

# "NONE NAME THEE BUT TO PRAISE."

MEN I HAVE KNOWN.—*By the Very Reverend  
Frederick W. Farrar, D.D. 8vo. T. Y.  
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**A** GREAT many distinguished gentlemen number the Dean of Canterbury among their most cherished friends, and are permitted to disclose the esteem in which they hold him in these rather artless pages. There are also a few distinguished gentlemen who have, with little reason, denied themselves the pleasure of the Dean's acquaintance, though this does not by any means deter him from including their names in the roll of honor which goes to form his table of contents. Thus in the chapter named *A Group of Eminent Americans* the name of Ralph Waldo Emerson leads all the rest. Turning to the page designated one reads: "Ralph Waldo Emerson I never saw. He is known to me solely by his brilliant essays, his poetry, the interesting records of his intercourse with Carlyle, and the careful appreciation of his genius by Mr. Matthew Arnold." Yet, great as must have been the loss of Emerson, he can rest quite as contentedly as that other American of distinction "whom I visited," Dr. Farrar's account runs, "and who died soon after."

Despite the success which crowned Dean Farrar's visit to this country,—and, as he reminds us, there would have been no Browning Society in Boston

but for him,—his pages show him to be vastly better pleased at home. Some of his experiences will make the reason for this quite apparent. "It will always be a pleasant recollection that as I left Lord Beaconsfield he rose, took me by the arm, walked with me across the great reception-room and . . . said very genially, 'Dr. Farrar, I have always felt a sincere regard for you.' They were the last words I heard him speak." Nor is this an isolated instance. When Dean Stanley heard of Dr. Farrar's appointment to a canonry at Westminster he wrote straightway: "My dear Farrar,—I shall indeed be delighted to welcome so great an accession to our Abbey staff." In this case the Dean's delighted friend lived to say many other pleasant things; which are duly repeated. Charles Darwin, here described as "the most epoch-making man of science in our age," Dean Farrar knew chiefly by letter. "I had sent him my *Origin of Languages*," he observes, "in which he had been greatly interested." One soon comes to feel that there are few men of real note, time not forbidding, who have not been eager to lay their tribute of praise at his feet. As a necessary result there is considerable monotony in the narrative, some of it being quite as flat as a Chinese landscape, for all the I's are very tall.

Yet Dean Farrar undoubtedly knows his audience and is right when he publishes his own portrait twice, and observes "Every man or woman takes an interest in even seeing men of unquestioned greatness"; and he rightly asks us to recall in this connection "how deep was the interest with which Robert Browning looked on a man who had talked with Shelley." These considerations should make him, in spite of all his little fondnesses for praise, not such bad reading, especially if we adopt his suggestion "in order to get rid," as he phrases it, "*in limine*, of the notion there is anything necessarily vulgar or trivial in such a refined and modified Boswellism as may seem to be involved in slight reminiscences."

The book abounds in illustrative anecdotes of the autobiographer and all that is his, going back as far as "my celebrated ancestor, the Marian martyr—Farrar, Bishop of St. David's, who was burnt alive at Caermarthen in 1555." Many of these have been extensively copied since their first publication and are doubtless familiar to most readers. In collected form, however, they cannot fail to leave a better impression of their compiler's many virtues, though the humor of the book is not as well-managed as the rest of it. One reads of Dr. Short, Bishop of Sodor and Man, who so delighted in the oral questioning of children in the national schools that on one occasion he asked them "What they supposed his besetting sin to be?" With one acclaim they shouted "Drunkenness!" but he explained that they were wrong: it was "Pride." A companion piece to this is Dean Farrar's *naïve* admis-

sion, "I was very diffident about myself—as a boy at King's College." But best of all is this—with which to close:

"I remember once being told by a friend that he happened to visit Carlyle just after a brilliant man of genius had left him, whom my friend had met on his way to Carlyle's door.

"Ah," said the visitor, 'I have just been visiting poor Carlyle. He is a mere wreck! a mere wreck!'

"So you have just had Mr. — with you," said my friend to Carlyle.

"Yes," was the answer of the 'mere wreck,' 'and he thinks God Almighty never made such another!'

Mr. — did not know Dean Farrar.