

and most illustrative of allusions, makes him a model among poetic mentors.

If he has never worn the master's robes it has been due probably to his deep-rooted fondness for the habiliments of Bohemia. He wore them, metaphorically at least, in the early days of his life in New York, when Pfaff's was a literary shrine in which all the poets of that time gathered, and his "Diamond Wedding" was an appropriate offering to its muse. He wears them now in the same figurative sense when the revels of the Centurions and the Players require it, and at any time he has a ready reply to a salutation couched in one of Béranger's ringing lyrics, or a fragment from Murger's party-colored work.

But in seeking for a closing word on Mr. Stedman it is necessary to choose some loftier interpreter than either of these, for his significance is of a more serious character. One thinks

of him as the friend of new interests, of new thoughts, of new ideals. One thinks of him more often as the contemporary and intimate of the leaders whose work he has shared in the formation of American literature. Lowell and Longfellow were his friends. Of Whittier he has written more clearly and more justly than could have been possible for any one who had not grasped through companionship and kindred experiences the Quaker poet's point of view. His first years of literary craftsmanship brought him in contact with men like Bayard Taylor and Ripley, and for a long time he worked side by side with John R. G. Hassard, one of the finest critics of his period. Like all the members of this famous company, he stands for what is most admirable in American letters. That his influence will be felt in the development of the latter is one of the most gratifying thoughts that arise in the presence of his portrait.

Royal Cortissoz.

ECHOES OF THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS.



THE first lesson given to us by the Religious Congress was the consciousness of our Christian divisions. I must say that nowhere have I been so struck by the variety and apparent irreconcilability of these divisions as in this country. Not only the internal differences between doctrines divide people, and keep them apart from one another, but even the mere exterior fact of going to one church and not to another. The church, no longer as a spiritual congregation, but as a building, seems to make people feel that they are different from people who go to another building, and that they belong to a different class of human beings. How many seem to believe that they live in order to go to church, and not that they go to church in order to learn how to live! If people would only realize that they have to meet in life and not in church, how unimportant would be the fact that they come from different churches, compared with the fact of their meeting in the same life! Never has this been more beautifully demonstrated than at that memorable scene of the opening session of the Religious Congress on September 11, 1893. How low must have fallen the barriers which separated a Presbyterian from a Methodist when they saw sitting next to one another an archbishop of the Greek Church, a Buddhist from Ceylon, a Catholic bishop, a Confucianist from Japan! How small certain people must have felt with their little

sectarian flag in front of that wonderful platform overshadowed by the banner of brotherhood! These men need not have said a word: they were eloquent enough by their appearance; it was a silent proclamation of unity — not unity as an aim we have to strive for, but unity as an actual force, as an energy in the Greek sense of the word: a latent power which expects to be used, and which must be and will be used, for its possibilities are unlimited.

But they did not remain silent: they began to speak, these men of different nations, different religions, different churches, and all at once we saw that underlying their different forms of faith was one common feeling — that universal striving of man, the same man, toward one and the same divinity. People understood (and how many were astonished in doing so!) that the same faith and hope and love could be expressed through different religious forms, just as the same feelings and ideas can be expressed through different words of different tongues.

That was the second lesson we learned — the changelessness of certain fundamental qualities of human nature by which the equality of men is secured through all the varieties of their physical organization, in spite of all the differences of form in which their spiritual strivings express themselves. It became manifest that the bond which unites the human family is not religion, but religious feeling; for if we say "religion," we inevitably must ask "What religion?" and thousands of answers

will divide humanity into thousands of classes; but if we say "religious feeling," there is no misunderstanding possible. "What religious feeling?" *The* religious feeling, for there is but one.

Yes, religious feeling, independently of how it crystallizes itself in the great variety of human souls, is the common field on which we all must meet to recognize the great equality of the human soul.

Now look how inconsistent those Christians are who, in the name of establishing a *Christian* brotherhood on earth, refuse to recognize as brothers, not only their fellow-men of other religions, but even their Christian brothers of other denominations. They act in the name of a religion, and they forget that religion is the result of religious feeling, and that the latter is proper to the heathen just as to themselves; but as they cannot deny the existence of religious feeling in a Buddhist, they evidently prefer to drop their own rather than to keep anything in common with him. They do not realize that, in putting their fellow-man of another religion out of *their* family, they put themselves outside the pale of the great *human* family; for the heathen by their exclusion does not lose what he had in common with them, while they voluntarily reject their natural similitude with him; and as that similitude consists in the community of religious feeling, they consequently (or, rather, *inconsequently*) keep for themselves a religion without religious feeling. "Religion" becomes a shallow word, empty of sense, and "Church" becomes synonymous with the "quarantine" which keeps them safe from all pernicious contact.

The "declassification"—if I may say so—of our human brother was, then, the third lesson we learned at the Religious Congress. We learned morally to undress our fellow-man, to despoil him of those qualifications in which the prejudices of our education had so wrapped him that his human soul had finally disappeared under the clothing of national, political, or religious denominations. All that had to vanish before the banner of brotherhood; the shell was broken, the kernel appeared. We saw that in the Creator's eyes we had no denominations; that before God we

were only men and nothing else, and, as such, brothers by the fact of our birth, and not because we belong to the same religion. That is what so many Christians were afraid of; and still, why should they be? Does the universal brotherhood not embrace the Christian brotherhood? Is the human brotherhood not the final aim prescribed by Christianity? Or do some people think that by including heathens in their brotherhood they renounce Christianity? Absurd as the question may seem, it is the logical result to which some people have to come if they persist in their ideas.

I will simply ask those who are afraid of losing their Christianity by extending the limits of their love, whether they think that Christianity is great because with its teaching of brotherhood it has inoculated humanity as with something new or supernatural? Did Newton *introduce* the law of gravitation into the world? No; he pointed it out—as French people would say, "he put his finger on it," and it was enough to make him great. So with Christianity. It did not *introduce* brotherhood into the world; it pointed it out, and made the acknowledgment of it compulsory. It did not impose on human nature anything supernatural which was not in nature before; and thank God it did not, for man would not be able to fulfil a prescription were it outside of nature's limits. So, my Christian friends who are afraid of loving *too* broadly, you may be right as to Christianity,—I mean Christianity as you understand it,—but pray do not forget that those whom you are afraid of loving do not hate you, or if some of them do, it is not to be supposed that you would like to resemble them in their errors: you would not like to give them the right to reproach Christianity with wrong similar to that which you condemn in them.

We will not discuss, my friends, but in the name of that Christian love which animates you, let us join together in a wish which certainly will help the establishment of that universal peace for which you, as much as anybody, are longing. Intolerance, my friends, has reigned long on earth; now let us join our prayers, and hope that the time will come when tolerance will be tolerated.

Serge Wolkonsky.

