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# THE BERKELEYAN.

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*"WESTWARD THE COURSE OF EMPIRE TAKES ITS WAY."*

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## IRVING AND HIS CRITICS.

S. 10. We are, no doubt, most of us aware that the English actor, Mr. Irving, who lately personated Hamlet in London, has generally received very high praise from his critics, whether these were English or American. The *London Athenaeum* remarks with great satisfaction the fact that, although Mr. Irving has before been an actor in melo-drama, he has managed almost entirely to rid himself of the blunders into which his experience in this sort of acting would be apt to make him fall, and has fully entered into the spirit of true high art. It admits that in one or two places, for example, in the scene about the pipe with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, he still shows some traces of his former business in melo-drama; but thinks that these are merely defects in an excellent piece of work.

A writer in *Macmillan's Magazine*, is not, however, at all of this opinion. He expresses his regret that the dramatic art has sunk so low in England that a cultured and conscientious critic could be found to say, as one of Mr. Irving's critics has done, that the first performance by a young actor of the most difficult task an actor can undertake, is an "almost perfect" production. He thinks, to be sure, that the young Hamlet may yet succeed better than he now does, for the reason that he is no doubt himself aware of many of his imperfections. But he is in fear that this possibility may be entirely destroyed by the injudicious praises which have been showered upon this first attempt. Fearing then that Mr. Irving's head ~~and~~ have been turned by success, he sets out to give the antidote in a dose of eight or ten pages of sharp criticism. He believes that Mr. Irving is still most decidedly a melo-dramatic actor. He says that the most successful parts of the impersonation have been those which admitted of the greatest effect in this line; that in consequence the foundation principles of Hamlet's character, his thoughtfulness, his keen sense of the ridiculous side of life, which even his deepest melancholy only serves to bring out stronger, his gentlemanly bearing, all these, are entirely lost sight of or greatly obscured; that, still more, some of the most important passages and scenes are left out, in order to subserve the purpose of stage-effect. And so he is in no ways in agreement with the lavish praise bestowed upon Irving. He apologises indeed, that he should be obliged to seem hard to a fellow-lover of the Dramatic Art which is now, as he thinks, so rapidly decaying. But justice demands it. Irving is not yet Hamlet.

Of course we cannot pretend to say how much justice there may be in this criticism. What we have seen elsewhere would incline us to believe that it is too harsh. But if the facts stated by the author are correct, we should certainly be compelled to agree with him, to a great extent at least. We cite the article chiefly to show how varied may be the opinions of different good critics on the same subject, when it is as disputable a one as the acting of a Drama.

ANY among our students who want to read "Draper's Religion and Science," are informed that a copy of it has been received at the Library.

## DEAD !

One of the few whom the world calls great has been gathered to rest. The mournful bier has borne, the sombre pall has shrouded, another victim of Death's relentless, unsparing hand. A warmly-sympathetic heart has ceased to beat; a kindly beaming eye is closed forever; a hand "that can be clasped no more," rests upon a bosom which throbs no longer for suffering and oppressed humanity. The soul of Charles Kingsley has passed from this world to the better, brighter spirit-land.

With this sad news not many days ago the wires were freighted; and yet it causes scarcely a regret in our receptive, responsive minds. To know that a noble life's destiny has been fulfilled; that a half century's labor of untiring love has accomplished all the ardent desires which inspired and encouraged it; that the mission of one devoted to the best interests of mankind has been ably performed, clouds with no sadness our recollections of the departed. For though the stern Destroyer may remove from our sight the rugged, manly form, the dauntless courage which stationed and sustained him in the front rank of those battling in behalf of the poor man's rights, has ensured him a world-wide, ever-green fame.

Born and bred in one of the loveliest rural spots of England, its beauty stamped a lasting impression on his mind; and in it he learned of the needs, the wrongs, of the lower classes of the people, which his vigorous intellect and his persevering, indomitable will found means in future years to satisfy and redress. By profession a clergyman, his discerning eyes were not blind to their social as well as their spiritual wants; and all that weight of learning, which he wore "lightly, like a flower," but enabled him to effect in a gentle, yet persistent and powerful way, the long and greatly desired amelioration. Possessed of an undying hatred for all oppression and tyranny, yet wisely governed by due respect for political order and authority, he sought to break down and demolish the barriers of caste, so deeply founded, so long established in his native country, and every tradition that tended to subject hopelessly one class to another; that tended to rive the brotherhood of man.

The celebrity of his equitable work had preceded his last year's visit to this land—to our University; and in the tall, spare, energetic form, the concentrated earnestness of manner, the magnetic influence of person which drew together in sympathy the hearts of speaker and hearer, the fervent, eloquent utterances of his now silent lips, we perceived the traits distinguishing a man above men, "ever ready to advocate the truth, ever quick to encourage progress, ever ready to utter the best and highest aspirations of the human soul." His eulogy of Bishop Berkeley, as being one of the noblest, kindest and calmest of all philosophers, his plea for comprehensive culture, his beautifully expressed encomium of music and the other aesthetic arts, gave point and purpose to his strenuous advice to cultivate the moral as well as the intellectual parts of our nature. We felt that his large heart evinced the same solicitous interest in our welfare, that he manifested in England towards the laboring-man.

On the fourth of June last Mr. Kingsley stood in our assembly room and addressed us; four months later a message was received here from him in Westminster Abbey, which states that "he had been praising up our beautiful Berkeley to every one both in America and England;" four months later and a fatal disease abruptly closed his life.

"Dying at the age of fifty-five," I quote from the *New York Tribune*, "Mr. Kingsley passes away in the meridian of his powers. He had lived a wholesome life; he was a well-knit, tough, elastic man; he had the capacities within him of much additional work. Yet it cannot be said that he left his work unfinished. The word that it was in him to speak for the emancipation of mankind from error and wickedness, the tyranny of class legislation, the burdens of poverty, wretchedness and vice—was fully spoken. He never lost an occasion, with voice or pen, in sermon, novel or poem, to plead with man for the rights of humanity.

Virtue, manliness, the spirit of adventure, the work of self-reliant character, and the necessity and beauty of religious faith are urged and celebrated in all his fictions. . . . Charles Kingsley, distinguished on two continents as novelist, poet and moral and social philosopher and teacher, had lived to see not a few ideas crystallized into practical fact, which were thought visionary twenty-five years ago. If it was his appointed vocation to foster the intelligent and virtuous aspirations of mankind toward equality before human laws and obedience to laws divine—and thus toward national and healthful happiness—he certainly accomplished it to the utmost limit of his power. . . . His visit to this country was a happy episode in his autumnal experience. He made many friends here, and he left a gracious and fragrant memory when he sailed away. He will be mourned in the present as the magical romancer who called up "Hypatia" the beautiful, and the tender poet who sang of "The sands o'Dee." He will be lamented in the long future, as a man of true and pure genius, whose moral nature allied that genius to patient work for the practical good of his fellow creatures."

It would be a well-nigh impossible task here to epitomize the long and eventful career of Canon Kingsley; and we need not make a hasty enumeration of his public deeds of benevolence and philanthropy;—let his biographer undertake this pleasureable duty. Enough for us to live in a world that has produced such a man; to feel that the air has grown purer, the sunlight clearer from his presence; to know that to him we may point as to a temple indwelt by human virtues and consecrated to their perpetuation. J.

## FALSTAFF AND SHAKSPEARE.

Falstaff, though not a moral man, nor illustrating the finest qualities of Shakspeare's genius, nevertheless gives certain phases of his creator's character. He was a favorite of the author himself, being placed in no mean capacity in two plays, and at the Queen's request making his reappearance as hero in a third.

That he was fond of sack, given to gaming, ("he dined it not above seven times a week"), a glutton, a debauchee, there can be no doubt. But it admits of question, whether or no he was a coward. I am inclined to take his own statement on that point: "Indeed, I am not John of Gaunt, your grandfather; but yet no coward, Hal." At Gadshill, when Prince Henry and Poins were playing the robbers, he did not run away without brandishing his sword. With one hundred and fifty men, of whom but three survived, unhesitatingly he went to the war.

Again, he must have had somewhat of a valiant appearance, or else Douglas would not have fought with him. Also he must have had coolness or else he could not have fallen down and feigned death so well that Douglas left him. He himself says, "The better part of valor is—discretion; in which better part I have