Editor's Easy Chair.

THERE is a class of men whom we all know, of the utmost delicacy and purity of nature, of quick sympathy and admirable accomplishment, who influence us like exquisite music, and who, without marked originality or commanding force, are remembered only like music when they are gone. Indeed, the fineness of nature which is most attractive, the conscientious intellect, so to speak, to which partisanship is impossible, and which pensively sees the equal reason of the other view, is incompatible with the quality which makes leadership, and which most impresses mankind. "Pray continue to be ornamental," said an accomplished woman of the world to a young man who began to feel a desire to take his share of the world's work. She forgot that the most exquisitely wrought column is yet of stone, and helps support the architrave. The Chevalier Bayard or Sir Philip Sidney carries a guitar upon a ribbon, but his sword is hung upon leather beneath it. He kneels in graceful compliment to the queen, but he kneels also in prayer to his Maker.

The charm of such a character is resistless. How little Sidney did, yet how much he is the darling of the history of his time, as he was of his contemporaries! Horace Walpole, who called Goldsmith an inspired idiot, is the only Englishman who sneers at Sidney. He was a kind of flower of men, and, like other flowers, he neither toiled nor spun. A cumbrous and stately novel in the affected style of his time, a noble essay upon poetry, and a few memorable sonnets, with his letter to Elizabeth against the French marriage, are all that remain to us of what he did. Nobody reads his "Arcadia;" few know his sonnets; his letter to the queen is forgotten. But Sidney survives. His name is the synonym of courtesy and grace, of accomplishment and valor. And he names for us a whole class of men, gentle and spirited as he was, men of the truest temper, of rare gifts, of subtile fascination, whose coming is bright as daylight, and whose refining influence is a permanent benediction.

Some of our readers may have seen the name of a young man of this kind who died not long ago in England—Julian Fane. A memoir of him by his friend, Robert Lytton, better known, perhaps, by his author's name, Owen Meredith, was lately published, in which the simple tale of the wholly uneventful life of Mr. Fane is so well told that the character of the man himself is clearly conveyed, with the beautiful impression of his purity and grace, and some conception of that personal influence which Mr. Lytton truly calls "incommunicable." "Yet," he adds, "the influence of these men upon the society they adorn is too beneficent to be altogether evanescent. Their presence animates and sustains whatever is loveliest in social life. The world's dim and dusty atmosphere grows golden in the light of it. Their mere look rebukes vulgarity. Their conversation elevates the lowest and brightens the dullest theme. Their intellectual sympathy is often the unacknowledged begetter of other men's intellectual labor; and in the charm of their companionship we are conscious of those benignant influences which the Greeks called Graces, but which Christianity has converted into Charities."

Julian Fane was the son of a nobleman, the Earl of Westmoreland, and he was born in 1827, at Florence, the "city of flowers," where his father was the British minister; nor was he in England until he was three years old. From the first there was the most intimate, affectionate, and inspiring relation between Julian and his mother; nor did that lovely and beneficent friendship ever fail. Every year, upon her birthday, he wrote to her sonnets of the utmost tenderness and thoughtfulness, even to the anniversary which recurred but a very short time before his death. In 1841 his father went as minister to Prussia, and with his own fondness for music and art, and the singular charm of Lady Westmoreland, the British legation became one of the most delightful houses in Berlin—"a sort of Continental Holland House," says Mr. Lytton, "where Genius and Beauty, Science and Fashion, Literature and Politics, could meet each other with a hearty reciprocal welcome." Indeed, Humboldt, Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, Rauch, Magnus, Begas, Hensel, were all frequent guests of that happy home.

Among such influences the boy, sensitive to beauty of every form and degree, rapidly developed. His musical instinct especially was extraordinary; and while yet very young he played in the presence of Meyerbeer parts of one of the composer's new operas which had been produced only the evening before, and of which he had carefully concealed the score. He asked in great agitation who could have given the boy the music, and would not believe that it was played from memory after one hearing. When Julian was seventeen his father officially attached him to his embassy, and he tasted with every advantage every wholesome pleasure of the life of a great European capital. But in 1846, when he was nineteen, he returned to England to fit for the university at Cambridge, which he entered in 1847.

All his friends at Cambridge—and any man might be proud of them—break out into praises of him, like all the English historians when they mention Sidney. He came, an earl's son, of singular and winning beauty, which is not lost in the portrait published in the memoir, of unusual accomplishment, speaking three foreign languages fluently, with the self-possession of such an experience of the best society in Europe as few men ever enjoy, but without the least pride or assumption or "bumptiousness," a simple, earnest, lofty-minded youth. He instinctively sought the best men, morally and intellectually. One of his most intimate friends was a sizar, a charity student, and a man of fine character and cultivation.

Fane was very tall, very graceful, and with a ready wit and constant play of humor. Mr. Lytton, in personally describing him, says: "His extraordinary mimetic power may be imagined from the fact that he could, without the aid of voice or action, and solely by a rapid variation of physiognomy, conjure up before the eyes of the most unimpressionable spectator the whole pageant and progress of a thunder-storm. I have

often watched him perform this *tour de force*, and never without seeming to see before me, with unmistakable distinctness, the hovering transit of light and shadow over some calm pastoral landscape on a summer's noon; then the gradually gathering darkness in the heaven above, the sultry suspense of Nature's stifled pulse, the sudden flash, the sportive bickering play of the lightning, the boisterous descent of the rain, the slow subsidence of all the celestial tumult, the returning sunlight and blue air, the broad repose and steady gladness of the renovated fields, with their tinkling flocks and rainy flowers—the capacity of producing at will such effects as these by the mere working of a countenance which Nature had carved in the calmest classic outlines, could only have resulted from a very rare correspondence between the intellectual and physical faculties: and it is no slight moral merit in the possessor of such gifts that he rarely exercised them at all, and never for the purpose of ungenerously ridiculing his fellow-creatures."

There is universal testimony to this goodness of the man. Its gracious memory inspires every one who speaks of him. His familiar companions were not many, and like other men of a delicate habit, he turned night into day. His interest in politics was strong, and he was inclined to philosophical studies, while his fondness for music and poetry was passionate. But all his friends felt in him chiefly the practical understanding and grave sense of justice which were the solid basis of all his brilliancy. Leaving the university in 1850, he returned to Berlin, and the next year was transferred to Vienna, where he remained until 1855. In 1856 he was attached to Lord Clarendon's special mission to Paris, and in the same year he was made Secretary of Legation at St. Petersburg, where he remained for two years, returning in 1858 to Vienna, where he remained until 1865. It was during this time that Lytton was intimate with him, and his sketch of their life together is delightful. They were hard workers, for England requires labor of her young diplomatists, and Fane had withdrawn from what is called "society," but only for the greater pleasure of a small circle of friends. The works of Henry Heine deeply interested him, and he translated many of the smaller poems, and was always, doubtless, haunted by the hope of a literary career. His literary acquirements were very large and various, and always available. His was one of the cultivated minds which are like well-ordered arsenals, where every weapon is in its place, and burnished and ready for instant use. How fine his poetic taste, and how remarkable his literary skill, the series of sonnets to his mother shows—a filial tribute of affection such as few mothers have ever received. He was modern in his sympathies, and although he was entirely familiar with the best older English literature, he was very fond of Tennyson and Ruskin. But the allurements of poetry did not win him from the faithful pursuit of his diplomatic profession, in which he had a much higher consideration than rank; and his professional memoirs and reports were of the highest character.

In 1866 he was secretary at Paris, and, although supposed to be a hopeless bachelor, he was suddenly betrothed and married to Lady Adine Cowper, with whom Lytton says that his life was of a felicity which any Greek philosopher would have deemed dangerously great. In the same year he resigned his post, and, to the sorrow and surprise of many of his friends, left the diplomatic profession. Mr. Lytton says that he felt that it was a career which could not satisfy his strongest moral and intellectual requirements, and would prove fatal to the development of powers which he perceived in himself. Doubtless, also, he felt his hold upon life insecure, and his inclination to a literary career was shared by his wife. He returned to England, and seemed to rally. In 1868 he took a house at Fotheringay, near to Apethorpe, the seat of the family, where his wife sank after the birth of a second child, and died. Fane was himself ill, and from that moment he drooped. In two years he suffered with a cruel illness, which yet could not touch his serene soul, and on the 18th of April, 1870, "he was apparently free from all suffering save that of extreme debility. Midnight came. He told his servant to remove the candle from before his eyes, saying that he wished to sleep. The room was darkened; he turned softly to his rest; and those that watched him withdrew into the next chamber in order not to disturb the sleeper. When, shortly afterward, his brother re-entered from the adjoining room to see if he were yet asleep, he was lying quite still, with a deep smile upon his face. He seemed to be (and was) in a sweet sound slumber. It was the slumber of death."

Such was the eventless life of a man who has left a profound impression upon the best men who knew him. Mr. Vernon Harcourt, a gentleman who, as "Historicus," was deeply honored in this country, writes a letter about Fane which is full of interest. It is pleasant to read in it that "on the American civil war, which I have always regarded as the true touch-stone in our times of real liberal belief, his sympathies were wholly on the side of constitutional freedom." And Mr. Motley, the historian, who was the American minister at Vienna while Julian Fane was the English secretary there, says, "I never found any one out of America more unswerving in his belief and sympathy, or more intelligent and appreciative as to the causes and progress of that great conflict, than he was." Mr. Harcourt's last words of his friend are very touching: "That so finished and complete a man should have perished so untimely—that the world should know so little of that which is best and highest and most lovely in the midst of it, is not less sad because it is so common. You and I, my dear L——, were among the few, the very few, to whom it was permitted to know all that Julian was; and whatever else may come to us, it is a gift for which we shall always feel supremely grateful. If you are able in any degree to convey to others less fortunate a sense of that delight which we have so often drunk in his companionship, you will have achieved a work well worthy of achievement, and I cordially bid you Godspeed, wishing that I had the power, as I have the will, to assist you in it."

Here was a man who passed unscathed the tremendous ordeal of prosperity and praise and fascinated devotion, who cultivated carefully and to the best purpose his gifts of nature, and who, above all and through all, was a good man, and whose influence was always most elevating and

purifying. He is a name only, and, unassociated with any conspicuous achievement, it is a name which will presently perish. But there have been few memoirs lately published which reveal a character so beautiful or a life more opulent in ennobling influences.

The Easy Chair was amused and amazed the other day upon being told that it was unfriendly to the clerical profession. It was the more surprising, because it is often told that it preaches and proses, and makes itself a kind of pulpit at the back-door of the Magazine, so that the reader can not escape without a sermon. There is no doubt that most readers need the sermon, and they are at perfect liberty to choose their preacher. But if the Chair may honestly prefer any claim to the cloth, it is upon the ground of friendship for it. How often has it not exposed the real hardships of the clerical life, the enormous and various expectation, and the wretched remuneration! The clergyman is expected to be both master and servant; to be at every body's call for any purpose all the week, and on Sunday to be learned and eloquent, both in the morning and in the evening. If a parishioner strolls into church, and, arousing from his nap during the sermon, thinks that he recognizes some sentence that he has heard before, how wroth he is with a minister who is always preaching old sermons!

The recent jubilee at Mr. Beecher's church, in Brooklyn, was not only very beautiful and touching, but it was a text for many meditations. With the immense growth of the press and the development of the lyceum in this country, the standard, both of expectation and of performance, in all kinds of oratorical appeal, is swiftly raised. If you add the fact that the official dignity of the clerical profession necessarily declines when men are measured not by the function, but by the manner in which it is discharged, many of the phenomena of clerical life are explained. The strict and universal ecclesiastical organization of the Roman Church, which no other has equaled, is rivaled in effect among the other churches by the social and æsthetic appliances of another kind. There is now a tendency to a union of club life with the church organization. The church parlor, with all its resources, is the sign that the time demands something more than the solemn Sabbath appeal. The old Puritan New England meeting-house, bare and cold and repulsive, in which comfort was a sin, and whose hard and straight pews and universal severity proclaimed that asceticism is itself a virtue, was hardly more different from the "mass house" than from the luxurious modern temple, with all its secular accessories.

But the modern spirit is the true one, for it does not postpone religion to one day and to a gloomy place, but mingles it with the week and with the common details of life. The clergyman is no more an austere and separate being, a part of a system, a functionary. He is not a lay figure, draped with respectable robes, nor reverend *ex officio*, but he is tried as all other men are, and is powerful and influential as they are, only by the force of his own individuality. Of course this tends to make the profession a reality. Intellect and character are the only vital personal forces; and the eloquence which charms is no longer permanent in the pulpit if it be not sustained by character. The answer which was made for Pope Alexander, that he had done something not as pope, but as Rodrigo Borgia, no longer avails. The rejoinder to that answer is now the controlling faith of society: "When Rodrigo Borgia goes to torment for that offense, what will become of Pope Alexander?" The man is no longer separated from the priest. The new faith is that the goodness of the man is the power of the priest.

And it is due to the same tendency that religion is more and more felt to be a life, and not a ceremony or a creed. John Wesley's fancy that creeds were only the fashion of spiritual clothes, so to speak, is not a figure only, but a profound truth. The important fact is the substance—that is, clothes, not the fashion in which they are made, which is the creed. And nothing is more evident than the relaxation of rigorous sectarian lines. The difference between Mr. Beecher's father in Park Street Church, in Boston, half a century ago, and Mr. Beecher himself in his own Plymouth Church, in Brooklyn, to-day, is the most striking illustration of the change. The gain to the clergyman, both in influence and self-respect, is immense. He is honored not as a piece of a hierarchy and ceremonially, but for himself and actually.

Naturally, also, this fact has two results: those who still hold by the old ceremonial tenure lose consideration; and those who stand upon their own feet are proportionally honored. The cry of sensationalism in preaching comes mainly from the former. It means that which impresses and attracts the multitude. But there is scarcely one great preacher to-day who is not, in a certain way, sensational. To use all the legitimate resources of the orator is to be sensational; and therefore all the famous orators of the church have been of this kind. Indeed, how can any man who believes that Christianity verified itself by miracles complain of sensationalism in preaching? On the other hand, as the ceremony vanishes, and the reverend robes disappear, leaving the man below, he must be a man who stands firmly and squarely upon his feet, brave, clear-eyed, sincere, lofty, simple, devoted, or he will go with his clothes. All men naturally follow a leader. But he must be a leader, and he must show that he is a leader. This is what the chiefs of sects have always done — Calvin, Pope Gregory, George Fox, John Wesley. The rule is now becoming universal. It is not enough to wear the badge of any of these, if you have not the character and the power which no badge can confer.

But the demands upon a clergyman, as we have often said, are excessive and unreasonable. To demand of a preacher two finished and admirable sermons every week is preposterous. If, however, he chooses to preach them, and can preach them, nobody will complain. But to the critical, intelligent, trained, and thoughtful audience of to-day a sermon must have something of the quality of Bossuet's before the French court, or it will seem halting and vapid. Such sermons as were formerly acceptable could not now satisfy. When, as in many Catholic countries, the mass of people depend upon the pulpit both for secular and for religious instruction, a