
JAMES PIERREPONT GREAVES.

NOTE.

[Whilst the foregoing article was preparing for the press, the following biographical notice of the great man, to whose name and character we had just called the attention of our readers, was sent us from England. Timely and welcome! The Memoir comes from a dear friend of Mr. Greaves, who had long lived under the same roof, and who strictly sympathized with his thoughts and aspirations. There is a certain grandeur about the traits of this distinguished person, which we hardly know where to parallel in recent biography. At the same time we are struck with his singular felicity in finding such an observer and reporter of his life. We rely on our honored correspondent to send us, with the least possible delay, the papers alluded to in the close of the Memoir.

EDITOR OF THE DIAL.]

PROPHECY is a Nature in Man. It is not merely an action either in or on the mind, but an ever present element. Neither is it a peculiar gift, unknown to all save the few.

For it is by reason of its presence in one, that it is comprehended as a possibility in another. It is rather the universal revelation, varying endlessly in power, in development, in consciousness. In degrees so endlessly varying, that the less receiver is apt to venerate the larger receiver, as a heaven-favored existence. Such largeness of reception belonged to the late James Pierrepont Greaves. Of those who enjoyed the advantage of numbering him amongst their human acquaintances, few will forget the vivacity, the force, the constancy, with which he was enabled to bring before the mind a vivid representation of the eternal power at work within him. Or rather, should it not be said, that the fervor in and from him was so strong, as to effect a kindling within the bosom of every auditor of that fuel, which till then had never been ignited. Somewhat of this result occurred to all with whom he was brought into contact. Either in anger or love, for animosity or friendship, deep, sincere, unqualified, was he distinguished in the category of every one with whom he was held in any moral relationship whatever. There was no coolness, no indifference; for the pungent power, the capacity for touching another soul in the very point of its being, was so strong and so universally exercised, that the result at the moment was sure to be either the vivifying of hopes to an extent never before experienced, or the stirring up of gloomy elements which renew the war within. The happy consequences fell, we need scarcely remark, mostly to the young, the pure, and such as were free of sectarian holdings; the unhappy ones to the fixed and stiffened doctrinal mind, the sectarian, the selfish.

In himself was remarked a youthful spirit, which physical age could not conceal, even from the common observer. The formality in expression, the framework of antiquated terminology, the imposition of precedent literature, which so frequently and so dreadfully stamp the signet of bald age upon the youthful brow, never weighed down the juvenile vigor in him. The spirit so living, so loving, and so potent, acted freely in all modes, like an elastic human body in flexile garments. Authors, as well as speakers, found, in reflections from him, a value put upon their words far greater than they intended, or of which they considered them susceptible. He thus deepened every thinker to a

moral sensibility beyond the ground of mere thought or contemplation, whence moral improvement has so long been *viewed*, but on which it never can be *actualized*.

To discover a critic, not himself an author, yet far more authorized than any author; to encounter a friend, not involved in individual sympathy, yet greatly more loving than the nearest kin; are incidents so uncommon to the writer, and to the soul, that they are marked as white days in the mind's calendar. These are moments, æsthetic moments, afterwards ever present; for they are not alone pencilled on the memory by pleasure, but engraven in the heart by love.

A being favorably organized mentally for this work of approved education, and of manners and external aspect more than "passing fair," who shall, either spontaneously or in some unpremeditated circumstances, be induced to throw himself inward in the prophetic nature to the antecedent power which breeds and develops it, becomes a real blessing, or at least a most blissful circumstance to his progressive fellow beings. With a strong tendency from these advantages to an indigenous exposition of this moral nature, Mr. Greaves appears to have been detained in little above a refinement of old notions, until circumstances favorable to the elimination of the higher were brought about. There was doubtless always a readiness to flow forth in this direction; but the nature must be strong indeed which can burst through every impediment which education, and institutions, and living society carefully pile around it; and in Mr. Greaves it did not resplendently shine forth, until events took place, usually called adverse, but which in his case, having been followed by results the most happy for himself and beneficial for his fellow man, may truly be termed fortunate, or providential.

Mr. Greaves was born at Merton, in the county of Surrey, a few miles from the great metropolis, on the night of the first of February, 1777. His parents, who moved in a thoughtful sphere, had several other children. Two of the sons were brought into the Church; but both have subsequently, in a better understanding of that which is to be revered, ceased to place the term "Reverend" before their names; and in other particulars have shown that the manifestations, for which James was remarkable, were not

the result of acquired opinions and doctrines, but consequences flowing naturally from an inborn nature, correspondingly organized, and at length happily emancipated. Alexander is now in America, where his mind finds a more free scope, and where he endeavors to work out his measure of utility.

James P. Greaves was educated to a mercantile life, which he pursued in partnership with some success; and the capital which he inherited was, in the ordinary sense of the term, profitably employed for many years. The establishment in King's Arms Yard, Coleman Street, London, was remarkable for its order, its selection of well conducted assistants, its liberality, and attention to the comforts of every person engaged, and the wise economy of an abundant yet temperate expenditure.

Under this barren serenity of commercial respectability so valuable a mind was not to remain buried. The French nation, then thrown into an actively hostile position to the old European system, of which England became the champion, cast itself about for other warlike weapons than guns and bayonets, and by an attack upon the English commercial system sought to undermine its political power.

One consequence of the Berlin and Milan decrees of 1806 was the bankruptcy of our friend's house. He was certified by consent of his creditors, to whom he conscientiously rendered up every particle of his property, and thus, having no incumbrance, became a free man.

Frequently it happens that one lesson is not sufficient for the pupil. Inapt or sullen, he wills to abide by his error, and does not easily suffer it to be eradicated. James P. Greaves was not so unwise; he appears to have discovered, upon this lively intimation, that the commercial was not his appropriate order amongst men; and he waited not for the second hint, which the disappointed suitor at the court of wealth so commonly requires. Nor was he rendered ill at ease by this discovery. He was neither discontented nor disconcerted.

When one, who has been the most fondly caressed of a numerous circle, whose lips have been regarded as the channels of affectionate wisdom, whose visits have been marked by the most spontaneous deference, suddenly finds all these external signs of respect reversed,—the caresses

changed to coldness, the reception transformed into doubt, the deference into contempt, how deeply poignant must be the sufferings in such a soul! Fortunate is it for the individual who in such circumstances thinks not of looking for a fresh circle of admiring friends, but is in harmonic seriousness driven to the discovery in his own mind of a more permanent and protective solace.

There are some beings so delicately constructed, that in the bare possibility of such a contingency shrink, in the reverse hour, from all outward contact. Even in cases where no such abatement of friendship would occur, there is frequently not faith enough for the experiment. When *such* minds at the same crisis undergo an inward transmutation from the ordinary routine of mental imitative discipline to that of real original thought, they are not only saved from the pain which falls on the mere exteriorly minded, but they come forth again amongst men from a new ground, regenerated beings, capable of aiding with joy and happiness the conditions for regeneration in others. Then does the past appear in its actual vanity or emptiness. The process, previously called "thought," is discovered to be unworthy of that noble title. Thought, primitive, generative, generic thought, becoming conscious, the imitative, repetitive, lifeless mode, no longer burdens.

How enriched does man then become, enriching all others too! Poverty is at least the signet, if not the test of virtue. None but the outwardly poor can be truly great; the truly great are always outwardly poor. Upon the breaking down of his worldly fortune, and the total surrender of his worldly wealth to its legal claimants, Mr. Greaves did not noise his adversity abroad, nor make a wailing as if overtaken by calamity. Some observing friends, however, were not wanting, who supplied his urgent necessities, and with a few pounds in his pocket he went to Germany. At the same time also some thoughtful friends directed his attention to that which is in a certain degree, though faintly, expressed in the deepest written books.

In a mood, then, such as may best be imagined from these circumstances and facts, he departed for a short season, as was supposed, to new external scenes. Not a mere animal man, in search of amusement, was thus liberated from the city's routine, but a mind went forth in love, duly

accredited by the Spirit, to link the nations together in the new relation of universal amity.

At that period it was not as it now is in respect to the feeling of brotherhood amongst nations. Then raged bitter hostility and severe bigotry in men otherwise to be considered enlightened; and barriers, since broken down in peaceful times, were still erect and blood-stained. Tranquil years have since given opportunity for the labors of such ambassadors between man and man, as the subject of our remarks, to operate freely in almost every department of mental and moral geography.

Modern public morality has effected a worthy progress, so far as it has removed its approbation from the warrior's achievements to those of the scientific discoverer; from the conquest of pride and anger over human blood, to the triumphs of mind over passive matter. But a still worthier progress must be accomplished. A newer morality must award its highest honors to those, who discover and apply new practical plans for aiding human regeneration, and conserving pure human generation. The law and principle of these works have long been revealed, but the actual intellectual means, as well as the physical contingencies, yet remain to be unfolded. This is man's most sacred social duty, and until this reality becomes the ruling vitality in his actions, neither his actual beneficences, nor his intellectual discoveries will have any real value with relation to true manhood, how much soever they may enrich the community, or render famous the individual.

All our improvements in machinery, though, when viewed in relation to sanguinary war and national pride, they are highly to be extolled, fall into the shade when compared with the conquest of man's selfish nature. To enable two ears of corn to grow where only one grew before, may be worthy of the highest honor which man in society can bestow. If this be true, how great return should be decreed to him, who enables thought to spring up in the mind heretofore barren, or devises means, having for their object the direct generation of moral vitality in man himself.

Such seems to have been the high and peculiar mission of Mr. Greaves. In many particulars he was as eminently qualified to carry it out. No second or selfish object diverted him from the primary purpose. He was ever

open to the interruption of inquirers, ever ready to lay his mind before those who, having better expounding faculties, were qualified as public interpreters, and had their private pleasure therein. He was of that nature, of which the world is happily not without other examples, which, abounding in all the qualities and organism requisite to the construction of an eminent character, with moral courage of the purest kind, with intellectual perspicuity far above the common lot, and energy equal to their popular manifestation, yet takes a direction which in its own day, at least, keeps the name from the public eye. These are the central minds of their circle, around which minds more circumferential revolve; the under mind upon which the superficial minds rest. Were the originality in many books, speeches, or institutions to be thoroughly traced, it would often be found necessary to transfer the merit, if any there be, from the known name to the unknown author, Greaves. Often was his the suggestive mind which either corrected the well-meant efforts of others, or started the original thought. His corrections, like his originations, were always effected by a faithful endeavor to connect the expressed idea with the true originator. This he had the faculty of doing in so many and such varied forms of expression, that he had an entrance into every mind, a word for every person. The educated and the uneducated, male and female, rich and poor, alike confessed the potency in his words, though their influence not unfrequently ceased when his pen or voice was stilled. But let us not too hastily adopt such a conclusion. There are now scattered over the thoughtful world written records of his efforts, to recall the mind of the author criticised to the real being Author, which cannot ultimately fail of beneficial results. There are now embosomed in many hearts sayings deep and living, which, as quickening conditions, shall tend to the reanimation of the living Word.

He was thus, in the most eminent sense, a practical philosopher. His gratification was far less in having the fame of good works, than in seeing them accomplished. Nor in other respects was he less actual. He early had a deep and permanent intuition of the Pythagorean idea. That everything needless should be given up; that all things, every action, should be made subservient to the one great end, was not with him a mere idea to be spoken of, but

actual practices. By an adherence to principle in this manner, in respect to diet, to behavior, to mental freedom, moral candor, and divine love, he became, despite of all tendency to retirement, an eminent example and a frequent theme of discourse to all who knew him. His presence made an academic grove in every familiar place; and his history calls to mind the reports of the celebrated men of antiquity. London streets have been, though perhaps not frequently, the scene of a happiness which must be secured rather in a penny loaf and spring water, than at luxurious banquets; in singleness of heart, rather than in family enjoyments.

So deep, so intimate was the interpenetration of the Spirit in him, that the power to express it affirmatively was by no means equal to it; and very generally his mode was found objectionable, until so far diluted that there was near danger of altogether losing the spirit. The fact, however, doubtless is, that it was what he would express, that was difficult to admit, and not the terms used to express it. The idea itself being new and unknown, novel and strange necessarily must the language be in which the speaker endeavors to expose it. However, this may now be made an experiment by every candid reader. The world already so fully abounds in scriptures, that there will not be much vice in the addition of a few more lines, especially when on all hands that one popular quality, novelty, must be conceded them.

Antecedent to the year 1830, Mr. Greaves appears not to have kept any regular record of his thoughts. His written efforts were deposited on the margins of the books he read, or displayed in private correspondence, or on still frailer or more portable scraps of paper, too freely, and now too widely distributed to be gathered.

Amongst his relics there are twelve quarto volumes of manuscript, in his own hand writing, which, being of a small character, these papers are really a monument of constant industry as of pervading love.

Inertia was unknown to him; and the love in his activity was as unfailling as itself. When not conversing or lecturing, his pen was constantly in motion. If unemployed publicly, he in private found means to render his presence on earth essentially useful to his fellow man. The simple operation of marking passages in books, by his pen, was

from his mind a commentary more pointed, more valuable, than on many occasions the lengthy annotations of the profound scholar. This slight, dumb sign that mind has been busy there; this proof that some other soul could touch the deepest ground which the deepest wisdom could express, that some auditor could be whose ear could catch the most sacred harmony which the profoundest harper could attune, is magnetism enough to involve a second reader, and to render him participant of the joys of the two predecessors, with the addition of the animating feelings peculiar to himself. To mind the footprints of mind, in an unmindful world, are doubly cheering.

There are occasionally still to be seen on earth giant minds, who bestride the narrow world of literature like a colossus; men of intelligence so living and so penetrating, that they seem to have the key in their own minds to every book. Their minds are enabled to transcend the author's, and to reflect back upon the book a brighter light, and more valuable similitude, as the human form is more estimable than the glass in which it is reflected.

Before we proceed to furnish extracts from these which, we hope not unprofitably, we may call sacred volumes, we would endeavor to give a few examples of the workings of his mind in the mode above mentioned, of contrasting the various authors which from time to time fell under his observation.

These marginal notices being spread over a course of many years, thirty at least, are not all the survey of a mind from one position. Though the central point is constantly expressed in them, there must necessarily be some graduation, during a series of years, in the utterances of a progressive mind. Mr. Greaves had a strong intuition also of the importance of a change in terminology. He evidently had an appreciating perception of the heavy chains, which oft repeated words and phrases throw around the mind, which otherwise were free to express spontaneously the germinations of the births within.

We are the better enabled to do this, as Mr. Greaves published some of these in the year 1827, in the form of a periodical essay, under the title of the *Contrasting Magazine*, having the assistance of Dr. Biber as editor.