

P.S. I have given Barker  
orders about four patients.  
They seem to me to have  
been repaired in the last  
few days as far as can be  
done.

Kingsley

1711.198.2

#### CANON KINGSLEY.

THE accounts we received while we were going to press last week left little room for hope, and few, we imagine, of Canon Kingsley's many friends were taken by surprise when, on Saturday evening, they heard of his death. His decease removes from among us a considerable figure in contemporary

English literature, and yet few will deny that ten or fifteen years ago the loss would have stirred the public more deeply than it does now. The causes that led to the decline of Mr. Kingsley's popularity were many, and we can but briefly touch upon them. First and foremost, no doubt, he had brought out no important work of late years; but there were other causes at work. His influence was weakened by the general decline of the Broad Church party—a decline due partly to the fact that the thought of the day has rejected the Broad Church compromise between scepticism and orthodoxy, and partly to the intellectual feebleness and nauseating cant of many who claim to be of the party. Mr. Kingsley also suffered from the terrible onslaught of Dr. Newman, an onslaught which made clear to the world what keener observers already knew, that with all his brilliant gifts, Mr. Kingsley was neither an accurate logician nor a profound metaphysician; and he was further injured by his appointment to the chair of Modern History at Cambridge. Although his published Lectures were too severely handled at the time of their appearance, and much of the criticism they encountered was spiteful and unfair, still neither by previous study nor by nature was he fitted for the post, and he did a courageous and wise act when he resigned.

Mr. Kingsley's reputation will eventually, we suspect, rest upon 'Alton Locke.' That striking novel probably occupies a permanent place in literature, and in it we plainly see the two main influences that moulded the writer's opinions. A great horror of the Calvinistic theory of Rewards and Punishments was the basis of his religious opinions—

Is selfishness for a time a sin,  
Stretched out into eternity celestial prudence?

And coming early under the influence of Mr. Maurice, he embraced with ardour the doctrines of that great theologian, whose chief work, 'The Kingdom of Christ,' appeared just after Mr. Kingsley took his degree. With these he, curiously enough, combined the teachings of Mr. Carlyle, especially in 'Sartor Resartus'; and clothing the doctrines he had thus imbibed in a dramatic and vigorous form, he at once attained a wide-spread popularity. It may be objected that both in 'Alton Locke' and in 'Yeast' he raises questions which he by no means answers; but this artistic incompleteness did not tend to diminish the immediate effect on his readers.

We cannot at all agree with the critics who consider 'Hypatia' and 'Westward Ho!' Mr. Kingsley's ablest fictions; while we recognize their many merits, and especially the beautiful descriptions of scenery in the latter, they seem to us less sincere and real than their two predecessors. His later works do not call for much remark. He himself said, "No man can write a novel after he is forty"; and though the maxim will not always hold good (Scott began his career as a novelist when he was forty-three), 'Hereward' certainly confirms it. Many of Mr. Kingsley's essays are charming; the descriptive passages in 'At Last' well deserved admiration, and his sermons are full of eloquent and striking passages; but, after all, he delivered his message in his first two novels. That the fiery advocate of "Christian Socialism" became in his latter years somewhat of a Conservative was natural enough, and was not due to any want of courage and straightforwardness on his part. Courage and straightforwardness were, indeed, ever his characteristics, and enabled him to take the popular side at a time when for a clergyman to do so was almost a phenomenon.

30 Jan '75  
11. 1863