

HIS HOSPITALITY OF MIND AND HIS GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT.

(For the Review.)

By WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON.

As the news of Ernest Crosby's death cast a shadow over the day and filled my heart with sorrow, Whittier's lines came freshly to mind:

Gone before us, O our brother,
To the spirit land!
Vainly look we for another
In thy place to stand.

It is a remarkable tribute to the character of the man that his loss is mourned by so many divergent minds, a testimony to the universality of his own. He was free from the narrowness of many reformers whose vision is confined to a special object. While this concentration gives driving force to a movement it injures one's sense of proportion, as all genuine reforms are correlated, converging toward a common goal.

Our friend, surveying the field from a height, discerned the sweep of vital forces, and agitators of moral insight drew him to their side as by the law of gravitation. It may be said of him, as Gov. Andrew said of George Thompson, the English abolitionist, "He never put his hand to a bad cause nor turned his back upon a good one." He was a soldier of truth, unhampered by parties or policies, never tempted to qualify or repress his utterance for fear of hurting the propaganda and keeping away timid souls who are shocked by the naked truth. Naturally many forward movements claim him for their own, even the socialists (whose sincerity he recognized but from whose philosophy he dissented) hastening to do homage to his memory.

Ernest Crosby had a discriminating mind, giving due weight to the various reforms which commanded his allegiance, and never confusing the secondary with those of fundamental importance. This excellent sense and sanity enabled him to keep a proper balance, while his absolute sincerity and frankness, unmarred by a contentions spirit, won for him a wide friendship.

It was an inspiring life. Experiencing in manhood a moral and spiritual re-birth, through Tolstoy's exalted teaching, he discarded inherited ideas and took service in the broad field of humanity. Henceforth his concern was no more for the people of his own country than for all mankind. He quickly outgrew the confining creed of nationality and the overworked sentiment of patriotism went by the board. For him race and caste distinctions ceased to exist, the woes and aspirations of the degraded and oppressed wherever found, enlisting his active interest and aid. Like Terence, nothing pertaining to humanity was foreign to his sympathies. "Wherever Freedom raised her cry of pain" she found in Ernest Crosby a sensitive ear and an arm ever ready in her defense.

Guided by this spirit, and directed by the great world-soul of Russia, it was inevitable that he should find and accept the gospel of Henry George. He was not long in grasping its import and making the acquaintance of the leader. As a non-resistant, full of abhorrence for war and its bloody associations, he discerned in the Single Tax the foundation principle which makes for peace. No dream of brotherhood is possible of realization while a few people own the earth and the rest are in practical serfdom to the usurpers. "First pure, then peaceable" became an illuminating text, and that charity can never be a substitute for justice appeared clear as the noon-day sun.

Tolstoy's emphasis on the non-resistant inculcations of Jesus, and their practicability as a working rule of life, determined Ernest Crosby to withdraw from a career of social ease and conventional ambition. New ideals and changed standards beckoned him to other paths. As Wendell Phillips and Edmund Quincy, quickened by the anti-slavery movement, turned from the allurements of wealth and fashion to work with the humble and discredited abolitionists, so did our friend undergo a similar baptism and hasten to manifest its efficacy by instant action. Although an abrupt change of sphere it must have been grateful to his noble nature. Quincy once wrote to a friend that while he was rich in the possession of family and friends with comfortable establishments in Boston, the temporary breaking up of Mrs. Chapman's home (the common social center for abolitionists) could not be made good. "It was the point where my two lives met, the ideas of the one being different from that of the other as if spent in different worlds."

The Philippine iniquity, consequent upon the imperialistic craze, called into play the dynamic resources of Ernest Crosby. With voice and pen, in prose and verse, his indignant protest rang through the land. His fine presence, manly voice and direct style, aided by a sense of humor and a gift of irony, compelled attention. The best of his utterances are destined to be collected for fresh and continuous service. His published works have already received a large approval and are stimulating to earnest seekers for a better social life.

It seemed as if, with that magnificent native endowment, that presence suggestive of redundant life and vigor, a long maturity awaited this preacher of righteousness. Alas for human foresight! The news of his untimely death came with the force of a shock even to men who never beheld him but who had felt his fellowship through the printed page. Whittier's apostrophe in the poem first quoted will also make a fitting one for Ernest Crosby:

"Unto Truth and Freedom giving
All thy early powers,
Be thy virtues with the living,
And thy spirit ours."

HIS LIFE AND INFLUENCE.

(For the Review.)

By BOLTON HALL.

Crosby's life and Crosby's writings, of which each so well supplements the other, have been so thoroughly and sympathetically reviewed in the *Chicago Public* of January and the *Arena* of March that it is not necessary to recount them here. But a few words on his practical usefulness will not be out of place.

The son of Dr. Howard Crosby, one of the first clergymen to take up the crusade of practical righteousness, he showed in his career the flower and fruit of his father's principles. New York University and Columbia Law School prepared him for three terms which he served in the New York Assembly, as a Republican, then the party of respectability. In 1889 he was appointed by President Harrison as Judge of the Mixed Tribunal of Alexandria, Egypt, where he served acceptably for five years.

Then the light came to him through Tolstoy's Anarchism and he saw what he expressed later in "Plain Talk in Psalm and Parable":

“Go on with your voting and organizing,
 Your judging and condemning and punishing;
 You say it is your duty;
 I think that perhaps it is,
 All I know is that it is not mine and that some day it will cease
 to be yours.’

He learned that it is not possible to force men to be good, and in this perception he passed beyond the reformer as he had long passed beyond the partizan.

Even in his consistent and single-hearted advocacy of making the value of the land common property by taxing it all into the public treasury, Crosby was no bigot. He saw that even the Single Tax is not a goal, but is a way to Liberty. As George himself said, “it is not the end of reform, but the gateway.” He felt, as he said, that all who are striving to awaken the social consciousness are in their degree the Prophets of the Lord.

Nothing is more remarkable than the range of social betterment associations in which he was a leader and a stay. When the Social Reform Club was practically dead, Crosby resurrected it; when Moses Harmon was imprisoned for endeavoring to instruct men and women about sex, Crosby supported his contention; when John Turner was deported under the new Anti-Anarchist Law, Crosby championed his cause, always with the simple direct eloquence of sincerity.

He was claimed by the People’s Institute, the Single Tax Clubs, the Anti-Imperialist League, the Social Reform Club, Whitman Fellowship, Filipino Progress Association, East Side Civic Club, Dickens Fellowship, Brooklyn Central Labor Union, Central Federated Labor Union, of New York, Vegetarian Society, “C. A. I. L.,” Emerson Club, Dr. McGlynn Memorial Association, Brotherhood of the Kingdom and the Women’s Henry George League, besides the Nurses’ and University Settlements, Outdoor Recreation League, the Society for Italian Immigrants and other retail purveyors of righteousness, and when the Spanish War was imminent and when to decry it was considered treason, Crosby combatted it. The address which he wrote is a fine presentation of the principles of Liberty and Fraternity, one and indivisible; he said:

“The right thing in this world is the just thing. That applies to governments as well as to individuals. A just man who finds he has invaded a neighbor’s domain will withdraw and make proper amends. What is right for an individual to do is right for an association of individuals or for a government to do; and nothing is clearer than that a government—such as the government of the United States—composed of individuals, sovereigns, each a law unto himself, yet subject to laws which he as a part of the whole makes for his own restraint—should also be just.

“The mission of the great American Republic is to rule by love, not bayonets; to extend a friendly hand to all peoples who would be free; and when they have reached their goal to add their names to the great roster of free and independent republics.”

We held a Memorial Meeting, not that he needed it, but that we did. His closest personal friend arranged it and arranged it well; the names of the Committee is a list of the goodly fellowship of the apostles.

Leighton Williams, the gentle Minister of Jesus, our own Hamlin Garland, Felix Adler, representing the respectables, Dr. Jane E. Robbins, John S. Crosby the orator, Abraham Cahan for the Russians, A. J. Boulton for labor.

All spoke, seriously but not sadly. Markham read a tender poem. It was just such a Memorial Meeting as I think he approved of. The splendid faces and the earnestness must have done his spirit good.

In his life there is nothing to apologize for or explain. A man who was of independent means but was independent of his means, who showed that he could support himself with his hands as well as with his brain—a singularly happy and satisfactory life.

Happiness seems to me to consist in the consciousness of achievement; and in harmony with one's surroundings and the highest achievement and the most perfect harmony is in love and the expression of love, and these he had. One had only to look at Crosby's face, one has only to look even at his picture to see that he had these. There is no note of sadness in his poems, nor was there any in him.

I have been with him in his work and in his play and talked with him many a long evening; he brought out and then accepted that which was best in every one; to arouse antagonism in him seemed to be impossible, and he had his natural reward in a host of friends, with one or two intimates, in a devoted wife, and in children who adored him and who give promise of walking in his ways.

And yet strangely, he died alone; in Baltimore where he went to comfort his wife, who was under the care of a specialist, he fell ill at the hotel; it was not regarded as serious till the third evening, when his children were telegraphed for and arrived too late.

But it was a good death; such as a man would wish to die; with no struggle, nor harrowing, lingering disease, he sank quietly till,

“The pretty, red cheeked maiden, Death, kissed him on the forehead.”

Seeing Crosby, the Word made flesh, the darkest Agnostic might feel the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of such a fair body, and the life everlasting of that Soul.

HOW I CAME TO KNOW HIM.

(For the Review.)

By LEWIS F. POST.

Upon returning from a Single Tax lecture trip in the early '90's I was asked by some members of the Manhattan Single Tax Club if I knew Ernest Crosby. Explanations followed from which it appeared that Mr. Crosby had written to the club for Single Tax literature. This was the first step, as it afterwards transpired, in Mr. Crosby's effort to follow Tolstoy's advice and get acquainted with Henry George. I did know Ernest Crosby, though not with any intimacy until long afterwards. In 1864 I had met him and his brother for a passing moment in their father's company at a time when at fourteen I was big enough and felt old enough to patronize little fellows of seven or thereabouts even if they were the “kids” of my venerated pastor. Some years later I had heard of him occasionally while he made his record in the New York Legislature, and occasionally afterwards while he was upon the bench in Egypt. I told these circumstances to the group at the club, but gave Mr. Crosby no further thought, supposing him to be only one more aristocratic “investigator” of social problems out hunting for something new in the way of intellectual diversion. It was a long time before the contrary distinctly appeared. But it did distinctly appear, as we all know; and nowhere in the list of Single Tax leaders is there ever likely to be found the name of a better-balanced, clearer-minded, more devoted or stronger-hearted man.