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WILMINGTON N. C.

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DUTY OF CHRISTIANS TO NEGROES.

While hundreds of pens are discussing the negro problem, an effort in the congress is on foot to punish the white race in the south for trying to undo the infamy and wrongs perpetrated by the north in giving the franchise to a million of blacks who were utterly unfitted for its use because of ignorance, want of training, race incapacity for government and moral qualities, there is one question that does not receive the attention it should receive. It is a most important question and is basic to all genuine and permanent advancement on the part of the negro race. It is their religious discipline and moral training. You may fill their heads with the three R's and technical education but if their moral nature remains as it has remained since their freedom by the result of war, they will be no better off in a century in character and usefulness as citizens than they were the day Lincoln violated the constitution and issued his proclamation freeing them.

The white race in the south under the very trying circumstances and the severe ordeal to which they were subjected, have done greater things, more municificent and magnificent acts in behalf of an illiterate race than was ever thought of or attempted in all historic records extant. But the kindness the forebearance, the sympathy, the money contributed for the education of the minds of the young negroes did not and do not exhaust all that must be done, do not now meet all the obligations that rest upon the superior, the dominant race—the race that has conquered and builded and civilized the peoples of the globe through the elapsing centuries. A puissant, regnant masterful race must endeavor to elevate an inferior race with which it comes in contact. Some times the whites have carried into new lands their vices, and the lower races have been demoralized and seriously lowered by the contact. Out in Alaska the Esquimau and other tribes have been much injured by the introduction of white men's vices, particularly their drinks.

The whites must do more towards imparting moral teachings and bringing to bear more of true Christian example and influence upon the negroes It is necessary to have them taught the plain, pure, comforting, elevating spiritual truths of God's Word. The lower class must be looked after more faithfully, earnestly, constantly, and the religious people are the ones to do this. What are the white churches doing for the negro race surrounding them? How much money is raised and expended annually in having sacred truths of God preached to them? The Gospel of Christ is the Gospel of love, of benevolnce, of self-sacrifice, of peace If it is preached wisely, earnestly, regularly to the negro race by educated, trained ministers well equipped for its faithful and efficient proclamation, much good must follaw. It will show the negroes that their white neighbors and the professing followers of the Lord are in earnest in promoting their present and eternal interests. There are great opportunities offered for doing good, for enlarging the benevolence of the white race, for extending the benignant offerings of the Gospel of Hope and Promise and for bringing more of the African race into the safe fold of the Christian faith and living.

The able Presbyterian Standard in its issue of the 27th ultimo, put this as a fact, and all must admit that there is much of truth in it.

'And while industrial antagonisms are beginning to spring up even in southern cities, between the two races, yet the great part of the manual labor of the south is done by negroes. And surely no man can read the book of human history and fail to see that this fact is without parallel, that two such widely different races should live side by side in peace. When we recall that there are eight millions of negroes in the south, the sporadic instances of race conflict are few enough. Surely it is by the blessing of God that a conquered people at the mercy of their former slaves, oppressed for years by their conquerors who had given the slaves their freedom, should have emerged from their defeat, and with the aid of these former slaves have builded the new south, and that the children of former master and former slave should he dwelling together, wfth no possibility of intermingling, with no constraint now of external force, yet in safety and peace. The failure of the white people to recognize now, at this opportune time, its obligation to the black people, can be nothing less than ingratitude to God. God has given us the means and the opportunity for their evangelization."

It is not probable that there will ever be a deportation of the negro race to Africa or elsewhere. It is altogether probable that the major part of the negroes now in the southland will remain and that in 1910, the number will have increased. We believe that the best labor possible for the south is negro labor—improved, elevated, better taught, more really Christianized, and, therefore, more upright, honest, truthful, virtuous and reliable. Improve the negro race—that is a stern unyielding duty of the whites, and the appeal will not down, for the responsibilities will last. The Standard is correct in this:

"They are not going to leave the southern states in any very great numbers for the northern states for the very simple reason that they are really wanted here and are not wanted there, that it is easier for them to make a living here than there, and that a southern climate is best adapted to their natures. They are here and here to stay and here in increasing numbers every year, so that it is easy to calculate on some 16,000,000 of them in the southern states in another generation. Here is God's remedy for all moral evil, and it brings with it elevation on all lines, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the gospel of peace. Can any believe that when the white man and the black man are both true followers of Jesus Christ there will be any clashing of interests? And now is our opportunity."

It is very certain that the churches need to open their eyes, and beholding the opportunities and recognizing the imperative responsibilities and demands upon them, to march up grandly and unitedly to the common work of uplifting the negro race at their doors. Delay is unwise. Neglect is not to be tolerated. Talking will not answer. It is prompt, earnest work that is demanded. The Standard earnestly puts it:

"We have been theorizing about the negroes long enough. In the mean time they are perishing for the gospel, just as really as their brethren of Africa. Let us do something for the negro. He is the servant in our homes, he is the dweller in the next street, he is the tenant on our farms. And God never yet, in all history, let a people go unpunished for the sin of ingratitude, involving the denial of an obligation."

Awake! Arise!

"Say well, is good: Do well, is better;
Do well, is spirit: Say well, is letter."

UNFAVORABLE AND FAVORABLE ESTIMATES OF BYRON.

If we had the leisure and the space we would be glad to discuss Byron's genius and art with care and elaboration. To treat of him in the least satisfactorily you must have ten or twelve pages in a magazine. So great a poet can not be reasonably considered in less space. It was mentioned in last Sunday's Messenger that some contemporary critics assailed and discredited him, and that in the last quarter of a century it has been quite the vogue to play havoc with his reputation both as a man and a poet. The way has been to say all manner of vile things about him personally and then to damn him as an inferior poet. It is surprising to us when so capable a critic and so excellent a writer as Rev. Dr. Henry Van Dyke writes—"I have lived too long with Byron. The sun has extinguished the fire-fly." And that is said of a poet who has received the praise and admiration of as great men of genius as have lived in the nineteenth century. A "fire-fly" indeed! His works show more positive and higher genius than can be found in all of the writings of the six foremost verse writers in New England. What are they? This is the depreciation of one who fully appreciates Tennyson and has written a very delightful volume upon him and who aspires to be a writer of poetry himself. Another northern critic of excellent parts is Professor Woodberry, of the University of New York, we believe. He is one of the best American critics, and is ordinarily just and penetrating. But he underates Byron as he showed in his paper on the poet's birthday centennial in 1888. He admits that he was a poet, but says men now pass him by. He adds that no one can love him. That must refer to the man and not to his greatest and noblest and sweetest poems. But what may have been partly true in 1888, is not true in 1901. We mentioned the two splendid editions of his works appearing in his native England now. Then there are dozens of small editions of his works issued by various book publishers. Many critics, be it also mentioned, have lately praised him as his great and singular merits so richly deserve. Among them the fine critic of The New York Tribune quoted from in last Sunday's article. There is indeed something of a Byron revival. He was verily a great genius and no dispraise can alter that fact. Byron lived a bad, unhappy life, and so have other poets of fame. Poetry is not to be sanely appraised according to the moral standing of the writer. Goethe and a dozen other poets of renown did not live saintly or fairly moral lives, and yet the world reads their works and accepts them as genuine. Woodberry is constrained to say that Byron wrote poems "that confer immortality." His best poetry—and there is much of this class—abounds in passages of exceeding beauty and splendor as well as of imperishable substance. There are many passages of rare power, of noble eloquence, of genuine pathos, of exquisite beauty and lustre.

When Byron died in Greece in 1824, the greatest creative genius of Great Britain in the last century, Sir Walter Scott, said in a brief article he published that "it seemed almost as if the sun in heaven had been extinguished." But, presto, change. Van Dyke has discovered that it was but a "fire-fly." Lord Macaulay, the great historian, critic, essayist, builder of admirable speeches, and a writer of poetry of excellence, but not of the higher order, said that Byron was "the most celebrated man in Europe." and that too while Goethe, and Coleridge and Wordsworth, were living. He said also that "a man of Byron's eminence would not come again." Has that been set aside as yet? He even thought Byron "a greater man than Milton—vast and widely varied." But he was "a fire-fly" and now "men pass him by," quoth the two (northern critics men like Stendhal, Sainte-Beuve (France's greatest critic, as all literary men know,) Castelar, the eloquent and unrivalled Spanish orator of twenty years ago—all these and others (including as we have said, Germany's greatest genius, Goether) have paid him the highest tributes.

But if you would read a paper of much length and rare force, and see Byron treated by one particularly able and accomplished and who understood Byron and appreciatel his grand and impressive genius, turn to Taine's two volumes—his great work, the "History of English Literature," translated and first published in 1872. It is by one of the chiefest and most admirably endowed writers of the last century, who has written at least two works of consummate excellence and unsurpassed interest Taine, devotes no less than forty-one of the large pages of his most unique and magnificent critical work to Lord Byron. It is twenty-nine years since we read the volumes, but we recall with unrepressed pleasure impressions they made, and even to now the fascination lingers "like the scent of the roses." Taine opens by characterizing Byron as "the greatest and most English of artists," and says "he is so great and so English that from him alone we shall learn more truths of his country and of his age than from all the rest together. His ideas were banned during his life; it has been attempted to depreciate his genius since his death; To this day (1870) English critics are unjust to him. "It is les, so now, in spite of Swinburne and some followers in under-valuing like Saintsbury and others. Aime discusses him at much length—his style, his pictures of sad and extreme emotions, his inferiority and superiority to Goethe, his dramatic gifts, his pictures of sensuous beauty and happiness, his naturalness and variety of style, and so on. He calls him "this unhappy great man."

We turn now for a few moments to a distinguished, loving English critic of great independence and who is much read, W. E. Henley, himself a poet. He reads and judges for himself, and is indifferent to the clamor of the pack who pursue the dead poet. In 1890, or about that time, Mr. Henley published a short paper on Byron. From it we take this: "He is the most romantic figure in the literature of the century, (nineteenth) and his romance is of that splendid and daring cast which the people of Britain —'an aristocracy materialized and null, a middle class purblind and hideous, a lower class crude and brutal'—prefers to regard with suspicion and disfavor." He goes on to show how Byron offended his public but we lack space to quote. Farther on he writes: "Meanwhile, however, the genius and the personality of Byron had come to be vital influences all the world over, and his voice had been recognized as the most human and the least insular raised on English ground since Shakespeare's. In Russia he had created Pushkin and Lermontoff: in Germany he had awakened Heine, inspired Schuman, and been saluted as an equal by the poet of 'Faust' himself He turns to Spain, Italy and France and shows "how he inspired and influenced the most important writers." And yet naught but a little "fire-fly."

Again Mr. Henley writes: "Byron was not interested in words" (as is the prevailing feature now among present day writers), and phrases but in the greater truths of destiny and emotion. His empire was over the imagination and the passions." One more view. Matthew Arnold holds a most unique place in British criticism. None of the numerous writers has a more pronounced recognition as to the first rank. What did Arnold say, and he has been dead but a decade or so: He said in Byron there is a "splendid and imperishable excellence which covers all his offences and outweights all his defects; the excellence of sincerity and strength." He said "that when the year 1900 is turned, and the nation comes to recount her poetic glories in the century which had just ended, the first names with her will be, "Wordsworth and Byron. We do not share in that view. We would write Byron and Tennyson. We have only space to say now that expurgated edition of Byron should be made—a royal octavo of "selections" as have been made in the case of Wordsworth and Matthew Arnold. Some of Byron's verse should be avoided. One-third of "Don Juan" should not be read. It is unfit and unclean. And yet that poem is probably the greatest triumph of his superlative genius. Some other day—weeks hence perhaps—we may write on some of his best writings.

LESSONS DRAWN FROM AN OLD STATESMAN.

We are not one of the admirers of the late Nathaniel Macon as North Carolina's greatest man. We hold that Gaston, Badger, Benton, Pettigrew, Vance and perhaps others were ahead of him. But Macon was a citizen to venerate, to admire, to honor, for he was a genuine man, a careful, conservative honest, sterling North Carolinian, brave in war and wise in peace. He is a great credit to this his native state. We took time recently to run over a paper we saw in the Raleigh Post from the pen of Mr. Clarence Poe, a Fayetteville young man we guess. It is over two and a half columns in length, and is instructive as well as entertaining. We learned some things we had not known and in the reading reviewed somethings we had forgotten. Mr. Macon was born in Warren county, but at the time of his birth in 1758, it was a part of Granville county. His father was a Virginian, his mother a North Carolinian. He was partly educated at Nassau Hall, Princeton, New Jersey, and left to enter the army to fight for the south. He returned to Princeton, left a second time, to become a soldier. He was a "high private" and refused pay for his services. He was "at the fall of Fort Moultrie, the surrender of Charleston, the defeat at Camden, and then took part in Greene's famous retreat.

"He was still with Greene on that retreat and in camp on the Yadkin, February, 1781, when he received from the Governor of North Carolina a summons to attend a meeting of the general assembly in which his countrymen had without his knowledge elected him to represent them." He declined but finally yielded under the persuasion of General Greene. He was but 23 then. He opposed the adoption of the federal constitution in 1787, insisting "that it gave too much power to the central government." He was right in this, and the adoption of the twelve amendments later conclusively attest this.

He was elected to the second congress in 1791. In 1807, he was elected speaker of the house. "In 1800 he positively declined to serve longer as speaker but nevertheless received forty-five of the 113 votes cast. In the house of representatives he served, being constantly re-elected, till 1815, when he was, without solicitation, transferred to the senate.

"There he remained thirteen years, always a leading member and acting president of the senate after the death of Senator Gaillard (February, 1826,) till May, 1828. Then, though re-elected president pro tem., he declined the office, knowing that within a few months he would complete his seventieth year, at which age he had previously decided to retire from public life."

He served the congress for 37 years. He married Miss Hannah Plummer, of Warren. He had two daughters, his wife living but a few years after marriage. "After 1828 he took no part in political affairs until 1835, when he presided over the state constitutional convention. Serving as elector for the Van Burten ticket in 1836 was his last public act. Death came June 29, 1837." He was 79 years of age and not 83 as sometimes stated. Mr. Poe says of him that "honesty, independence, faith in the ability of the people to settle properly all political questions, and opposition to all unnecessary (and perhaps some necessary) appropriations, were his strong points, politically. He was a democrat in the broadest and deepest sense of that word." He was unwavering in his devotion to what he held to be true democracy—a government of the people and by the people and for the people," to use the stolen saying of Lincoln, filched from an old New England reader in the thirties. Mr. Poe writes:

"Macon wished to keep all political power directly in the hands of the people. More than once he complained of the constantly increasing power of the executive department of the government. He would accept no office "not the gift of the people or of their immediate representatives in the legislature." Twice he refused a position in Jefferson's cabinet but the insignificant office, justice of the peace to which the people of his county directly called him, was not too small for him to accept."

Mr. Macon was faithful to his convictions, of unswerving honesty, despising demagogy, and never cringing before public opinion if he thought it unsound and injurious. We quote:

"Though all the people should declare a measure proper I would still have my own opinion,' he said. If he favored popular measures he would vote for them; if he did not favor popular measures, the people should select some one else to represent them. It has been said that 'in the nearly forty years of his congressional service no other ten members gave as many negative votes."

How out of place he would be if now a member of the federal congress. He would be in harmony with neither party, and not near enough to take what passes now for democracy to be in touch with its exponents. He said that the best man for the place was the man who would tax the people least. A wise saying, and should be axiomatic. He waged unrelenting, fierce war on "pensions," the bane of this country, and one of the greatest sources of corruption and oppression. "As he had refused pay for his service in the revolution, he now refused all pension money. The people who stayed at home, furnished supplies and supported the old and disabled were, he said, as much entitled to pensions as those who served in the army." He gave no vote for a pension. He was against a large military force. He said:

"When people are prepared for war they are sure to fight,' 'I do not wish to carry this imitation of England too far. To support her army and navy, her people are kept poor. Our people pay enough taxes. The navy is intended for conquest and we have enough territory. I am for standing solely on American ground and on no other."

What a miserable "old fogy they would call this patriotic statesman now. What! Opposed to high taxes, robberies of the people, a great army, a big navy, huge fraudulent pensions! What a fossil! He is a thousand years behind the times. Mr. Macon regarded, and said in 1797, that slavery "was a curse and he wished there were no negroes in this country." He always stuck close to this view. He was then "building wiser than he knew." If there had been noe the greatest war of 2,000 years would not have happened. There would not be now any disturbing element and no diabolism in the congress aimed at the southern whites. He thought emancipation however was impracticable. "He worked his farm when not in the congress. He worked in the field at the head of his slaves until age rendered him unable to do so, co when at home. He had all the pioneer's love for the forest and said that "no man should be able to hear his nearest neighbor's dog bark."

One more great trait remains to be mentioned. He never got an office for a relative. No nepotism stained his pure hands. He was in politics 57 years remember. He lived in comfort and was wise in his day and generation. "We ne'er shall look upon his like again." While all wisdom did not die with him, a brave, noble, kindly, sound statesman was laid away in that rock-covered grave near his residence, which this writer had once the privilege of beholding. We have essayed to use Mr. Poe's paper so as to present a remarkable model to youth and manhood .While Pliny said that "no man is at all times wise," yet a wise man may be able to discern correctly passing events and to look beyond and see those things hidden to most eyes, and yet may come to pass. "Coming events cast their shadows before," said Thomas Campbell, we believe it was. An English writer of our time has said that "the intellect of the wise is like glass: it admits the light of Heaven and reflects it."

GENERAL TOON IMPROVING.

His Physicians say He will Recover—Many Applicants for Admission to Agricultural College—Great Delay at Charleston Exposition.

Messenger Bureau.

Raleigh, N. C., December 16.

The joint legislative committee which is making the annual examination of the offices of the state treasurer and auditor finished its work in the former office this morning.

The news from the bedside of the superintendent of public instruction was very encouraging today. His physician said he would recover.

The space at the Agricultural and Mechanical college here is so cramped, owing to the recent fire, that for the present no new students from other states can be received. There are over fifty applications for admission of advanced students. It is probable that buildings near the college, or in Raleigh, will be rented, and the students occupy them. At one time it was the plan to use tents, but this is abandoned.

The United States district court here will end its term tomorrow. There have been many convictions. J. W. Grady of Mt. Olive, a white man who took letters belonging to a negro of the same name and stole their contents gets thirteen months in the penitentiary at Nashville, while George McKay, a white man who stole the letters of R. P. Baldwin, a soldier in the Philippines, gets a 7-year sentence and is fined $500.

D. H. Milton, of Reidsville, is the new chief clerk in the office of the insurance commissioner, succeeding R. M. Philips.

Secretary T. K. Bruner, who is installing the exhibit of the state agricultural department at the Charleston exposition, writes commissioner Patterson: "February will be the earliest moment visitors will be repaid for coming." He is impressed by the proverbial slowness of the Charlestonians, which is particularly striking to such a hustler as he.