Old Testament, an uncovering and quiet explication of Hebrew roots, metaphors, analysis and interlacing threads of significance, until the old text starts up through the mould and dead leafage of Hebrew, Greek and Latin, into the vernacular,—crisp, fresh, fragrant.

With all this there is a touching simplicity, as if half deprecating any flavour of pedantry, or mere erudition. It is not strange that Bible readers in almost every pew find the chapter and hang on every word; for such words are, as it were, raised from the dead and quickened once more to life. A liturgic feeling here and there crops out. The Doctor reads the Decalogue, and the choir at the close chant a simple Kyrie Eleison. Then one of the psalms is read responsively, but no creed is recited, although there is a very good one, commonly called the Apostles', to be found in the Westminster Catechism.

A PREACHER THOROUGHLY IN EARNEST.

The sermon is simple in construction, transparent and unmistakable in purpose, exceedingly forcible, and put with a close, urgent logic, impatient of resistance or trifling, and an indifference to academic elegance or with an eye to effectiveness. It is questionable whether, in print, they would distinguish the author among his brilliant contemporaries. There is no glamour of a masterly philosophy, no speculative by-play—no side shows of picturesque, richly elaborated flights of oratory or eloquence; never a trace of sensationalism: and, clearly, the preacher is oblivious to "weep here," and other technical memoranda, in getting up his manuscript. It is written extempore in the spirit of immediate necessity or crisis. So the preacher dashes across the corners, reduces his idioms almost to bluntness—but he is never rude, never gets beyond range of a certain brawny, Doric grandeur or dignity of expression. He is penetrated with the traditions of his Church, is resolutely and stoutly conservative in his theology; but it is hard to catch and identify his theology from the realistic, concrete, palpitating body of his discourse. For he proceeds rather after the order of synthesis—builds up, models, embodies all the while—has, in short, little taste or fancy for analysis and the desiccating processes of criticism. There is nothing speculative, ideal or merely philosophical in his conception of life and its depths of loss and gain. He has no pet formulas, no prescriptions of infallible theories among his curatives. There is something inexorable, almost intolerant, in his dealing with sins and sinners. He puts no faith in rose-water expedients; is stern, uncompromising, pitiless, towards shams and hypocrisies in the Church as well as out of it. A man who palters with his conscience in a double sense must find this particular church a veritable "little ease." But it is a healthy, winnowing, invigorating blast that falls from his lips, and honest, well-ordered, brave living should come of it. Approach him as closely as you find opportunity in church or elsewhere, and you will experience no mortifying disillusion. It is always the same man and personality, without trick, disguise or any such thing.

HIS WARFARE OUTSIDE THE PULPIT.

There is one characteristic of commanding importance in attempting the portraiture of Dr. Crosby. It is this. In preaching, his sermon is only half done. Where other men fold up their manuscripts as an artisan hangs up his tools, Dr. Crosby moves directly on, charging the next line of rifle pits or breastworks of the enemy. For Dr. Crosby's Lord is literally a Man of War. So he burns under the righteous indignation of soldiership, and he carries a sword with a keen edge, and smites like Joshua of old, or the Covenanters, or the Roundheads against "the man of sin" wherever he encounters him. Words are the threshold of his living sermon; for he grapples face to face with evil doers and evil livers, and complements his preaching with his valorous, persistent conflict with social evils and perils. And this desperate spirit of conquest gives initial velocity and penetrative force to his sayings. So to preach against the world, the flesh and the devil, is in Dr. Crosby's conception, to fight manfully against them in person. And no man has fought with finer, firmer enthusiasm. With a dozen such pastors—and what city ever yet held a dozen such at once?—even New York might experience a moral and social purification and rectification as yet undreamed of by the boldest optimist.

In 1877, he organized the Society for the Prevention of Crime for the trial and punishment of illicit traf-

fic in strong drink; for the suppression of licentious theatres and vile concert saloons, reeking with drunkenness and debauchery; for the vindication and moral reinforcement of municipal legislation, and for the purification of the criminal courts.

HIS SCHOLARSHIP AND SOCIAL QUALITIES.

Around him centre the best influences and labours for the purification and moral health of this great city, and his counsels are far-seeing and full of practical wisdom. It is impossible to give more than a glance at his fine and thorough scholarship, which ranges chiefly among the classics and Oriental languages—Hebrew, Arabic and Syriac, with some research among the Assyrian cuneiform inscriptions. Dr. Crosby is of genuine Knickerbocker descent—was born in this city, and comes of a family distinguished for its wealth, public spirit and devotion to the larger charities of the churches. No man has more winning qualities at home or in society. He is now fifty-nine years old, is an incessant worker, producing sermons every week, and is a vigilant parish visitor in his flock of 1,500 communicants. He is of average stature, at once elegant and distinguished in bearing, and his strongly marked features beam with geniality and a scintillant intelligence. In any gathering of men he would be a notable and commanding personage.—*N. Y. Tribune.*

THE SICK ROOM.

Ah, there is a bird's shadow flitting across the pane. The tree-top sways and trembles with soft rustlings, a white cloud floats dreamily over the blue, and now—O delight and wonder!—the bird himself comes in sight and perches visibly on the bough, dressing his feathers and quivering forth a few notes of song. All the world, then, is not lying in bed because we are, is not tired of its surroundings, has not the back-ache. What a refreshing thought! And though this glimpse of another life, the fresh natural life from which we are shut out—that life which has nothing to do with pills and potions, tiptoe movements, whispers, and doctors' boots creaking in the entry—may cause the hot tears to rush suddenly into our eyes, it does us good, and we begin to say with a certain tremulous thrill of hope: "When I go out again I shall do so and so."

Ah, if nurses, if friends knew how irksome, how positively harmful is the sameness of a sick-room, surely love and skill would devise remedies. If it were only bringing in a blue flower to-day and a pink one to-morrow, hanging a fresh picture to vary the monotony of the wall, or even an old one in a new place—something, anything—it is such an infinite relief. Small things and single things suffice. To see many of his surroundings changed at once confuses an invalid; to have one little novelty at a time to vary the point of observation, stimulates and cheers. Give him that, and you do more and better than if you filled the apartment with fresh objects.

It is supposed by many that flowers should be carefully kept away from sick people; that they exhaust the air or communicate to it some harmful quality. This may, in a degree be true of such strong, fragrant blossoms as lilacs or garden lilies, but of the more delicately-scented ones, no such effect need be apprehended. A well-aired room will never be made close or unwholesome by a nosegay of roses, mignonette or violets, and the subtle cheer which they bring with them is infinitely reviving to weary eyes and depressed spirits.—*Home and Society.*

THE WANT OF SELF-CONFIDENCE.

There are some who never seem to believe themselves capable of anything; they see others press forward to attempt and achieve, and shrink back into a desponding inactivity. Having no faith in themselves, they undertake nothing and effect nothing. If they are convinced of some fault or bad habit, they have so little hope in being able to cure it that they scarcely make an effort. If some avenue of usefulness and honours opens up before them, they draw back, almost sure that they should not succeed, and decline to enter. If a new duty presses urgently upon their conscience, they try to quiet its promptings by pleading inability. Thus their lives pass away in uselessness, their faculties do not develop, or their characters improve, their abilities are wasted, they dwindle into insignificance, and all this, not for lack of power, but for lack of power, but for want of confidence and courage that would set that power into good practical working order.