

IMPRESSIONS OF HAMPTON INSTITUTE

BY PRINCIPAL A. G. FRASER

AFTER a two months' visit to the United States, made with the hopes of raising money and resulting in pockets little heavier than when I started, many have expressed their sympathy and felt how deeply disappointed I must be with my American experience. When all things are considered, I am not. I would not be without the experience of that visit for a great deal. It is not the memory of the many kindnesses received, or the glorious hospitality, and the inspiring individuals alone. These, it is true, would enrich any life and memory. Neither is it the glimpse into the engrossing interest and mighty problems of American life that makes up for two months spent away from work in the East. All these may mean little directly for the better equipment of a Ceylon missionary. But the privilege of staying at Hampton Institute in Virginia, of being allowed into close personal touch with its Principal, and of learning its problems and aims and methods under his direction, would make any visit at any time more than worth while to any educational missionary. I am supremely grateful as a missionary for the opportunity given me in my visit to America, and that because it took me to Hampton.

The Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute was founded in 1868 by General Armstrong. He was the son of Hawaiian missionaries, and had been familiar with negro plantation workers from childhood. At the outbreak of the war between North and South he had just graduated. At the end of it he was a general in the army of the U.S.A. His career was meteoric. Handsome, gallant, brave to a fault, generous, unselfish, able and devoted, he was the Chevalier Bayard of the war. Throughout he fought for the negro. He understood him, enlisted a negro regiment, drilled it, trained it, and made it a most efficient body of troops. After

the war he was appointed mediator between the blacks and whites by the United States Government, and surely no wiser choice was ever made. A man of profound sympathy, absolutely fearless and extraordinarily judicious, he understood the point of view of both peoples, and worked for the then far-off goal of mutual goodwill and co-operation between those who so recently had been slave and master.

It is worth while trying to realize a little of Armstrong's story if one is to study Hampton at all. His gallant spirit still captivates the imagination of those he worked for, and dominates the scene of his labours. Let me give the message enclosed with his will, written three years before his death. It shows the simplicity and directness of the man. Remember it came from a man distinguished for heroism amongst the many heroes of the North, a man gay, handsome, approachable, playful, sympathetic, a man who knew his pupils individually as well as collectively, and was as much at home in the negro log cabin as in the councils of his nation.

MEMORANDA

Now, when all is bright, the family together, and there is nothing to alarm and very much to be thankful for, it is well to look ahead and, perhaps, to say the things that I should wish known should I suddenly die.

I wish to be buried in the school graveyard, among the students, where one of them would have been put had he died next. I wish no monument or fuss whatever over my grave; only a simple headstone—no text or sentiment inscribed, only my name and date. I wish the simplest funeral service, without sermon or attempt at oratory—a soldier's funeral.

I hope there will be enough friends to see that the work of the school shall continue. Unless some shall make sacrifice for it, it cannot go on.

A work that requires no sacrifice does not count for much in fulfilling God's plans. But what is commonly called sacrifice is the best, happiest use of one's self and one's resources—the best investment of time, strength, and means. He who makes no such sacrifice is most to be pitied. He is a heathen, because he knows nothing of God.

In the school, the great thing is not to quarrel; to pull all together; to refrain from hasty, unwise words and actions; to unselfishly and wisely seek the best good of all; and to get rid of workers whose temperaments are unfortunate—whose heads are not level, no matter how much knowledge or culture they may have. Cantankerousness is worse than heterodoxy.

I wish no effort at a biography of myself made. Good friends might get up a pretty good story, but it would not be the whole truth. The truth of a life usually lies deep down—we hardly know ourselves—God only does. I

trust His mercy. The shorter one's creed the better. "Simply to Thy cross I cling" is enough for me.

I am most thankful for my parents, my Hawaiian home, for war experiences, for college days at Williams, and for life and work at Hampton. Hampton has blessed me in so many ways; along with it have come the choicest people of this country for my friends and helpers, and then such a grand chance to do something directly for those set free by war, and indirectly for those who were conquered; and Indian work has been another great privilege.

Few men have had the chance that I have had. I never gave up or sacrificed anything in my life—have been, seemingly, guided in everything.

Prayer is the greatest thing in the world. It keeps us near to God. My own prayer has been most weak, wavering, inconstant; yet it has been the best thing I have ever done. I think this is a universal truth; what comfort is there in any but the broadest truth?

I am most curious to get a glimpse of the next world. How will it seem? Perfectly fair and perfectly natural, no doubt. We ought not to fear death. It is friendly. The only pain that comes at the thought of it is for my true, faithful wife, and blessed, dear children. But they will be brave above it all, and, in the end, stronger. They are my greatest comfort.

Hampton must not go down. See to it, you who are true to the black and red children of the land, and to just ideas of education.

The loyalty of my old soldiers, and of my students, has been an unspeakable comfort.

It pays to follow one's best light—to put God and country first; ourselves afterwards.

Taps has just sounded.

S. C. ARMSTRONG.

Hampton, Va. New Year's Eve, 1890.

There was nothing so much needed amongst a slave people as an attractive, inspiring and uniting personality. God gave them General Armstrong, and as such he is an important factor in the consideration of Hampton. Hampton frankly goes in for hero-worship in the best sense, and Hampton is right.

We are proud of the traditions of our great English public schools. We recognize their immense educational and inspirational value. I doubt if any public school has as great a tradition or inspiration as that bequeathed to the disjointed, depressed, and despairing negroes of the South in the time of their greatest need by General Armstrong, and not to them only, but to the often sadly wronged Indian tribes, whom he also took under his wonderful care.

In 1868 Armstrong found the negroes turned adrift from the ruined plantations, huddled together in filth, moral and physical, and

with neither the opportunity nor the intelligence required to earn their daily bread. Mentally, physically, and morally they were, as a rule, unfit to obtain any employment requiring any degree of skill or responsibility. "To meet this situation, and avert the tragedy of a race that must live and yet could not earn its bread was the tremendous task General Armstrong set himself." He established, with the aid of the American Missionary Association, an industrial school on the site of the present Institute, with two assistants and fifteen pupils. There he laboured for twenty-five years, to be succeeded in 1898 by Dr. Frissell, the present principal. Of him I can say nothing here, but the prophet's mantle did not fall on less worthy shoulders. To-day there are over 1000 students, negro and Red Indian, of whom 875 are boarders. The staff consists of 200 teachers.

To describe the work in detail, giving time-tables, syllabus and so forth would only be to estimate a speech of Demosthenes by analysing the sentences and parsing the irregular verbs. The atmosphere would be lacking, the fire and the inspiration. But Hampton stands for training national leaders for nations which have almost lost their sense or pride in national or race existence. Hampton is full of hope in the future of the negro, and of pride in the great qualities God has given him. And it has the right to be. Not once but often, I have heard leading and thoughtful Americans, men thoroughly cognizant of the facts, say that the race question in the States is solved, and that Hampton and its offspring Tuskegee have found the solution. It is now only a question of time, and the solution will be applied to the whole area of the problem. But the menace is now lost in hope, and the negro is become an asset to the nation, and not a thing of fear. How true this is can be seen by considering the monies given to Dr. Booker Washington, a negro trained at Hampton. For his similar work at Tuskegee he receives over £60,000 per annum, and his needs and the subscriptions to meet them are rising. Hampton, limiting its work to the training of leaders, does not extend its borders as rapidly as Tuskegee; but requires and raises about £52,000 per annum. And these Institutes are no longer alone. Others exist for both negro and Red Indian. Again inspired by and imitating the work of Hampton many are being founded for the similar education of the whites. One educational board distributes in this way the interest on a subscribed capital of £11,000,000 sterling. President Taft is only giving voice to the obvious approval of thinking and patriotic Americans when

he says, "There is nothing that offers such an opportunity for the wealthy man of this country as the cause of negro industrial education in the South. Hampton is the solution of the negro problem."

Hampton claims to have proved, in the words of Dr. Frissell, that "the daily round and common task can be made a means of grace and a source of culture and intellectual development." When the pupils, negroes or Indians, enter it, they start on a course of four years' unremitting toil. But the toil is lightened by endless variety and by all that genius and careful attention to every detail can suggest. Thirteen trades are taught, over and above the scholastic education given. The two greatest departments are the Normal and the Agricultural. Both of these are full of suggestion for any educationist, but especially for those whose work lies amongst a people whose environment and social and economic conditions are rapidly changing. Hampton has shown a remarkable genius in adapting the best of the highest American knowledge and civilization to the needs and understandings of its varying pupils.

At 5.30 the students rise. Breakfast is at six. Till midday they work in schools and industries. Then when the midday bell rings they have ten minutes in which to change from working clothes into uniform. Then they form up on the parade ground, are inspected, salute the flags of the U.S.A. and of the Institute, and to the music of their band march to the dining-hall. The whole parade is simple, dignified, and impressive, and admirably calculated to develop a sense of the unity and dignity of the whole body, and of their part in the national life. Before sitting down to dinner all stand in their places to sing the Hampton grace. The negro love of melody and genius for it is nobly employed and developed in the whole life of the place, in the services, in folk-songs, and wherever reasonable opportunity offers. At one o'clock all return to the classrooms, or the workshops or farm, and the evening meal is at six. After that come prayers and later evening classes from seven to nine for those who have been at their trades all day.

Of course there are recreations—football, baseball, and other games, for those who have indoor and sedentary work. The physical well-being of the students is very carefully considered. Defective eyes, for instance, are invariably noted and treated. Sickness is almost unknown. In 1911 there was only one case of enteric, and that developed in a student who had been less than a week at the Institute, and there were no cases of contagious diseases and no

deaths. The careful airing and lighting of all the rooms, and the perfect sanitation, account largely for this. But the value of it lies chiefly in the fact that the students themselves are trained to understand and to be responsible for the maintenance of these conditions, and when they leave Hampton they are capable apostles of better sanitation and cleaner living.

Of the students about 40 per cent. are female, and 60 per cent. male, and about 10 per cent. are Indian, 90 per cent. being negroes. Nothing but good can be said by those in authority at Hampton on the results of their sex and race co-education. The tone of the whole place seems to the observer high, pure, manly, and straightforward. Two quotations from the memorial addressed in April 1912 by the Hampton Indian students to Congress are of interest here.

“Day by day we have learned at Hampton the real value of time and money. In the Government schools we did our detail work without being taught to know and care about the whole task. We accepted food, clothing, and shelter that were given us without knowing their value. At Hampton we have learned to keep account of the supplies which we have received from the Government, and we have also learned how to use our time to the best advantage.”

“At Hampton we live in the atmosphere of Christian service, and we thoroughly appreciate what we receive and have been receiving from highly educated men and women who are interested in us as individuals and are not merely teaching Indians for money.”

There is a self-reliance in a place where the students build all the buildings, make their own clothes, do their own research work, and choose their own reading for their essays, cook their own food, and always and ever look out over the wide field of their whole race to study how now they may best learn to help wisely in the years to come.

Hampton has a splendid *esprit de corps*. I have never seen greater. But it differs in kind from any that I have seen elsewhere. Its centre is not in the walls or grounds of Hampton, but in its deeds of service past and its hopes of service to come. The note of service is in the very breath the students breathe. No one who has attended Dr. Frissell's Bible-class with his senior students on Sunday can wonder that it should be there, and prominently there. But that it should be where it is must mean a long, consistent, and steady growth. To quote Dr. Frissell, “The most important factor in the education of the students who come to Hampton is the body of traditions which they find here, and into the inheritance of which they enter . . .

Each year sees some 250 new students enter Hampton from all parts of the South ready to conform to the standards they find. They are met on their arrival by some 600 old students who have been here from one to four years, and the newcomers are moulded with that ease and effectiveness which always characterize the unconscious influence of young people on young people."

The result of this education on the race feeling of the negro may be gathered from an address delivered to the negroes of Tuskegee, by a Hampton graduate and teacher, himself a negro.

"Whatever question there may be about the white man's part in this situation there is no doubt about ours. Don't let us fool ourselves but keep in mind the fact that the man who owns his home and cultivates his land and lives a decent, self-respecting, useful, and helpful life is no problem anywhere. . . . I thank God for the excellent chance to work that my race has in this Southern country; the negro in America has a real good, healthy job, and I hope he may always keep it. . . . Let no one of us ever be ashamed or humiliated when we are called workmen; let us be proud of the distinction. Remember always that building a house is quite as important as building a poem; . . . that whether we labour with muscle or brain, both need divine inspiration. Let us consecrate our brain and muscle to the highest and noblest service, to God and humanity. . . . I am not unmindful of the conditions under which we live. It is very easy for a race to accept the valuation which others set upon it; to conclude that it is after all 'good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of man,' but there is no excuse for your going through the world with a sort of self-depreciatory demeanour as if you owed the rest of mankind an apology for existing. Remember that you are creatures of God's most perfect handiwork and that any lack of appreciation on your part is a reflection on the God who made you. Remember also that though a negro, and black, and though belonging to a backward and somewhat undeveloped race, God meant you should be as honest, as industrious, as law-abiding, as intelligent, as cultivated, as polite, as pure, as Christ-like, and as godly as any human being that walks on the face of God's green earth. . . . You are soon to join the ranks of the great army of graduates, who have gone out from this Institution. They have set the standard very high; they have rendered excellent service for their people, their country, their God. Not a white boy or girl in all America has such a chance to mould, to fashion, to help, to lead his people as is given to you."

Such is Hampton's outlook. It is no cheap acceptance of things as they are with a view to making the best of them. But it accepts present conditions as a valuable training towards manhood and God, and as a discipline to the better day that shall come

through faithfulness in the present. A weak, disorganized, slave race has again been marching through the desert towards the promised land, and the prophet need not be bold to-day, as he was in 1868, who declares that through this race shall come a blessing and an enriching of the nations.

Let me turn to the work outside Hampton, done or inspired by Hampton, a work which draws the eyes of all Hampton students during their college course, and is one of the most educative factors in it. It is of infinite value to the training of the Hampton student that Dr. Frissell and others of their leaders are not only leaders in Hampton but in the finest social work and service in the South. As I have said the *esprit de corps* of Hampton is centred without it.

To begin with its *alumni*: Hampton educated and gave its founder and leader to Tuskegee, in Dr. Booker Washington. In all it has furnished Tuskegee with over a hundred teachers. The Rev. W. Shepherd who exposed the Belgian atrocities on the Congo, faced the wrath of its officials and was put on his trial, was another of its negro graduates. Throughout every Southern State these old pupils are to be found making the desert blossom, teaching nobler aspirations, cleaner and healthier living, better sanitation, self-respect, and the love of God in Christ Jesus to their fellow-men. One, for instance, started improved methods on his little farm. The neighbouring farmers thought him a fool and said so. But he doubled the yield of corn. He then cultivated plots belonging to different farmers in different centres round about his district. These learnt his lesson, and the conditions of life have improved in that county. But he is only one of many. Of all the graduates of Hampton only two have ever been convicted of crime.

In their various districts graduates have organized poultry clubs, corn clubs, clubs for women, boys, or girls. The village and district schools have been revolutionized over wide areas. Hampton has sent school inspectors and supervisors into eighteen counties of Virginia, and not only have they improved the schools, but they have influenced the children to apply in their homes the lessons in cooking, sewing, and hygiene which they have learnt in the class. They have taught the boys how to grow corn also, and how to improve immensely their fathers' fields; and the girls have been trained in canning. The economic gain to the negro through the Hampton type of education has been so immense that schools for whites are being run on similar lines, and Dr. Frissell has a great

voice in these also. Dr. Ogden, the chairman of Hampton's governing body, is also the great leader in the work for whites.

Last year a staff of thirty-four agricultural demonstrators were employed in the state of Virginia alone. In the course of their work they travelled over 140,000 miles in the year and had 1845 demonstrations and 2600 co-operators and 1635 corn club boys under them. It is not hard to understand why farm land in Virginia should have gone up 96·7 per cent. in the last decade, whilst stock and buildings have improved 93·2 per cent. Of the 183,943 farmers in Virginia, 48,039 are negroes, a change indeed since the days of 1868 when General Armstrong found them huddled under the walls of Fort Monroe. Over 66 per cent. of these negro farmers are to-day proprietors. It is good to know that year by year they are increasingly subscribing to their old school.

Every year Hampton holds a Conference for farmers also. Again there is an annual conference for teachers. The one held in 1911 had 311 members, 144 being from Virginia and 167 from eighteen other States. Numerous social duties have been undertaken, e.g. homes are found for neglected children, and investigations have been made into many evils with a view to their removal.

Take another question which directly affects us all in the East, that of hookworm. Hookworm infection affects practically all countries between parallel 36° north and 30° south. In some countries the infection is very widespread. It predisposes to dysentery, typhoid, and any anaemic disease. It renders its anaemic victim incapable of anything like full work, various authorities stating the handicap to be anything from 60 to 30 per cent. off the full man's work. Evil sanitation is the chief cause of the spread of the disease. Throughout the Southern States the infection is generally very heavy, and Hampton is placing all its force behind the effort to crush out this evil. With its large force of demonstrators, inspectors, and normal teachers always going forth it will assuredly succeed, though the battle may be long.

But I have mentioned only a few of Hampton's interests. Her students are missionaries in Africa and there is no African question in which they are not interested. Hampton is looking out more and more towards Africa with a view to planting her life out there again. Her students in their missionary meetings hear of the spread of the kingdom of God in all lands. Dr. Frissell gives his mind and thought to all, and in his full life finds time to work for all.

The spirit of service has produced at Hampton a spirit of fine culture. Men are alive intellectually for they are interested in all that interests men, and their intellectual interest is high in quality and pure, for it is begotten of sympathy and of love of the highest. After all there is no classical learning so truly human and cultured as the Bible, and no learning so gentle as that which Christ and His Spirit give.

The publications of Hampton, including its monthly magazine, *The Southern Workman*, deserve more than passing note. All are of interest to educationists, and the magazine is quite first-rate.¹

Hampton has had one great advantage over the average foreign missionary institution—it has been beside its home base. This has made its financial support possible, of course. But it has done more. It has given Hampton a picked body of two hundred workers, or at least one to every seven students. Thus the personal touch with the students is quite remarkable. Moreover Hampton has a harmonious staff; they work in peace. Largely this is due, no doubt, to the personalities of its two great leaders. But it has also been made possible by the fact that they could deliberately choose their helpers, and also could fearlessly act on Armstrong's dictum that no workers, however able or cultured, should be retained at the cost of friction and dispeace. The close personal touch between the governing body and the staff has also been of immense value.

A visit to Hampton is to the missionary worth more in education than a dozen conferences. It is a missionary institution under ideal conditions, taken full advantage of by great Christian men. It gives a warm welcome to all working for the extension of that Kingdom for which its energies are employed. It puts all it has of experience and knowledge at their disposal with cordial generosity. It is not a place of strained men bearing Atlas burdens. But it is a place where in obedient faith men have appropriated the promises of their Lord, and in His name are bringing in with gladness the kingdom of God.

¹ Special attention may be called to a paper by Robert E. Park, read at the International Conference on the Negro, and published in the *Southern Workman* for June 1912, in which the writer discusses the essential features of the scheme of education represented by Tuskegee and Hampton.