

boarder as Mrs. People had been, and the two sat down at a table and had a long talk on the state of affairs. Mr. Stratford was greatly interested in Enoch's account of what he had done, for the old man told him everything, even to his method of getting rid of John People in order to have a clear field to work in.

"You see, sir," said Enoch, "what I'm about is a good sight deeper than what folks is likely to think that jus' looks at it from the outside. There's a rat in a hole in this Vatoldi business, and all these things that surprise you about the place is the stick that I'm tryin' to punch him out with; and I think that feller eatin' outside has just made the stick about long

enough to reach the mean, sneakin' varmint at the bottom of his hole. I'm almost dead sure I tetched him, for if he didn't stick out his head this mornin', I'm wuss mistaken than I ever was before in my life. I'm pretty sure that it won't be long now before I'll have him. And then, if I choose, Mr. Stratford,—I don't say that I'm goin' to do it, but I can do it, if I like,—I'm of the opinion I can show you your hundredth man. For if there's one man that sticks out sharp from any hundred people you know, it's this one I'm after."

"I have a very strong notion, Enoch," said Mr. Stratford, "if you catch the person you call your rat, and bring him to me yourself, that I shall see my hundredth man."

(To be continued.)

Frank R. Stockton.

EDWARD THOMPSON TAYLOR,

THE BOSTON BETHEL PREACHER.

THIS evangelist of the sea was born in Richmond, Virginia, December 25, 1793. He was a Christmas present of then unknown worth. He was a ruddy child; as of red earth the first Adam is fabled to have been made. As he grew up his brown hair had in it a tint of fire, as if from an ever-burning flame in his breast. He was a possessed man. To the credit of what was afterwards the Confederate capital, we must pass this great nativity. His mother was Scotch, a governess in what, from something of superior rank recognized at that time in the homestead, was called "the great house," from which his father was banished for making such a supposed inferior match. The mother expired as the son came into the world. The little "bundle of baby" fell into the hands of a negro mammy, whose love and care ever after haunted his heart. Like Moses, drawn out of the bulrush ark in Egypt, or like Jesus in the manger, he was a foundling of providence, and foreordained to the business of preaching. It is a curious parallel between him and the elder Booth that as the distinguished actor wanted prayers over some dead pigeons, so Taylor held funeral services for chickens and kittens that had departed this life, and used not only persuasion, but even the whip, to gather his mourning audience of negro boys and girls, though the lash may have been as gentle as the oratory was wonderful in the six-year-old boy. When he was about seven, living near the city with a lady to whom the charge of him had been consigned, he was one day out picking up chips. A sea-captain passing by asked him if he did

not want to be a sailor. He instantly left his chips, as the first disciples did their nets and money-changers' tables. He did not even go back to the house to say good-bye, but, readily impressed, ran away with the free-spoken stranger, embarked on the sea and upon the for him wilder ocean of human life.

In the biography of Taylor, prepared by the Reverend Gilbert Haven and the Honorable Thomas Russell, one of his sons-in-law, the next ten years are called "a blank," and they were no doubt a hard experience, to which he was seldom inclined to refer. But void of instruction and discipline, that rough decade could not have been any more than were the "three years in Arabia" of the Apostle Paul. In his later ministry, having been taken to visit the famous Dr. Channing, on leaving the house he observed to the friend who had introduced him: "Channing has splendid talents; what a pity he had not been educated!" No school, academy, or college could equal in Taylor's mind that university of wind and wave through whose long and trying curriculum with many a sharp examination, for at last such triumphant graduation, he had passed. But he never forgot the rock he was hewn from in Virginia, the mother of States. A feeling, though no doctrine, of State sovereignty or State rights may have been at the bottom of his opposition to abolitionists, and of his resentment of John Brown's raid. But his abode in North Square would have been the quickest to open to a fugitive and the hardest out of which to get a runaway slave. He was a patriotic American, but his

yearning for native soil led him, when he was physically far past his prime, to make a pilgrimage to the old birthplace, and afterwards at a religious festival in Boston the tale of his travels was told. He had been anxious, he said, above all, to find one of his playmates, little Johnny by name. But he hunted the town after him in vain, until at length an old, white-headed, stooping man was discovered and brought to him; and that was all that was left of "little Johnny."

The present writer's recollection of this pathetic speech of reminiscence, which carried away a thousand hearers as with a flood of tears, advises him how impotent must be any attempt to expound the method of this "walking Bethel," as by Edward Everett he was called. It were as easy to describe the method of a cyclone, water-spout, or thunder-cloud. He was a piece of nature, yet also of perfect, marvelous, half-unconscious art. When an actor from New York went to see "how he did it," having heard of the effect he produced, all the watching of tone and gesture was foiled; and the curious expert had at length to retreat behind his pocket-handkerchief to hide his sobs. Like a rocket which, as it rises and blazes, unwraps manifold hues, and drops through the sky bewildering showers of sparks whose shapes are gone ere they can be marked and described, such was his spontaneous rhetoric, surprising nobody more than it did himself. In his bronzed and scarred face, that did not appear to have found itself in a looking-glass, and in the mellow voice, so musical unawares, was never an atom of pretense, artifice, or intoning affectation. When his own eyes were streaming, and the congregation's cheeks were wet, he would keep straight on without a quaver, and not break down, though everybody else was melted and overwhelmed. Once I asked Emerson to dine with him, and Emerson hesitated, saying he feared "Taylor was a cannon, better on the Common than in a parlor." But at the table what a flute, harp, or viol he proved to be! He represented, in New England, the tropical zone. He was a creature no less real than strange, as we have to take into our natural history not only the lark and robin and sparrow, but also the gait and flight and splendor of the parrot, oriole, and flamingo. But no repeater was he of other people's speech. Of all eminent Americans he was the most original and inimitable in his genius and style. Like his Master, he never wrote. He said he shivered from hand to foot at the sight of an inkstand and pen. If he undertook composition he was bereft of his power. He prepared himself after his own fashion for the pulpit; yet, if a text was handed

in at the last moment, it was like a drill-borer on a sudden touching deep in earth an oil or gas-well, which bursts up, perhaps, in flame. His most overcoming eloquence in public or private was provoked by a question on the spot. When the Methodist ministry, to which he had belonged, was ridiculed as deserving but small pay, he answered that the circuit-rider, with his Bible in his hand and before him "a wilderness of human souls," would be a match for any divinity-school graduate. He was an extemporizer, who did not, however, slight his task. He compared getting ready for the desk to fermentation: "When the liquor begins to swell and strain and groan and hum and fizz, then pull out the bung!" No idler or lounge, he observed closely and mused deeply. He was perpetually alert with look and ear and thought. He leaped in humor and sparkled with wit. He was not partial, but threw his span across the broad stream of human life. He was the parallax of this solar system of society. He presided at all boards, as he would have walked the quarter-deck of a ship, a commander sympathetic with his crew, having the courage of a lion and the tenderness of a lamb or a dove. When one of his daughters remonstrated with him about something he was doing, he replied he "had not sailed so long, to be run down by a schooner." At his conference meetings, which were more entertaining than a museum or theater, he would cry out to the slow speaker, "The King's business requires haste"; to the irrelevant, "Too far off"; to those of laborious utterance, "Lubricate"; and when there had been any impertinent or insolent display of declamation, a green, tigerish light came into his untamed eye, the signal of seizing on his prey and omen of self-assured victory. "How long shall we compass this Jericho before the walls tumble!" he cried out in my vestry. I hinted that if conversion may be immediate, the formation of character is a process. He "got mad" with me in a moment, and bounced out of the room. But the next time we met he hugged and kissed me in the street.

His method, or rather God's method with him, did not exclude study or books. But he was not a peruser of literature. He listened while one of his daughters read to him for long hours, day after day. He admired the sermons of South. But he never quoted anybody. He assimilated and reproduced. He said of those constant at the church prayer-meetings, "These are the absorbents"; and he was himself a huge absorbent from all that the world of knowledge and action had to give. It was a normal school of the whole creation he went to, and which he never could get

through the lessons of, till he had been at the head of every class.

His mode was not learned, logical, or dogmatic, but so impassioned that the wonder is that his spontaneous combustion should not have brought his constitution to ashes ere he was nearly seventy-eight years old. Before his imagination, ever on fire, heaven and hell lost their substance, fled as fading views or fugitive shows, while in the horizon arose or lowered only the saint's or sinner's spiritual state. "Walking large" like the Indian and treading disrespectfully over all denominational lines, this indeed catholic preacher judged nothing and nobody by sectarian rules. He transcended the transcendentalists,—he dug with his garden shovel under all the radical growths. He was the only speaker among us that could hold scholars and authors, farmers and sailors under the same spell. After he had addressed once our Boston Philosophic Club, Emerson said, "When the spirit has orb'd itself in a man, what is there to add?" When a brother begged of him a subject, he answered, "It would be too hot for you to hold."

In his rapt discourse he seemed to have no mortal body but what served for expression and was the medium of his mind; his eye, his hand, his very foot spoke. In the midst of other talkers he was like a President in his cabinet. What great orators we have had,—Everett with his studious grace and melodious voice, Webster the resistless and majestic, the oriental fancy of Choate and the silver trumpet of Phillips blazing against slavery the blast of doom! But in none of them was a power to fuse, blend, and kindle so divine as that of Taylor. His chimney did not smoke. His gun carried its charge without any stain in the barrel. If eloquence be clear delivery of the highest emotions and a communication so complete, through look and account, that the manner and gesture disappear in the lodging of sentiment and truth in the hearers' breasts, then this man succeeded. He was a live transparency and a self-operating telephone. How supple to the spirit and without a speck, to obscure or thwart, in himself!

He was in earnest. He said, "When I am full of grace, my voice is thunder." Dante was painted in the streets of Florence as "the man who had seen hell." Taylor beheld heaven and hell, like Swedenborg, as both alike eternal states in the soul. They were to him but the picture-book of its condition. Daniel Webster he called the best of bad men—but he wanted to see him again beyond! If Emerson should go to hell, he said, "it would change the climate, and the emigration would be that way." Parker, he declared, would have been in hell so long he would not know

he had ever been out of it, before he could even "mar the gilding on the Bible lids." To astonish a stagnant preacher, he said that his own dearly beloved wife was in hell, but that she was having a good time there, as the church formulary teaches that Christ "descended into hell." When one affirmed of a desperate transgressor that he would "go to the devil," Taylor stretched out his hand and exclaimed, "farther than that," meaning that the wicked have a worse fate than is implied in meeting any visible Satan, in the grapple they were sentenced to with their own remorse.

The pit played no such part as did the celestial region in the drama which this exhorter's sermons were. When he heard a liberal Christian, in a May-meeting speech, make much ado about evil and dwell with long and painful patience on the subject of sin, he compared him to "a beetle rolling his ball of dung to his hole in the sand." "The good Samaritan," he said, "did not maul the wounded Jew with texts." I cite but a few samples from memory, out of the thousand-fold repertory of illustration which no record of a verbal herbarium would be big enough to hold, even pressed and dry.

It is fifteen years since, on April 6, 1871, the man passed on, or *over*, as the French say, whom we cannot conceive to be dead or to have any goal or term. When he was about to go, drawing his last breath, as it is said the majority of persons do, at the turn or ebbing of the tide, he was told that he would soon be among the angels. He replied, "Folks are better than angels."

He was an opposer of Spiritualism. In a call which I made upon him with William Lloyd Garrison and George Thompson, the English abolitionist, he denounced the doctrine of ghostly manifestations which they zealously upheld; he averred that where he, Taylor, was, the spirits never came to stay. They must have been indeed very lively to have had or been of spirit more than he was himself. Infinite love with imperial will was in this apocalyptic angel "standing on the land and on the sea."

Most men who have been famous in the clerical profession live in their works, as we so politely call their printed words. But no scrap of his writing is to be found. Paul said his converts were his "epistle." Father Taylor's letters were the sailors, who carried his name and lessons to every shore and port of the globe. As seeds of plants are transported by insects or in the bodies of larger beasts, and as germs float, as in thistle-down, on every breeze, so by whoever touched or heard this minister-at-large and by every wind under the

whole heaven his teachings were borne to sow the world.

He was a moralist; he taught temperance. "I would put all the alcohol in a cave and roll a planet to the door."

The main argument for religion is such a man who is by its realities so inspired that he feels like the prophet who had "fire enough in his belly to burn up all the sins of mankind." But Taylor was not a man of vagaries, the heat-lightning of the mind. His peculiar faculty was to bring ideas into contact with life. "Higher law," he said, "it means stand from under." With the odd phrasing of transcendentalism he was offended; and he branded that new philosophy, of fifty years ago, as "a gull, with long wings, lean body, poor feathers, and miserable meat." A bright man said he was afraid of Taylor's wit, knowing he would make him cry before he got through. No error or iniquity could cloud or disperse the positive glory he saw or hush the hosannas he sang. So, without written register, he liveth evermore. His enthusiasm many floods of opposition or fogs of doubt or indifference could not quench or dim. To his thought the heavens were less than the human soul. There were no dimensions to his heart. He too was "greater than the temple." "O Lord," he once prayed for an old man, "take him to heaven, if his friend be there; but, at any rate and in all events, take him where his friend is!" That petition many friends of Taylor's, still in the flesh, are disposed for themselves to adopt and repeat.

No early Christianity, no medieval theology, or so-called ages of faith, could yield a better specimen than this man of trust, whether in a present providence or a future life. As he was leaving Boston, to journey for health in the East, he said to his friends, "I commit to you my wife, my children, and my church. But He, who gives a ton of herring for breakfast to the young whales, will take care of my children." When he was discoursing once to me about the Trinity and the only-begotten Son of God, I asked him if he thought there ever was a time when God had but one child, or when his family could be counted. He flushed and cried out, "There you are at your metaphysics!" The metaphysicians stood not high in his esteem. He said, "They are like fire-flies in a southern swamp—Flash, flash, and all is dark again." He tried to be a stanch Methodist in his creed. But no pulpit of his day showed a catholicity to match his own. When a denominational brother declined to enter his desk because a Unitarian had been in it, he left him at the end of the aisle, fell on his knees at the foot of the pulpit-stairs and exclaimed, "O Lord, deliver us, here in

Boston, from bigotry and from bad rum; thou knowest which is worst, for I do not." The Reverend Doctor Lyman Beecher, meeting him one day in the street, said humorously, "Well, Brother Taylor, who is cheating? Are you cheating the Unitarians, or are the Unitarians cheating you?" Instantly came the reply, "The fact is, Brother Beecher, a third party has come in that wants to have all the cheating to itself." He loved Ralph Waldo Emerson, as Emerson did him, they being clerical cotemporaries. But he said, "Emerson knows nothing more about Christianity than Balaam's ass did of Hebrew; but I have watched him, and I find in him no fault. I have laid my ear close to his heart, and cannot detect any jar in the machinery." Of another person, nearly connected with himself, being asked if his friend had been converted to religion, he answered, "No, he is not a saint, but he is a very sweet sinner." As he was dining at my table with Doctor William Ellery Channing and my dear colleague, Doctor Charles Lowell, the latter inquired about a famous preacher of Taylor's acquaintance at the North End in Boston, where the Sailors' Bethel was, adding, "I should like very much to see him." Taylor broke out with, "You cannot see him, sir; he is behind his Master."

But for his unsurpassed independence of will and character, Taylor would have melted and been dissolved in his rarely equaled sympathies for every living creature. As I walked with him on the public garden in Boston, a sparrow, startled from a clump of bushes by our tread, flew in fright away. He stopped on the gravel path, looked and stretched his hand after the bird, squeezing his fingers gently together in a sort of caress, and said to the sparrow, "I would not hurt you." But, on another occasion, he declared to me, "If there were in the Boston Port Society any discontent, I would show them the back seams of my stockings very quick." It would have been hard to tell whether he most loved Boston, or Boston most loved him. Never was any morose or gloomy expression caught on his face. His charm was that he was a cheerful Christian. He said of believers of the long-visaged type, "They seem to have killed somebody and just come back from burying the body." On the doorstep of my house, as he went out to make a call, he turned and said, "Laugh till I get back." When John Quincy Adams had addressed the company at a Unitarian festival as "brothers and sisters," Taylor said, "My ears have heard and mine eyes have seen a wondrous thing,—the man with the army and navy of the United States at his nod and beck, saying here, 'brothers and sisters.'" He was not only a preacher, of

genius unlike any other, but a faithful pastor to visit the needy of the flock. But he said of a certain member of it who kept continually falling back into drunken ways, "He is an expensive machine; I have to keep mending him all the time; but I will never give him up."

In extemporaneous utterance Taylor has in no community ever been excelled. His was indeed a marvelous fervor and flow. He made an assembly of the clergy shake with irresistible laughter, as with perfect mimicry he took off their own manner of preaching, with the hand and arm stretched one way in gesture, and their eye in another direction hunting after the place on the manuscript page. But seldom indeed has any actor or orator been, possessed in like measure, or rather beyond all calculable degree, with the dramatic gift. He astonished the late Dr. Belows, with whom he sat at my board, as, without rising from his chair, he enacted the spinning dervish, a figure he had himself seen in his travels abroad, and which he made us see, though not stirring from the room where we sat and ate. It could not have been done by Kean or Booth. In the Revelation it is written, "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." Reverently we may apply this sublime verse to illustrate how, before a divinely inspired human imagination,

sublunary things flee and become as chaff in the wind from the threshing-floor, or put on new shapes as symbols and ciphers of realities which with the soul abide forever.

"Can a Calvinist be a Christian?" asked Taylor of Doctor Horace Bushnell. "Certainly he can," Bushnell replied. "Not so fast," rejoined Taylor. "Suppose, to the elect in heaven by sovereign decree with no claim beside, the Lord should come and say, 'Let us turn this stick round, and give the doomed at the other end a chance, while you take a spell in their torment, would the saints by arbitrary favor submit?'" Bushnell laughed, but offered no rebuttal to the query. Yet Taylor was not a Universalist in the sense of making the inner door of the tomb open into paradise immediately for all. When one scouted, in his presence, the notion of a retribution to come, he remarked, lifting his thumb and finger significantly to his nose, "We all have a sentimentality of that sulphur." But he was hospitable to any stranger, lay or clerical, in his church. "Come up," he cried to them; "my pulpit has no doors."

Perhaps these memorial fragments may hint a consistent whole. They may be formed into an image of the great friend and servant of the mariners, their priest without cowl or frock; or revive for some the actual traits in him which no abstract or analytic disquisition could clearly and fully set forth.

C. A. Bartol.

FATHER TAYLOR AND ORATORY.

I HAVE never heard but one essentially perfect orator — one who satisfied those depths of the emotional nature that in most cases go through life quite untouched, unfed — who held every hearer by spells which no conventionalist, high or low — nor any pride or composure, nor resistance of intellect — could stand against for ten minutes.

And by the way, is it not strange, of this first-class genius in the rarest and most profound of humanity's arts, that it will be necessary (so nearly forgotten and rubbed out is his name by the rushing whirl of the last twenty-five years) to first inform current readers that he was an orthodox minister, of no particular celebrity, who during a long life preached especially to Yankee sailors in an old fourth-class church down by the wharves in Boston — had practically been a sea-faring man through his earlier years — and died April 6, 1871, "just as the tide turned, going out with the ebb as an old salt should"? His name is now comparatively unknown outside

of Boston, and even there (though Dickens, Mrs. Jameson, Dr. Bartol, and Bishop Haven have commemorated him) is mostly but a reminiscence.

During my visits to "the Hub," in 1859 and '60 I several times saw and heard Father Taylor. In the spring or autumn, quiet Sunday forenoons, I liked to go down early to the quaint ship-cabin-looking church where the old man ministered — to enter and leisurely scan the building, the low ceiling, everything strongly timbered (polished and rubbed apparently), the dark rich colors, the gallery, all in half-light, and smell the aroma of old wood, to watch the auditors, sailors, mates, "matlows," officers, singly or in groups, as they came in, their physiognomies, forms, dress, gait, as they walked along the aisles, their postures, seating themselves in the rude, roomy, undoorred, uncushioned pews, and the evident effect upon them of the place, occasion, and atmosphere.

The pulpit, rising ten or twelve feet high,

against the rear wall, was backed by a significant mural painting, in oil—showing out its bold lines and strong hues through the subdued light of the building—of a stormy sea, the waves high-rolling, and amid them an old-style ship, all bent over, driving through the gale, and in great peril—a vivid and effectual piece of limning, not meant for the criticism of artists (though I think it had merit even from that standpoint), but for its effect upon the congregation, and what it would convey to them.

Father Taylor was a moderate-sized man, indeed, almost small (reminded me of old Booth, the great actor, and my favorite of those and preceding days), well advanced in years, but alert, with mild blue or gray eyes, and good presence and voice. Soon as he opened his mouth I ceased to pay any attention to church or audience or pictures or lights and shades; a far more potent charm entirely swayed me. In the course of the sermon (there was no sign of any MS., or reading from notes), some of the parts would be in the highest degree majestic and picturesque. Colloquial in a severe sense, it often leaned to Biblical and oriental forms. Especially were all allusions to ships and the ocean and sailors' lives of unrivaled power and life-likeness. Sometimes there were passages of fine language and composition, even from the purist's point of view. A few arguments, and of the best, but always brief and simple. In the main, I should say, of any of these discourses, that the old Demosthenean rule and requirement of "action, action, action," first in its inward and then its outward sense, was the quality that had leading fulfillment.

I remember I felt the deepest impression from the old man's prayers, which invariably affected me to tears. Never, on any similar or other occasions, have I heard such impassioned pleading—such human-harassing reproach (like Hamlet to his mother, in the closet)—such probing to the very depths of that latent conscience and remorse which probably lie somewhere in the background of every life, every soul. For when Father Taylor preached or prayed, the rhetoric and art, the mere words (which usually play such a big part), seemed altogether to disappear, and the *live feeling* advanced upon you and seized you with a power before unknown. Everybody felt this marvelous and awful influence. One young sailor, a Rhode Islander (who came every Sunday, and I got acquainted with, and talked to once or twice as we went away), told me, "that must be the Holy Ghost we read of in the Testament."

I should be at a loss to make any comparison with other preachers or public speakers. When a child I had heard Elias Hicks, and Father Taylor (though so different in personal appearance, for Elias was of tall and most shapely form, with black eyes that blazed at times like meteors) always reminded me of him. Both had the same inner, apparently inexhaustible, fund of volcanic passion—the same tenderness, blended with a curious remorseless firmness, as of some surgeon operating on a beloved patient. Hearing such men sends to the winds all the books, and formulas, and polished speaking, and rules of oratory.

Talking of oratory, why is it that the unsophisticated practices often strike deeper than the trained ones? Why do our experiences perhaps of some local country exhorter—or often in the West or South at political meetings—bring the most rapid results? In my time I have heard Webster, Clay, Edward Everett, Phillips, and such *célèbres*; yet for effect and permanence I recall the minor but life-eloquence of men like John P. Hale, Cassius Clay, and one or two of the old abolition "fanatics" ahead of all those stereotyped fames. Is not—I sometimes question—the first, last, and most important quality of all, in training for a "finished speaker," generally unsought, unrecked of, both by teacher and pupil? Though may be it cannot be taught anyhow. At any rate, we need to understand clearly the distinction between oratory and elocution. Under the latter art, including some of high order, there is indeed no scarcity in the United States,—preachers, lawyers, lecturers, etc. With all, there seem to be few real orators—almost none.

I repeat, and would dwell upon it (more as suggestion than mere fact)—among all the brilliant lights of bar or stage I have heard in my time—for years in New York and other cities I haunted the courts to witness notable trials, and have heard all the famous actors and actresses that have been in America the past fifty years—though I recall marvelous effects from one or other of them, I never had anything in the way of vocal utterance to shake me through and through, and become fixed, with its accompaniments, in my memory, like those prayers and sermons—like Father Taylor's personal electricity and the whole scene there—the prone ship in the gale, and dashing wave and foam for background—in the little old sea-church in Boston, those summer Sundays just before the Secession war broke out.

Walt Whitman.