THE FAME OF JOHN FOXE'S BOOK OF MARTYRS.

by

Andrew J. Patenall

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Department of English,
McGill University,
Montreal.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1. General Introduction.

John Foxe's Book of Martyrs (1563-1570) is one of the most famous books in the canon of English Literature.[1] And, among famous books, it is one of the least read. Ever since the day of its publication, just 400 years ago, it has always enjoyed some sort of fame and, at times, notoriety. We have much evidence attesting the book's long-established fame and many reasons for its diminished popularity.

Throughout English Literature of the last 400 years, there are continual references to the Book of Martyrs, and further testimony to its wide currency comes from a wealth of anecdote and established historical fact: Nicholas Ferrar, in his community at Little Gidding, would read an extract from this book before meals;[2] in many churches, especially in rural parishes, a reading from

1. The Book of Martyrs is the popular short title of Acts and Monuments. It has long been widely used, was used by Foxe himself, and so will frequently be used here. For Full Titles of each Edition see the Bibliography Part I.

2. Nicholas Ferrar (1592-1637), a scholar, businessman, and politician, in 1626 purchased Little Gidding manor in Huntingdonshire. Here he organised a small religious community, and for eleven years lived an austere monastic life of study and good works.

Foxe became an integral part of the service, and many churches still possess their Foxe, although by now they have dispensed with the readings. There is hardly a Rectory library in England without its Foxe; and in many private homes the family Foxe and the family Bible long stood side by side; in antique bookshops today, many copies can be found, packed with the interlinear ejaculations of piously horrified readers. The Book enjoyed a great and long popularity and was a fundamental part of the Protestant way of life.

In the enthusiasm for publishing new editions and revisions of Foxe, scholarship was often sacrificed in the interests of religious fervour. One duodecimo edition of 1812 has a preface that continuously and mistakenly refers to the author as "that zealous writer, Mr. George Foxe",[3] although, of course, the Quaker George Fox (1624-1691) was in no way connected with John Foxe (1517-1587). Even more remarkable is the fact that the public neither noticed nor cared about the error, for twelve years later in a reprint of this edition, a new preface repeats the mistake with unabated ardour. It was the book that mattered and the book that was famous, and not its author. The long fame of Foxe's book then, was built on a strong love of, and an earnest belief

3. Rev. T. Pratt, ed. Fox's Book of Martyrs, 2nd ed. (London, 1824), p. vi.

in, the righteousness of the Protestant cause, and on an equally passionate hatred of what was regarded as the Roman seat of Anti-Christ. The most conclusive evidence for this is to be found in the prefaces and forewords of the innumerable editions of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. So much for its fame.

That today the Book of Martyrs is scarcely read results perhaps from a salient feature of modern devotional habits. The religious zeal of even seventy years ago, has been largely replaced by a religious apathy, certainly among the kind of people who used to read Foxe -- the professional family man, the churchgoing shopkeeper, and others with an average 'middle-class' education. It was for these people that Foxe wrote, and his book assumed the position of a lay-man's Hooker. Good reasons for being, if not an Anglican, at least a Protestant were contained therein. Now, however, religious tolerance and encouragement to follow one's own lights have taken much of the fire out of religion. It is not held against a man if he is a Roman Catholic; and Roman Catholics are instructed to pray for the success and welfare of Protestant councils and congregations. When we read Foxe, therefore, we do not accept his tales as proof of the righteousness of his cause; we know that these very Protestants, when they came to power in 1559, and for the subsequent ninety years, tortured and martyred many

Jesuits and lay Catholics, whose suffering and heroism were as magnificent as that of Foxe's Protestant Martyrs. As a theological weapon Foxe served long; but in this capacity he is now obsolete.

It is in these last seventy years especially, that he has fallen into disuse. A symbol of the change can be observed today in the parish church at Cirencester, in Gloucestershire, where, from a lectern beside the Bible, the Book of Martyrs has been retired to a glass case in a side-chapel. Yet its fame survives. The work still stands among such giants of Tudor Literature as Fabian and Stow, Holinshead and Hakluyt; they are all monuments of industry with a secret and mysterious grandeur. Extracts from them appear in prose anthologies. We come across them in literary histories, where they are mentioned with reverence, although in very general terms. As units of Literature, however, they remain vast, forbidding and (usually) unopened.

Such is the situation of the Book of Martyrs today. The purpose of this paper is to examine and discuss, in terms of the mid-twentieth century, two questions: The first concerns the fame of the Book of Martyrs: "What were the circumstances surrounding the book which accounted for its popularity, and thus its reputation?".

An answer may be found in the history of the printings of the book, from the time of its inception in Foxe's mind at around 1550, up to the publication of the last of the nine "ancient" editions in 1684. By putting the work into this historical context, we shall perhaps see to what extent the book was an integral part of Protestant England, how as propaganda it always remained vital and alive, and how its subsequent fame was built on continual daily use for the first 150 years of its existence.

The second question will deal with the fact that the book is not read today. The question posed is whether or not the Book of Martyrs is still worth reading; and if it is, we must decide why. This thesis will seek an answer in three stages: First there is a critical examination, in which the book will be treated consistently as a piece of Tudor Literature, and not as a divine history of Protestantism. Then the inevitable question of the book's reliability will be discussed; and finally some evaluations and opinions as to its worth today will be formed and proposed.

First, however, John Foxe himself should be introduced. We shall not be especially concerned with him in this paper -- three centuries of readers knew little about him, and as for them, so for us; it is the Book of Martyrs that is under discussion; everything will be subordinated

to that. Yet it would seem a distressing gap if the author was to be completely ignored. A brief biographical and character essay will introduce him, before we move to our two central points. A fourth introduction will give some attention to the critics and criticism of Foxe.

2. John Foxe.

No full biography of John Foxe has even been attempted, and extant information about him is skeletal. Parish, University, and Diocesan registers may yield a little more than we now have, but the substance of what we actually do know comes from a Memoir by his younger son, Simeon. This was written in Latin at around 1611 and survives in a manuscript in the British Museum.[4] It was printed, together with a translation, thirty years later where it forms a preface to Volume II of the Eighth Edition of the Book of Martyrs. It is incomplete and omits many biographically important details; but the fact that the publishers (the Stationers' Company) saw fit to insert any memoir at all indicates the understandable wish of the reader to know something of the author, even when it is with the work that he is most concerned.

4. BM. Lansdowne MS. 388

Foxe was born in Boston, Lincolnshire, in 1517, and his parents were of "the commonalty of that town." [5] While he was still an infant his father died, but his mother was soon remarried to a Richard Melton. Little is known of his youth, but at around 1534 he went up to Oxford and was associated with Brasenose and Magdelen Colleges for twelve years. He seems to have been a natural academic and to have found in Oxford a most congenial atmosphere. He steadily became more strongly confirmed in Protestantism and his piety was very well-known. Finally, his convictions on certain dogmas, particularly that concerning the marriage of priests, obliged him to resign the fellowships that he had obtained. There is no disgrace attached to his departure; his action was the perfectly honourable resolution of honest differences.

He wished to become a schoolmaster, but as no position was forthcoming, in 1545, he reluctantly accepted an appointment as tutor in the house of William Lucy at Charlecote, near Stratford-upon-Avon. On 3 February 1547 he married an Agnes Randall of Coventry, and shortly after this he left Charlecote, again probably to escape the troubles his strong Protestantism incurred. With no plans, he went to London. There he underwent great difficulties

5. from Simeon Foxe's Memoir.

in obtaining a post. Finally, when he was almost destitute, the Duchess of Richmond employed him as tutor to the three children of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, who had been executed early in 1547 on a charge of High Treason. At first Foxe lived in London, but later the family moved to Reigate, where the Duke of Norfolk, father of the Duchess of Richmond, had a manor. Here they were joined by another pupil -- Charles Howard, who was related to the family and who later became Lord Howard of Effingham. In 1550 Foxe was ordained Deacon by Nicholas Ridley, but remained at Reigate, continuing as tutor and writing tracts. This lasted until early 1554 when Mary's policies, now oppressively anti-Protestant, precipitated his next move. From 1554 to 1559 Foxe was an exile.

We shall consider this and the consequent stages of his life more fully when examining the genesis and growth of his book. A very few facts are all that will be necessary here. As an exile Foxe dwelt mainly at Basil, where he was variously occupied, but chiefly with his martyrology, until September 1559, when he returned to London and a Protestant England. The rest of his life he spent in London preaching, writing, translating and, of course, compiling his Book of Martyrs. He died on 18 April 1587 and is buried in St. Giles, Cripplegate. He was survived by his wife, his

two sons, and at least one of his two or three daughters.

As with information about Foxe's life, our knowledge of his character also stems largely from the Memoir. Unlike his book, his character has been almost unanimously praised. There are reiterated instances throughout his life of his integrity and piety. His uncompromising adherence to his principles did not make his life materially comfortable. For many of his years his austerity caused grievous sickness. But his nature was firmly moulded around fine and upright qualities. He never tried to ingratiate himself with his superiors, although he knew them well and conversed with them freely. For instance, when he needed help on his return from exile, he frankly asked it from the Duke of Norfolk. Similarly, although he inserted in his book a flattering and generous address to the Queen, he did not hesitate to write to her and strongly recommend religious tolerance; his repugnance of the Protestant persecution in Mary's reign was matched by his repugnance of the persecution of the Catholics and Anabaptists in Elizabeth's reign. Foxe was immensely respected by courtiers and the poor alike. But he never lost his humility, his forthrightness, and his devotion to God. Some have said that he was naive and simple, but very few have denied his integrity. It may be concluded that his character was impeccable.

3. The Fame of the Book.

As I have suggested, the period 1550-1684 provided the basis of the fame of the Book of Martyrs; since an examination of the printings of this book during this period will be used in explaining the fame, it is necessary to introduce and establish a few elementary facts about the editions of the work.

The book was originally conceived by Foxe as a Protestant Ecclesiastical History and was published as such, in embryonic form, at Strassburg in 1554 and at Basil in 1559. But when the stories of the Marian persecution became available, Foxe enlarged the book with those tales. As a result, the First English Edition of 1563 was more of a martyrology than a balanced History. The book claimed to cover the years 1000-1560, but almost one half of it was concerned with the last ten years of this period. Despite this distended plan, the book achieved instant fame, especially for its narratives of the Protestant sufferings under Mary, which would have been still vividly real in the minds of most readers. By 1570, popular demand had produced a revised and much enlarged Second Edition. By now Church authorities recognised the book as a work of tremendous ecclesiastical power, and copies were placed in many churches and collegiate chapels. Six years later came the Third

Edition, and in 1583, the Fourth. Both of these were revisions of the Second, and the latter was the last to be published in Foxe's lifetime. There are however, certain further additions and emendations in the Fifth Edition of 1596. This therefore, is the edition on which the examination in this paper is based. It embodies all of Foxe's work on the Book of Martyrs and none of the subsequent accretions which various hands contributed to the book. All quotations, except where otherwise noted, are referred by the number and letter following them to the page and column of this edition. The pagination is continuous throughout both volumes.

Of these editions, the first four were published by John Daye, the distinguished London printer, and the fifth by Peter Short, under the assign of Daye's son, Richard. All subsequent editions were published by the Stationers' Company. Except for appendices which were designed to keep the work up to date, the text of the book remained unchanged. The Sixth Edition of 1610 was a very handsome production, which incorporated a short appendix by Edward Bulkeley[6] telling of the various persecutions

6. Edward Bulkeley D.D., was prebendary of Lichfield and rector of Odell, Bedfordshire. He died in January 1619.

of French Protestants in the late sixteenth century. It also gives a brief but interesting note on the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. The Eighth Edition of 1641 is an almost exact replica of the Seventh Edition of 1632. Both include a continuation by a Nicholas Holmes. Among the narratives here, are the stories of the Spanish Armada of 1588 that had been ignored up to now, and a new and remarkably full account of the Gunpowder Treason. The one great difference between these two editions is that Volume II of the Eighth presents, as we have seen, the Memoir of Foxe by his son, Simeon. In 1684 the ninth and last of the "ancient" editions appeared. A huge and splendid set, it was issued, like the two preceding editions, in three volumes, but unlike all the others, printed in Roman face and not Black Letter. The Ninth Edition was the last complete Book of Martyrs to be published. Since 1684 two versions have claimed completeness: Those of Samuel Cattley (1837-41) and of Josiah Pratt (1870),[7] but in these the text has been ruthlessly edited and the result is of as little real use to a student of Foxe as are the mass of miscellaneous compressions, selections, and "improvements" of the Book of Martyrs with which the public

7. S.R. Cattley and G. Townsend, eds. Acts and Monuments, 8 vols. (London, 1837-41); 2nd ed. (London, 1843-9). Josiah Pratt, ed. Acts and Monuments, 8 vols. (London, 1870); 2nd ed. (London, 1877).

was deluged throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This paper ignores all these post-1700 editions. They constitute a fascinating bibliographical story, but it would require a major work to do them justice. Also, they are only the results of Foxe's fame, and not, as were the "ancient" editions, the causes of it. Moreover, the bigotry of the later editors only serves to distract us from the work as literature. Foxe, in his own prefaces, often exhorts papists, but he never damns them. He regarded his book as a record, not as an exalted weapon. By adhering to the Fifth or an earlier edition we are enabled to fulfil the professed purpose of this paper, which is to examine the work as a piece of Tudor Literature.

A further and interesting point, and one that will be extensively developed, is the theory that whereas post-1700 editions poured forth in a very general wave of invective against Roman Catholicism, the nine "ancient" editions were all occasioned by a specific event or series of events of a politico-ecclesiastical nature. If this theory can be found tenable, it will go far in supporting the idea that the basis of the fame which has so long accompanied the Book of Martyrs, lies in these crucial years, 1560-1684, during which time the book and the history of its publication were very closely involved in the development of English Protestant thought.

4. The Book of Martyrs

The Book of Martyrs is a huge work. Even the earlier editions, the Second to the Sixth, comprise two great volumes, and the pages are very closely covered. As each successive edition became better laid out and more clearly printed, so the bulk seems to have grown. The climax to this was the Ninth (or 1684) Edition -- three massive large-paper Folio volumes, which total 2400 pages and weigh fifty pounds. The need to realize the physical size of this work is imperative and cannot be too strongly emphasised. We are going to examine the book with an analytic probing that must surely reveal faults. But our perspective is wrong unless we see these faults firstly in the context of the mammoth work, and secondly in the knowledge that it is the work of one man only. This is the most vital single point to be set down in introducing any study of the Book of Martyrs.

The Book is planned on a grand scale. It is divided into twelve books, each successively covering a shorter period of time. Thus the first three books take us through the first 900 years of Christian History; the second three books move the story to the accession of Henry VIII, and the next three cover from that time until the death of Edward VI. The final and easily most lengthy three books are devoted to the reigh of Mary Tudor. This one reign of

of just five years constitutes well over one third of the work, and it is the narratives in this part on which Foxe's fame, or notoriety, rests. These were the tales that caused shocked and violent reaction for three and a half centuries.

The first four books are not particularly distinguished history. They represent the result of years of comprehensive assimilation of the standard texts by a very thorough and very Protestant mind.[8] The text is often entertaining but sometimes tediously prolix. From Book Five onwards we are presented with a steadily increasing number of documents, Bills, and contemporary papers, and, what is more important, with provocative and informative personal opinion. Book Eight is heavily documented with State Papers, proclamations, and private letters, and the work continues in that manner to the end. Moreover, it is from this point on that we find the wealth of personal anecdote and narrative. Many of the events of the reign of Henry VIII were witnessed by a large number of people still living in the fifteen-sixties, when Foxe was at work. As we shall find, this "hearsay" method of Foxe's is immensely effective. With a profuse source for recent events, Foxe found the contemporary part of his history swelling out of all proportion to the earlier sections. Since, to a great extent, material was put into

8. These sources included Bede, Matthew Paris, Roger de Wendover, Ranulf Higden, Geoffrey of Monmouth, John Capgrave, etc., as well as near-contemporaries such as Fabian, Sleidan and Hall.

its section as it came to the author, mild editorial chaos within each subject division also results. These points need only be briefly introduced, since they will be discussed and developed more fully in their proper place.

The result of these facts, the Book itself, scarcely needs introducing; it is immediately apparent that the work is an encyclopaedic and sprawling agglomeration of very diverse elements. Eventually one must decide whether the Book of Martyrs is an homogenous work or an heterogenous scrapbook of the Protestant movement. Is the Book of Martyrs organic above and beyond its admittedly organic ground plan? This problem and its variations will ultimately be seen to be fundamental to all evaluations of the worth of the book. While examining its several parts, we are examining the whole torso. Above everything else, the Book of Martyrs is going to be treated, discussed, criticised and evaluated as a unit, and a single unit, of Tudor Literature. Any opinion formed about the whole Book must be very carefully qualified by a consideration of its parts and of the circumstances surrounding its compilation. It is for this reason that the intrinsic examination of the Book of Martyrs follows, rather than precedes, the examination of its fame and history; a more accurate representation will be achieved if the second part is conducted in the light of the first, and if the circumstances of the book are clearly appreciated.

5. Foxian Criticism.

There is only a small body of critical work on the Book of Martyrs, and it can be simply and briefly introduced. To determine the exact reason for this poverty is less easy. Paradoxically, the answer seems to lie in the book's fame. It was so much a standard work, fulfilled such a vital purpose, and caused such strong personal animosity and partisan controversy, that in its time it could hardly be subjected to analytic and objective criticism. For a good Protestant it was an apocalyptic work, laying open incontrovertible truths. For a good Catholic, the Book of Martyrs was a manifestation of the devil, a "Legend of lies" (1114b), and as such deserving only of pious abuse. In the last seventy years, however, some genuine criticism has appeared, although even now we often find unmitigated and unqualified abuse in quite recent studies of subjects to which Foxe's work has some relevance.

We shall be mentioning the first critics of Foxe when examining the history of the early editions; the critics before 1700 contributed some of the most pertinent comments that were to be made until the present century. Between 1700 and 1760 there was comparatively little interest in the Book of Martyrs. There were few editions of the work and correspondingly little comment. From 1760 to the turn of the

century, the Rev. Madan[9] and the Rev. Paul Wright[10], who both produced abbreviated, but still large, editions of the work, were the dominant Foxian scholars. Their remarks were scarcely critical, but they did revive interest in, or were at any rate indicative of revived interest in, the Book of Martyrs. Wright was especially active, and published four editions of his version, giving it a wide circulation through the sectional method of distribution.[11]

Early in the nineteenth century, editions of the Book of Martyrs began to pour forth in a flood of varying sizes and formats. Each had its own "critical" introduction, none of which seem to have been constructively honest. Foxe still survived, not on his own merits, but on a tide of ignorant adulation. It was not until 1837 that Foxian criticism attained to anything scholarly. At that time, Cattley and Townsend were producing their "complete" edition, and bringing some substantiated if faulty knowledge about Foxe to light. Meanwhile, the librarian of Lambeth Palace, S.R. Maitland, was waging an anti-Foxe campaign chiefly

9. Martin Madan (1726-1790), a controversial Methodist, was well known in England and acquainted with a large circle of important persons, including Cowper.

10. Paul Wright (d. May 1785), vicar of Oakley, Essex, was a popular editor of such works as the Bible and British Histories, as well as the Book of Martyrs.

11. By the method of selling one section or signature of a work at a time, the cost was comfortably spread.

through the columns of The British Magazine. With a show of thoroughness he managed to discredit the Book of Martyrs. Townsend's ensuing defence was pathetically feeble and ill-equipped, and from this time Foxe's reputation has been seriously questioned.[12] In the wake of Maitland's very flimsy, but vigorous attack, the criticism of the subsequent one hundred years, though progressively more objective and analytic, was still generally poor work. It was not until 1940 that a sound and scholarly assessment of Foxe appeared--J.F. Mozley's John Foxe and his Book.

Mozley's is unquestionably the most significant and valuable piece of criticism yet produced on Foxe and his book. The arguments against Foxe, which Maitland propounded, are refuted with total success,[13] and with equal success Foxe's reputation and honesty are vindicated. Mozley's study is not, nor was intended to be, a thorough and definitive examination of the Book of Martyrs; rather it is an

"A large trade was done through England and Scotland by canvassers, who sold in numbers and parts such works as Family Bibles, Daily Devotions, Lives of Christ and Foxe's Book of Martyrs." Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th Ed.; see under Publishing.

12. This defence was embodied in the Preface to the Second Edition (1843-9) of Cattley's version of the Book of Martyrs.

13. The arguments consisted of queries as to the validity of certain historical incidents, which Foxe may have received in a garbled and inaccurate condition. But Maitland did not realise that Foxe usually corrected these in subsequent editions.

introduction that establishes some important preliminary facts about Foxe's life and his work. It offers judicious criticism of certain features, brings together much scattered information, is totally free from religious bias and sentiment, and presents the student with a useful starting point for studies on Foxe. Mozley's book has such clarity and forthrightness that Foxian criticism may be considered to have started here. It cuts through the dense growth of bigoted abuse and adulation, and provides a path straight to the actual Book of Martyrs. This excellent preface cannot be overpraised.

Since Mozley's work there have been three important studies of Foxe. The first is L.M. Oliver's "The Seventh Edition of John Foxe's Acts and Monuments,"[14] which deals quite comprehensively with the Sixth and Seventh Editions and summarises the history of the earlier editions. Within its limited scope, this essay is efficient and provides a basis for further research.

The second study is a brief essay by Professor William Haller, "John Foxe and the Puritan Revolution."[15]

14. Leslie M. Oliver, "The Seventh Edition of John Foxe's Acts and Monuments," The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America, XXXVII no.4 (1943), 243-60.

15. William Haller, "John Foxe and the Puritan Revolution," in The Seventeenth Century (Richard F. Jones Presentation Volume) (Stanford, [1951]), pp. 209-24.

This useful commentary, which relates the Book of Martyrs to its ecclesiastical and political context, has recently been expanded into a book, the third important study; Foxe's Book of Martyrs and The Elect Nation.[16] In this work, Professor Haller considers Foxe's book in the light of Protestant England's sense of national purpose or election as current in the early seventeenth century. A broad and thoughtful work, it presents an acute delineation of the role of the Book of Martyrs in the period covered by this present paper. There are, however, many factual errors in it, some of them, quite serious. On the first page of the text (13) Professor Haller asserts that a copy of the 1570 edition of the Book was ordered to be set up "in churches and other public places." If this had been so, it certainly would have supported Professor Haller's thesis; but unfortunately it is not true. No such order was ever made; [17] and there are many such errors.

At the present time the reader must rely on these three pieces -- and the Book of Martyrs itself. Attached

16. William Haller, Foxe's Book of Martyrs and The Elect Nation (London, 1963).

17. L.M. Oliver conclusively exploded the common belief that this order was once made. A simple proof of this is that there were never enough copies of the book to supply each parish. The total number of copies of all nine editions cannot have exceeded fourteen thousand, which is well below the total number of parishes.

to this paucity of criticism, there are certain advantages. One is that it is possible to open the book without any preconceived opinions or prejudices. But on the other hand, there are disadvantages; perhaps rather more critical literature of a constructive nature might have induced more people to regard the Book of Martyrs as literature, and to peruse it themselves.

Criticism of The Book of Martyrs is badly needed. As we approach it without a guidebook, its size and scope seem most forbidding.

CHAPTER TWO

The Genesis of the Book of Martyrs 1550-1559

When Foxe determined to write a book of martyrs, or even when he actually began to write, is difficult to discover. The work was certainly begun, however, between 1548 and 1554, and a study of that period will enable us to make some judicious guesses at the dates of composition and arrive at some important conclusions -- important because they will aid our understanding of the original purpose of the work. The most significant piece of evidence is, of course, Foxe's first printed history of the martyrs of 1554, and the circumstances surrounding it. This was the title of the work:

> Commentarii rerum in ecclesia gestarum, maximarumque per totam Europam persecutionum à Vuiclevi temporibus ad hanc usque aetate descriptio. Liber primus. Autore Joanne Foxo Anglo.

The work appeared in Strassburg late in September 1554, in time for the Michaelmas Fair. It was published by Wendelin Rihelius, "a morose man...strongly addicted to that opinion on the sacramental question which they attribute to Luther." [1]

1. As Grindal described him in a letter to Foxe. See William Nicholson, ed. The Remains of Edmund Grindal D.D. (Cambridge, 1843), p. 220. Hereafter cited as Grindal.

It was called "Liber primus" because Foxe had planned, and at that time still planned, to write a Protestant History of the period from Wycliffe to the accession of Edward VI, and this first book took the story only up to 1517 and the emergence of Luther. The work was very small in comparison with the giants to follow -- just 212 octavo pages. Its fragmentary nature suggests that it was very casually assembled, as were the later and greater collections which grew from it. This is Foxe's earliest martyrology and there is extant a rough draft revealing that it was nearly complete in form by the time he left England as an exile late in March of 1554.[2] Indeed, he can have had but little time or leisure to work on it from the day he landed on the continent, for after arriving at Nieuport, he went to Antwerp and Rotterdam before continuing to Frankfurt, where the Easter Fair was in progress, and where he may have met other exiles as well as important European Printers. He could not have reached Strassburg until early May. Here, although he must have found English refugees to help him, much time must have been taken in establishing his wife and himself and in seeking means of support. Only in late June did he contract with the dour Rihelius to print the first part of his History. Thus two and a half months at the most were available for preparing and proofreading the edition. Mozley, who gives a clear

2. This and certain other details are supplied by Mozley.

account of Foxe's difficulties prior to his departure, says also that he was in poor health, a fact noted by Simeon Foxe in the Memoir of his father. Since time and access to documentary material were obviously limited, little can have been composed in these months in Germany. We have to look further back for the genesis of the Book of Martyrs.

As we have seen, from early in 1548, Foxe had been tutor to the children of the Earl of Surrey; the eldest, Thomas, who had become Duke of Norfolk on the decease of his grandfather in 1554, proved a friend to Foxe both before and after the latter's exile. (It was Foxe who later accompanied him to the scaffold, when in 1572 he was executed for subversive activities on behalf of Mary Stuart.) Between 1548 and 1554 therefore, Foxe was continually attached to this family, living mainly at Reigate, in Surrey. In 1550 he was ordained a deacon by Ridley, and his violently Protestant preaching made his relationship with the papistical Stephen Gardiner, in whose diocese he dwelt, very precarious. During these years he wrote several tracts. In 1548 he attacked the death penalty for adultery; in 1551 he earnestly pleaded for the revival of excommunication;[3] and in 1552 his Tables of Grammar appeared, of which no copy is extant, but which was a novel Latin

3. This is an interesting indication of Foxe's desire for a tauter religious discipline in the new church.

grammar designed as a simplification of that in use at that time. In addition to these efforts, he translated in 1547-8 works by Luther, Oecolampadius, and Urbanus Regius. It is quite evident that during this period Foxe was deeply involved in, and closely concerned with, the progress of the Reformation, the ecclesiastical and episcopal feuds in the new church of England, and the civil strifes, at the centre of which was the Duke of Somerset, the Lord Protector. The religious feuds were, as we shall see, continued in a smaller way by the Frankfurt exiles in 1554 and 1555.

Just as there was a need for apologies for the Protestant succession in 1559, which was met by Jewel's Apologia (1562) and, much later, by Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, both of which became pillars of support for the Church of England, so there was a need in Edward's reign for a work to justify and propagate the reformed church and its reformed service books. The death of Edward in June 1553 served to emphasize further the urgent need for a Church Chronicle. The degree to which Foxe was concerned with such matters is shown by his bold tract of March 1554, exhorting the nobility of England to obstruct the passage of the revised Act of the Six Articles, which was correctly rumoured to be planned for Mary's second Parliament of April 1554.[4]

4. BM. Harleian MS. 417. Reprinted by John Strype in Memorials of Thomas Cranmer (Oxford, 1812), II, 937.

It was probably awareness of this necessity, and not the influence of Lady Jane Grey as has been popularly thought, that occasioned Foxe to write his history. Mozley suggests "about 1552" as the date of the beginning of the book. This date seems late, and it is probable that Foxe realized the need for such a work earlier. It may even have been before 1550 that he began in an unhurried way to collect materials. Perhaps he did not establish any sort of text until mid-1553. The length and quality of the published work suggest certain facts, the main being that the compilation of the final draft did not occupy a great amount of time. Had Foxe begun earlier to edit his accumulated material, the result would have been more polished. If we seek a date at which Foxe began his great work, "about 1550" is more probable than "about 1552". The genesis of the Book of Martyrs can be placed, in any case, between these two dates. The above-mentioned causes must have decided Foxe's original intention; and the work of these years was consummated in the Commentarii of September 1554. However much one speculates beyond these facts, they at least provide a sound frame from which to proceed to Foxe's remaining years of exile -- 1554-1559 -- which culminated in the great Latin Edition of the Book of Martyrs.

Early in October 1554 Foxe returned to Frankfurt, probably intending to write Part II of his Book -- an inten-

tion never realised. Peter Martyr had induced him instead to translate Cranmer's second book on the Eucharist, which work, although it was never published, occupied his time up to mid-1557. He found the work very difficult. The text was crabbed, and Cranmer's English did not turn into Latin easily. With the lack of libraries he wished to return to Strassburg. His duty as preacher for the English community at Frankfurt also made demands on his time; and more time still was taken by his inevitable entanglement in bitter domestic disputes among the Frankfurt community. This feud was between the radical "Knoxians" led by John Knox, who advocated sweeping reforms along the lines of Calvin at Geneva, and the more moderate "Coxians" led, from April 1554, by Richard Coxe, who adhered to the 1552 Prayer Book.[5] A committee, on which Foxe sat, decided on a compromise which, however, included large parts of the radical Genevan service. There were many who would not subscribe and the battle wore on until Knox, with most of his faction, was obliged to leave the city. While the victorious "Coxians" stayed in Frankfurt, many of the others went to Geneva. Foxe, a mild puritan, inclined to the radical party and left the city. He, however, went only as far as Basil. There is yet another reason for Foxe's dis-

5. An account of these problems was published a few years later: William Whittingham, A brieff discours off the troubles begonne at Franckford. A.D. 1554 (Zurich, 1574) (STC. 25442)

continuation of the Commentarii: In February 1555 John Rogers, having been burned in Smithfield, became the first Marian Martyr, and from this time on, an ever-increasing flow of reports came into Germany, telling of more and more persecution in England. At once Foxe could see that his original plan, which extended to the end of the reign of Henry VIII, would be totally inadequate. Because of the swiftly changing pattern of religion in England, Foxe's mind turned away from a project already much delayed. Circumstances had combined to render his plan obsolete and to doom the Commentarii to be forever an unfinished work.

In September 1555 Foxe journeyed to Basil and it cannot have been an easy trip. In addition to his incipient poor health and to the hazards and worries of travelling, his wife had just given birth to their first daughter, Christiana.[6] There is doubt about where Foxe dwelt when he arrived in Basil. Mozley and C.H. Garrett both state that he lived in the Klarakloster, an old convent which the English society rented from the city.[7] The assumption, however, is based only on an archive which reveals that 24 pounds rent was

6. The date of the birth is not known, but we do know that the child was baptised in Basil on September 22nd. It therefore seems more probable that she was born before, rather than after, the journey, since it is unlikely that Foxe would have travelled when his wife's pregnancy was so far advanced. He may, however, have done so, since he might not have chosen to travel while his child was still unchristened.

paid for it in 1557. Whether it had been rented in 1555 prior to the arrival of the exiles, or even on their arrival, is not known. Had it been rented earlier, surely it would have been too large and too expensive for the few who were already there. We cannot therefore, dismiss Strype's conjecture that, at first anyhow, Foxe lived with the printer, John Oporinus, and the most likely hypothesis is that he stayed with Oporinus until the Klarakloster was finally rented. He must either have been in touch with Oporinus very soon after his arrival in Basil, or he may even have met him previously at Frankfurt or Strassburg. The Commentarii was sent as a professional sample of his work, but the outcome was not very encouraging. Foxe, like so many other exiles, was obliged to work at proof-reading for a living. Fortunately, however, he was associated with a fine printer who was eventually prepared to print much of Foxe's own work, including the 1559 Book of Martyrs. Foxe heartily disliked "that tedious employment", proof-reading.[8] Indeed, as the letter in which he thus describes the task shows, it interfered seriously with his work on the martyrology, which was already complicated by the flood of narratives pouring out of England. During his first year in Basil he was associated also with the University

7. Christina Garrett, The Marian Exiles (Cambridge, 1938).

8. Grindal, p.231.

as a free student. We know little of this except that he was matriculated in 1556. The business of supporting his family was a continual struggle. Famous is Grindal's gift of two dollars to help poor Foxe.[9] He was never one to complain, but too often, as he himself once said, he must have been "reduced to the last farthing." [10] A second daughter in 1558 was an added responsibility. Hitherto, the conditions under which Foxe worked while in exile have been too glibly passed over. He once wrote to Henry Bullinger saying: "I am here harassed to the utmost of my strength, in collecting the histories of the martyrs."[11] The climactic martyrology of 1559 is a monument to the industry of a man working under severe stresses.

Foxe's industry becomes even more remarkable when we realise that besides this one great project, between 1555 and 1559 he produced several other works. In March of 1556 appeared the dramatic poem Christus Triumphans, and other pieces followed, including a Latin common-place book (1557)

9. Grindal, pp. 223-4.

10. Grindal, p. 231.

11. Hastings Robinson, ed. The Zurich Letters A.D. 1558-1579 (Cambridge, 1842), p.26. Hereafter cited as Zurich Letters.

and an epistle of thanksgiving and praise for the end of the reign of Mary Tudor and the beginning of that of Elizabeth (1559). There is also the unpublished translation of Cranmer's book on the Eucharist. This last was both time-consuming and extremely hard work. Grindal offered sympathy with respect to the "tedious work,...in which you must needs have had to contend with many difficulties."[12] Foxe struggled hard but vainly to get it published, and for the printer Froschover he even, "to my great weariness,"[13] copied out the first part again. Nevertheless, all through these Basil years, and despite his other work and problems, he was collecting material for his magnum opus, and collecting more avidly than he had done prior to 1554 for his Commentarii.

The seriousness of Foxe's labour in what he by now must have recognised as his vocation is apparent throughout his correspondence. Edmund Grindal -- fellow exile, late chaplain to King Edward, and later Bishop of London, and Spenser's "good Algrin"[14] -- was Foxe's most important assistant and critic. He was, in the words of Strype, "a great and diligent collector of papers relating to the writings, examinations, acts, and sufferings of the martyrs in England

12. Grindal, p.226.

13. Grindal, p.231.

under Queen Mary. And, from him, "continues Strype,"Mr. Fox received great assistance in his work."[15] Grindal had left England early in Mary's reign and had been among the few who earnestly studied the tongue of their new home, Germany. As we see, he set himself the task of collecting the tales and documents concerning the Marian persecutions, and he did this independently of Foxe, although Foxe later received and assimilated all the material into his own work. Early in 1556 Foxe had written to Grindal asking for details of Cranmer's disputations and death. Grindal's cooperation is evident in his answer: "If...they do not intend to publish the account of Cranmer's death I will do my utmost endeavours to send you a copy, when occasion requires it."[16] Grindal often offered opinions on the validity of documents, notably on those relating to John Philpot and Bishop Hooper. "I do not arrogate myself to the post of critic," wrote Grindal in a letter dated 1 August, probably of 1556, "but candidly, after my manner, communicate to you the convictions of my mind."[17] This is representative of the advice which Foxe must have found especially valuable. It is also representa-

14. Edmund Spenser, The Shepheardes Calender, July Eclogue, line 229. See also lines 215-228.

15. John Strype, The Life and Acts of Edmund Grindal (Oxford, 1821), p.13.

16. Grindal p.220.

17. Grindal p.223.

tive of Grindal's good nature. A year later, on 18 June 1557, Grindal again commented candidly after his manner, on the difficulties that beset the collectors of narratives:

> As to what you write concerning the history of the martyrs, I am as glad that you are forward to undertake it, as I am sorry that the materials of that work cannot be supplied to you after the manner in which a year ago I thought they would be supplied. For I then thought that before this time we should have had the history of the martyrs written in our own language, and, if not printed at least prepared for the press; so that the history might be published nearly at the same time both in English and in Latin, the latter being done by your assistance. But there has been some delay in this matter. [18]

Of course, it was finally left to Foxe to complete both the English and Latin versions. He was grateful for all this concern: "...neither have I any distrust, that your vigilance and fidelity will be wanting in collecting the rest."[19] Grindal, as he had been early in leaving England, was early in returning. But before he went, he assured Foxe of continuous aid. "We will there collect together what we can, and transmit them to you. The loss of time will be a trifling

18. Grindal p.226.

19. Grindal p.231.

consideration, if it be compensated by the fullness and certainty of the account."[20]

A second and younger English cleric, John Aylmer, also assisted Foxe, especially with information about Lady Jane Grey, whose tutor he had been. The lovely narrative in Acts and Monuments of this young Queen must owe much of its warmth and immediacy to the recollections of Aylmer.

Among Foxe's continental acquaintances, Henry Bullinger was probably the most sympathetic. In a letter dated 13 May 1559, Foxe requested his assistance, explaining his wish to learn of the European martyrs: "For although I am more immediately concerned with British History, yet I shall not pass over the sacred history of other nations, should it come in my way."[21] In the following month there is another letter from Foxe, this time asking for specified information on Zwinglius, Grinaeus, and Hooper's Swiss wife. It is interesting to observe that during these short months before the publication of the Basil Book of Martyrs, Foxe still had time to send a kind letter to one Frensham, grievously sick. It ends with the tantalising comment: "The

20. Grindal p.237.

21. Zurich Letters p.26.

bottle ye sent is not yet come unto me."[22] We are never told what the bottle contained or whether it ever did arrive. In the final six months before printing Foxe was engaged almost exclusively on the martyrology and as late as August yet another letter to Bullinger urgently requested further information on Zwinglius and Grinaeus. Up to the last moment evidently, he never slackened in his much hampered quest for information about the persecutions. This quest, the main interest of his life since 1554, moved towards its triumphant climax in the late summer of 1559 when John Oporinus and Nicholas Brilinger published the great Latin Edition of his Book of Martyrs.

The edition, published early in September, was dedicated to Foxe's former pupil, Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk. The dedication is dated 31 August 1559. The Title runs:

> Rerum in Ecclesia gestarum, quae postremis et periculosis his temporibus evenerunt, maximarumque; per Europam persecutionum, ac Sanctorum Dei martyrum, caeterarumque rerum,...digesti per regna et nationes commentarii. Pars Prima. In qua primum de rebus per Angliam et Scotiam gestis, atque in primis de horrenda sub Maria nuper Regina, persecutione narratio continetur. Autore Joanne Foxo Anglo.

Even in the title the emphasis falls on the Marian tales, which were to remain always the most important, most popular and best section. This edition, a folio of 750 pages, is

22. Zurich Letters, p.38.

divided into Six Books. It is a fairly well manufactured book, although not of the superb standard achieved by Daye a few years later. It incorporated a revised text of the Commentarii and continued the narrative right into Mary's reign, although the post-1556 martyrs are very briefly treated, being named only in a catalogue. The second volume, which was predicated in the title by "Pars Prima", was actually concluded by Henry Panteleon (or Pantaleon) in 1563.[23] Although both parts of this edition had but little currency in England, they became and remained an important document in Europe, despite Jean Crespin's martyrology, which was first published in 1554, and which was often reprinted.[24] Foxe himself owes much to both Crespin and Panteleon in his 1570 and subsequent editions; and similarly Crespin, in the later of his editions, owes much to Foxe. The only other Latin "edition" of Foxe that should be mentioned here is that of R. Pecock, who published a revised text at Strassburg in 1564.[23] Foxe had no hand in these two subsequent editions.

Foxe left Basil shortly after the publication of his book and was back in England late in October 1559, almost a year after the accession of Elizabeth. The story of the martyrology now changes character, becoming a tale of deve-

23. See Bibliography Part I.

24. See Bibliography Part III.

lopment, rather than one of genesis. The 1559 Edition was the first recognizable Book of Martyrs; its text is that on which Foxe based his English Editions. It is also the source for many documents otherwise extinct and unprinted. Although Foxe never ceased to work at his martyrs, he never again had to do so under the conditions that made the genesis of this book such a remarkable achievement. When considering such topics as Foxe's reliability, it will be very important to bear in mind the troubles he faced in assembling the work. And the circumstances surrounding its creation must be remembered and taken into account when assessing Foxe's achievement.

CHAPTER THREE

The Book of Martyrs, 1562-1564.

The years 1559 to 1570 were vital in the development of the Book of Martyrs. The importance of this stage is apparent when we remember the turbulent Ecclesiastical history of this time. The international implications of England's religious policy, as well as the course of her domestic history, provide an interesting and appropriate background for the growth of the Book.

The international furore created by Elizabeth after 1559 is well known. Having emerged in 1559 as a Protestant, she steadily pressed reforms aimed at establishing this faith and uprooting Roman Catholicism. By a series of brilliant diplomatic stratagems she avoided excommunication (until 1570), set France and Spain at cross-purposes, and rendered Pius IV an impotent and supplicating mediator in European politics.[1] By dividing her enemies, who united could have destroyed her, she also staved off the threat of Mary Stuart. Less dramatic, but of greater importance here, is the domestic history of English Protestantism during these years. With increasingly

1. For a discussion of these facts and their relevance to Foxe, see William Haller, Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation (London, 1963), Chapter III, "A Godly Queen."

severe measure against Papists, the old Bishops were imprisoned, a new and cleverly modified Act of Supremacy was passed, and the country was soon militantly Protestant. Of even more relevance than these measures, however, were the ecclesiastical and episcopal differences between the various sects of the newly-established religion, -- schisms probably foreshadowed by the feuds in Frankfurt in 1554.[2] The result now was a compromise, a course somewhere between the puritan and "high-church" parties. John Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury, a central figure, by inclination stood, like Foxe himself, to the puritan side of the middle path. Jewel managed to modify his views and became the chief literary apologist for the church of England. It was he who provoked the most important controversy of the decade by twice challenging (in 1559 and 1560) all-comers who thought themselves able to confound his faith by reference to the Fathers and the Scriptures.[3] Should anyone succeed in this, "I am", he wrote, "content to yield unto him and to subscribe." [4] In 1562 his Apologia for the new church appeared. This work stood, with the Book of Martyrs, and until Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, as the great learned Protestation of

2. See above p.28

3. This and other controversies are analysed and discussed by A.C. Southern in Elizabethan Recusant Prose 1559-1582 (London, 1950), pp. 60-118.

4. John Ayre, ed. The Works of John Jewel (Cambridge, 1845-7), I, 21.

of the newly established creed.[5] Jewel's most active opponent was Thomas Harding, and much later Gabriel Harvey spoke of these two as "Harding and Iewell, two thundring and lightning Oratours in diuinity."[6] Harding also loosed some incidental bolts at Foxe, which, as we shall see, Foxe answered. The other important controversy was that between Osorio, a Portuguese bishop, and Walter Haddon, who took upon himself the defence of the English Reformation.[7] This concerns us since it was Foxe who continued the controversy after Haddon's death in 1572.

Although Foxe was by nature retiring, he became by force of circumstances a militant Protestant. He and his book must be viewed in the context of contemporary history, for while Jewel's work was the weapon of scholarship, Foxe's work remained, for 350 years, the great popular weapon.

When Foxe landed in England in October 1559, the religious feud was well under way. As early as 8 January of the same year, Michael Surian and Paulo Tiepolo, the Venetian ambassadors to England, had reported to the Doge that

5. Apologia Ecclesiae Anglicanae (London, 1562), (STC.14581). Translated as An Apologie or aunswer in defence of the Church of England (London, 1562), (STC.14590). Modern reprint published at London this year (1964).

6. From Pierce's Supererogation (1593). Reprinted in Gregory Smith, ed. Elizabethan Critical Essays (Oxford, 1904), II,247.

"many who in time of Queen Mary were exiles on account of religion have returned."[8] This letter also indicates the lateness of Foxe's return from Basil. He delayed his move for two probable reasons. One was the need to see the Rerum through the press, and the other was the uncertain political climate in England. A second journey into exile with the concomitant expenses would have been an intolerable burden for poor Foxe, his wife, and his two daughters. When he did arrive in London, impoverished and sick, he appealed to the Duke of Norfolk, with whom he had corresponded continually since Mary's death. The appeal was at once answered and on the last day of October or the first of November Foxe moved into the Duke's London house near Aldgate. In the meantime he had established a friendship with John Daye, even then one of London's finest printers. Without delay, on 10 November, Daye published Foxe's translation of Ridley's A Friendly Farewell, which must have been in readiness before Foxe left Basil.[9] This was the first fruit of a great partnership which flourished until Daye's death in 1584.

7. See Southern, Op. cit., pp. 119-25. Walter Haddon, LL.D., (1516-1572) was a leading scholar, advocate and latinist, and undertook the Osorio controversy in 1563 at the request of the Government.

8. Rawdon Brown and G.C. Bentinck, eds. Calendar of State Papers...in...Venice...1558-1580 (London, 1890), VII, 8.

9. A frendly farewel, which master Doctor Ridley did write, vnto all his true louers a. frendes in God, a litle before that he suffred (STC.21051).

From now on Foxe set about collecting narratives for his martyrology. He was ordained by Grindal in January 1560 but apart from a marked tendency to low church attitudes his ecclesiastical career was unremarkable. A letter from Laurence Humphrey of 13 August 1560 reveals Foxe as a quiet and laborious student, working unobstrusively at his task in London.[10] Later that year Foxe and his family moved to Norwich where he examined for the first time provincial diocesan registers. His eldest son, Samuel, was born there on 31 December 1560. From Norwich, and for the next two years, Foxe made frequent and prolonged trips to London, and to registers at Canterbury, Lichfield and elsewhere. It was sometime in 1560 that Daye put translators to work on the Latin edition of 1559, leaving Foxe free to gather original material. It is because these years prior to 1563 were uneventful that they are so obscure. Foxe was extending the history back to 1000 A.D., adding narratives of foreign martyrs, and filling out the Marian period in England. The result of these labours was published, according to the colophon, on 20 March 1563.

In bulk much larger than the book of 1559, the Edition of 1563 is known as the First Edition.[11] The huge

10. BM. Harleian MS.416. Quoted in part by Mozley, p.64.

11. Mozley's description of this edition (pp.129-39) precludes the need for an extended description here.

volume, containing 1742 pages, was a finely made book, with the title:

> Actes and Monuments of these latter and perillous dayes, touching matters of the church, wherein ar comprehended and described the great persecutions and horrible troubles, that haue bene wrought and practised by the Romishe Prelates, speciallye in this Realme of England and Scotlande, from the yeare of our Lorde a thousande, vnto the tyme now present. Gathered and Collected...by John Foxe.

There were 24 pages of prolegomena which included a controversial Kalendar of Martyrs (suppressed in the Second Edition), and various apologies, addresses, prefaces and prayers. The book was magnificently adorned with 51 woodcuts--an unusually lavish number at that date.[12] Indeed, the product was superior and correspondingly expensive. William Turner of Wells criticised the price in a letter to Foxe but went on to acknowledge the great and immediate acclaim with which the book was received.[13] In spite of the price, the Protestant camp could ensure the book of success. Its vigour and force put it in the vanguard of Protestant propaganda.

Foxe, in his Apology to the Reader, had anticipated

12. See Appendix -- "The Illustrations of the Book of Martyrs."

13. Reprinted in Henry Christmas, ed. The Works of Nicholas Ridley D.D. (Cambridge, 1843), p. 481.

violent attacks against himself and his work. The first serious assault came from Nicholas Harpsfield, imprisoned in the Fleet, who, as Marian Archdeacon of Canbertury, was featured as a senior villain in the Book of Martyrs. His attack, in the Sixth Part of his Dialogi Sex,[14] was directed at the narrative of Lord Cobham who, in 1440, was involved in charges of treason. Foxe regarded Cobham as a martyr, while Harpsfield saw him as a traitor. Foxe vigorously defended his own right of opinion and mocked the pettiness of Harpsfield's attack. A few extracts will demonstrate his method:

> Nicholas Harpsfield...an english man, a person to me vnknowne, and obscure hitherto vnto the world, but now to purchase himselfe a name with Erostratus, or with the sonnes of Enachim, commeth out not with his fiue egges, but with his sixe rayling dialogues. (523a)
>
> The Popes Scout, lying in priuie wait to spie faults in all mens works, wheresoeuer any may appeare, taketh pepper in the nose, and falleth againe vnto his old barking against me. (645a)
>
> Haue yee not then done well, and properly (thinke you) so bitterly to flee in my face, and to barke so egerly all this while at mooneshine in the water, hauing no more cause almost against me, then against the man in the Moone. (645b)
>
> You heape vp a dunghill of dirtie Dialogues conteining nothing in them but malitious railing, virulent slanders, manifest vntruthes, opprobius contumelies, and stinking blasphemies, able almost to corrupt and infect the aire. (531a)

14. Dialogi sex contra Summi Pontificatus, Monasticae vitae, Sanctorum,...et Pseudomartyres, etc. (Antwerp, 1566)

The fragments cannot do justice to the whole, but they do indicate the spirit with which Foxe entered the fray.

Thomas Harding, already mentioned as an assailant of Foxe, was more abusive than critical.[15] To his repudiation of the famous tale about the Guernsey martyrs (1763-8), Foxe devised a reply much less biting than that he had directed at Harpsfield.[16] He concludes with charm and moderation:

> And thus for lacke of further leisure, I end with maister Harding hauing no more at this time to saie vnto him, but wish him to feare God, to imbrace his truth, to remember him selfe, and to surcease from this vncharitable railing and brawling, especiallie against the dead which cannot answer him. (1768b)

The Popish resentment was as unanimous as the Protestant applause. An outstanding Papist literary critic at this time was Thomas Stapleton who, aided by notes from Harpsfield, attacked Foxe in his Counterblast:[17] "He plaieth in dede the wily Foxe and springeth with his false wily tayle, his filthy stale not into the doggs, but into

15. See Thomas Harding, A Confutation of a book intituled An apology of the Church of England (Antwerp, 1565), and A reiondre to M. Iewel's replie against the sacrifice of the Masse (Louvain, 1567), (STC.12761).

16. The famous tale involved the burning of two innocent women; the injustice was acknowledged even by the Marian regime after a subsequent inquiry. The horror of the tale arose from the fact that one of the women was pregnant at the time, and on account of the flames was prematurely delivered of a child, which bystanders rescued. On the orders of the authorities, the child was hurled back into the fire and consumed.

his readers eies."[18] Mild Foxe was indeed at the centre of a most acrimonious battle.

In the years following the First Edition, Foxe was not exclusively occupied in dispute and defence. The book had evoked from its readers a mass of fresh information, as well as corrections, and Foxe therefore planned a revision. In the preface to the Second Edition he explains that after 1563, "I well hoped that these my trauailes...had bin well at an end, whereby I might haue returned my studies againe to other purposes." But events decided otherwise and he began to extend the history back to apostolic times and to amplify the Marian tales. With this he was fully occupied for the next seven years.

Shortly after the publication of the First Edition, Foxe received the prebend of Shipton, a post from which he procured small remuneration, and on which he lavished scant attention. His low-church tendencies prevented a more dynamic rise in the Church and his role was strictly that of a popular preacher. For instance, he was not, despite his abilities, connected with the "Bishops" Bible of 1568. He was

17. A Counterblast to M. Hornes vayne blaste (Louvain, 1567), (STC.23231)

18. Quoted by Southern, op. cit. p.129. For a discussion of Stapleton and A Counterblast see ibid. pp.88-94, 126-35.

respected for his piety, but his dissent was unacceptable to the hierarchy of the new church.

Many critics have objected that Foxe, in re-editing his work, omitted much important material. I think the magnitude of the loss is exaggerated. Several Latin documents and certain disputations were excised or replaced by abstracts. Often in the subsequent editions we are referred back to parts that had appeared only in the First Edition. Little significant or entertaining matter is excluded. In the narrative of a False Alarm of a Fire at Oxford (1102), Foxe has edited out some details of English firefighting methods which had been included in the Basil Edition for the benefit of European readers. This is no loss in an English Edition; it indicates the nature of all Foxe's excisions. His method of pruning seems to have been both judicious and justified.

For every word that went a page was added. The Book contains scattered allusions to assistants examining records throughout England and Scotland and sending new narratives back to Daye's shop. The veiled references to the shop, its locale, and the flow of visitors and gossips around it are fascinating.[19] The book also demonstrates the close-

19. Several of the quoted extracts in Chapter 5 illustrate the immediacy of the book. See especially pp. 120-123.

ness of the partnership of Daye and Foxe. In places Daye can almost be heard advising Foxe how much space on the latest gathering remains; and Foxe writing down, "a little vacant space of emptie paper remaineth" (1176a), before filling up the page with an anecdote. The lack of factual information about these years is compensated by the vivid impression of assembly and editing offered by the book itself.

One fact not mentioned in the book, but one that should be remembered, is Foxe's ill health. In 1557 or 1558 he asked Bishop Parker for a Lenten dispensation on medical grounds.[20] Strype, too, calls Foxe a "spare, sickly man."[21] Yet despite this and other problems, the much enlarged Second Edition appeared in 1570.

Before and after 1570, the Catholic Threat and Protestant Indoctrination dominated Elizabeth's reign, and the Second Edition of the Book of Martyrs was at once caught up into the controversies. During the first ten years of the reign the threat had come from Mary Stuart. After the murder of her husband Darnley in 1558, she fled to England and for a year constituted an embarrassing and dangerous problem for Elizabeth. In the following year Thomas, Duke of Norfolk,

20. John Bruce, ed. The Correspondence of Matthew Parker, D.D. (Cambridge, 1853), p.230.

21. John Strype, The Life and Acts of Matthew Parker (Oxford, 1821), I, 354.

Foxe's pupil and benefactor, led the rebellion in the north on Mary's behalf. Because of his own weakness the attempt failed, and the failure ultimately led to his execution and to Mary's imprisonment. The threat posed by Mary was thereby diminished. A papal bull of excommunication against Elizabeth came in 1570, too late to help Mary. It was merely an impotent gesture. England was securely and actively Protestant.

From 1570 to the end of the reign the Catholic Threat came from Spain, and for the first 18 years of this period the two countries were in a state of undeclared war. England's sailors, with the tacit approval of the Queen, outrageously provoked Spain by pirating untold quantities of bullion and treasure as they were brought back from the New World. In 1587, the year in which Mary was executed, Drake attacked Cadiz. In 1588 Spain's Armada sailed to invade England, thus declaring open war.

Between 1570 and 1588 Jesuits were smuggled into the country in ever-increasing numbers and posed an insidious problem for the authorities. Their hated (and brilliant) literature was also brought in; some of this, of which mention will be made, was directed specifically at the Book of Martyrs. With the execution of Father Edmund Campion in 1580, the Jesuits were no longer persecuted on the pretext of political expediency, but openly on account of their religion. Their cour-

age was undiminished. These men and their writings were the immediate foes of Foxe's book and its advocates.

As early as 1571 the Book of Martyrs received official recognition from two important bodies. On the recommendation of certain Bishops, including Archbishop Parker, the Mayor and Corporation of the City of London decided, on 1 February, that

> Not onely master Chamberleyn shall at the costes of the Chamber of London, provyde and set vp in thre[e] orphans courte, fast cheyned, one booke of the laste pryntinge of actes and monumentes for all men to looke vppon for their better instructions, and [but] that allso order be taken that all the companyes of this Cytie such as are of habylitie, shall at the charges of their hall, provyde and take order that in euerye of their halles in somme open place one of the said bookes may be had, and set vp for euerye man to see and reade, that shall therunto be wyllinge, and that notice therof be geven to the saide companyes.[22]

The second official order came two months later. On 3 April the Convocation of Canterbury met in London, and it was John Daye who printed the canons that the convocation drew up.[23] Among the canons was the notice that the Book of Martyrs and the Bible of 1568 should be placed in every cathedral and that

22. Edward Arber, A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London; 1554-1640 A.D. (London, 1875-1894), I, 496.

23. A booke of certaine canons, concernynge some parte of the discipline of the Churche of England (STC.10063).

every Bishop, Dean, and Archdeacon should purchase a copy for his own house. Daye was thus ensured of a satisfactory sale of the expensive work, which had now achieved a new dignity. These two edicts gave the martyrology secure fame, which from this time was to grow rapidly.

The 1570 edition of Foxe's work was physically impressive and on that count well able to stand by the "Bishops'" Bible. It consists of two folio volumes, of which the first is entitled:

> The first volume of the Ecclesiastical History, contayning the Actes and Monumentes of thynges passed in every kynges time in this realme, especially in the Church of England.

The prolegomena has been extensively revised.[24] The provocative Kalendar of Martyrs is gone, as are all but one of the 1563 prefaces. Three new prefaces appear, all of which have a noticeably patriotic bias. Then follow over 2300 pages of text, in double columns.

Of all the editions of the Book of Martyrs, the Second is, bibliographically, the most interesting. The edition contains many examples of late insertions, cancels, and single-page imposition; and, moreover, the first part of the edition is printed on a larger paper than that used in the

24. Mozley describes this edition in some detail, pp.139-48.

latter part. Some of these peculiarities have been discussed by L.M. Oliver[25] and P. Dunkin,[26] who have patiently analysed the late insertions and the cancels, and have traced them back to the several compositors who were working independently. With respect to the two sizes of paper, Mr. Oliver reasonably deduced that, since the smaller and cheaper sheets occur only after signature IIIIi in the Second Volume, Daye must have run out of his original stock. The inability to replenish stock may be traced to a basic stigma in English bookmaking at that time. Because there was no manufacturer in England, paper had to be imported from France. The problem is discussed in a letter from Richard Tottel to Lord Burghley, probably written in 1585, but of immediate relevance to the present work:

> It is almost twelve yeres past...sithens I and some other of my companye, seinge the want and dearth of good paper in this realme, and also the disceite that is vsed Dailye in makynge therof Did fullie agree to bestowe some labour and cost for the ereccion of a paper Mill heare in this lande.[27]

25. Leslie M. Oliver, "Single page Imposition in Foxe's Acts and Monuments, 1570." in The Library, 5th series, I, no.1 (1946), 49-56.

26. Paul S. Dunkin, "Foxe's Acts and Monuments 1570, and Single-Page Imposition." in The Library, 5th series, II, no.2 (1947), 159-170.

27. Arber, A Transcript etc., I, 242.

He pointed out the national advantages of such a project and shrewdly asked for a twelve-year patent. Since he and "some other" of the Stationers' Company saw the need for ready access to paper, it is not unrealistic to suppose that Daye might have been among the other petitioners and planners in 1573 or 1574. Certainly in 1570, he must have wished for a local supplier in order to complete his Book of Martyrs with suitable speed.

Another hindrance to printing was the law forbidding the employment of more than three foreigners. Daye produced the book on three presses, as we learn from a letter from Foxe to Sir William Cecil, in which he pleads for permission to employ extra foreigh help as trained Englishmen could not be found.[28] A few years later, we are told that "master Daie hath iiij presses,"[29] and a printing house of this size may very well have had more than three foreign employees.

Despite these hindrances, the Book of Martyrs appeared late in 1570. Since the edicts of the city of London and of the Convocation of Canterbury would have set a precedent for other bodies and since there were, no doubt,

28. BM. Lansdowne MS. 388.

29. Arber, A Transcript etc., I, 248.

many parishes, especially in London, that were eager to procure their own copies, the edition must have sold briskly. Although it was not mandatory, by the end of the seventeenth century a very large number of churches possessed a Book of Martyrs. Some ships possessed a copy of the book, in addition to a copy of the Bible. Drake took a copy to Cadiz in 1587, and during his return entertained himself by colouring the pictures. A letter that he sent to Foxe telling him of his victory over the Spaniards reached London shortly after Foxe's death.[30] The acceptance of the Book of Martyrs by the Church assured Daye of financial security and Foxe of fame. It was only five years before they set to work on a Third Edition, and within thirteen years a Fourth Edition had appeared.

From the time of the publication of the Second Edition, and until his death in 1587, Foxe was a highly respected and busy man. The heavy work on the Book of Martyrs was done and he could turn to other interests. His son Simeon lists the many noble and courtly friends who eagerly sought the conversation of his distinguished father. Foxe carried out his duties as a preacher and on Good-Friday, 24 March 1570, delivered a famous and often-reprinted sermon

30. Reproduced in Thomas Greepe, The true and perfecte newes of the exploytes, performed by Syr F. Drake (London, [1587]), (STC. 12343).

at Paul's Cross, the Sermon of Christ Crucified.[31] Foxe's consolation and advice were available to all men, from the misguided Duke of Norfolk to the diffident and humble Thomas Pye, a student at Balliol who, after many weeks of hesitation, gathered enough courage to ask Foxe's opinion of an Hebrew translation he had made.

As well as fulfilling these pastoral duties, Foxe continued his partnership with Daye. Between 1570 and 1587, several works in which Foxe had had a hand, appeared.[32] They are evenly spread through this period, except for a gap between 1573 and 1577, when Foxe would have been preoccupied with the minor revisions for his Third Edition. The most important of these works were his edition of the Anglo-Saxon Gospels and the preface to the collected works of Tyndale, Frith, and Barnes.

The Gospels were probably produced at the instigation of Archbishop Parker, a keen Old English scholar.[33] The manuscript was his and was edited by Foxe, whose knowledge of Old English was slight, and by John Jocelyn, Parker's

31. A sermon, of Christ crucified preached at Paules Crosse, the Friday before Easter, commonly called Good Fryday (STC. 11242). Reprinted in 1575, 1577, 1585, and 1609.

32. For a convenient bibliography of Foxe's minor works, see Mozley pp. 243-5.

33. The gospels of the fower euangelists tr. in the olde saxons tyme into the vulgare toung (1571), (STC.2961).

chaplain, who knew the subject well. Opposite the Old English text the version from the 1568 Bible was printed. The publication encouraged printing the scriptures in the vernacular, and provided an early example of that practice. In the preface, Foxe strongly advocates the use of the vernacular, and it was for the same reason that he inserted an Anglo-Saxon sermon in the Second Edition of the Book of Martyrs (1042-4).[34] Old English scholarship was an accidental result of the English Reformation, and was encouraged by Parker, Jocelyn, and Daye.

The edition of the works of Tyndale, Frith and Barnes had been forecast in the Book of Martyrs, and appeared in 1572 or 1573.[35] Foxe supplied biographies, largely taken from the Book of Martyrs, and a preface in which he praises the art of printing. A similar eulogy had already been printed in the martyrology (650). In the preface Foxe emerges as one of the great Tudor Humanists.

It is certain that, while Foxe was attending to these other projects, corrections and complaints about the

34. This sermon was a reprint of Aelfric, A testimonie of antiquitie (London, J. Daye, 1567), (STC.159). This work is the first example of printed Anglo-Saxon.

35. The Whole works of W. Tyndall, John Frith, and Doct. Barnes, etc. (London, 1573 (titlepage) or 1572 (colophon)), (STC. 24436).

Book of Martyrs continued to arrive at his house in Grub Street and at Daye's shop by Aldgate. Adjustments were entered in the Appendix, but there were also corrections in the text. John Daye's son, Richard, seems to have supervised the Third Edition, compiling a new index, which was retained until the Seventh Edition. The Third is an economy Edition.[36] The print is small and blurred and the paper is thin and cheap. The use of such wretched paper is unexplained. Daye who consistently produced high-quality work, certainly, as contemporary works indicate, could have obtained good paper. He must either have had little faith in his market, supposing that he had already saturated it, or have genuinely wished to provide a low-cost edition for private individuals and poorer parishes. The sacrifice of quality has meant that the Third Edition is today the rarest.[37]

Foxe's old friends, Simon Parrett and Laurence Humphrey, both criticised the quality of this edition and, in 1583, urged Foxe to make his Fourth Edition a more splendid book.[38] Much stronger criticism appeared of the material

36. The Title was the same as that of the Second Edition.

37. It commands a disproportionately high price, usually selling for up to 70% more than the superior Second Edition.

38. The letter survives in BM. Harleian MS. 416.

within the book. Robert Parsons, the vitriolic and articulate Jesuit, made the first of his many attacks in the work usually known as "Leicester's Commonwealth".[39] This consists mainly of abuse of Leicester and the "hot puritans", of whom Foxe was one. Parsons was a powerful writer, but even if Foxe saw this attack, which is by no means certain, he was probably not much troubled by it. The Book of Martyrs was twenty years old and Foxe was, by now, well used to violent criticism. The Fourth Edition makes no mention of any attack later than that of Harding in 1567.

The Fourth Edition appeared in 1583 and was the last in the lifetimes of both Daye and Foxe. It was superior in every way to the edition of 1576 and contained only a few alterations. The eloquent closing address to the reader, new to this edition, was preserved in all later editions.[40] The title also differed from that of the Third Edition. Whereas the titles of the two previous editions were The Ecclesiastical History, this edition reverted to Acts and Monuments, the title of the First Edition, and ran

> Actes and Monuments of matters most speciall and memorable, happenyng in the Church, with an universall history of the same...Newly revised and recognised, partly also augmented, and now the fourth time agayne published...by the author, etc.

39. The Copie of a letter wryten by a master of Arte of Cambridge to his friend in London (Antwerp? 1584), (STC.19399).

This remained the title for the last five "ancient" editions.

The publication of the Fourth Edition marks the end of an era in the story of the Book of Martyrs. John Daye died on 23 July 1584, and Foxe on 18 April 1587. The great partnership was celebrated in Daye's epitaph:

> This Daye the cruell night did leaue behynd to view and shew what bloudi Actes weare donne he set a Fox to wright how martyrs runne By death to lyfe Fox venturd paynes & health to giue them light Daye spent in print his wealth But God with gayn retornd his wealth agayne [41]

40. Ed. IV p.2154; Ed.V p.1949.

41. Reproduced by John G. Nichols, "Memoir of John Daye the Printer," The Gentleman's Magazine, CII (Nov.1832), 417-21.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Book of Martyrs, 1584-1700.

After 1584 the story of the Book of Martyrs revolves around various London printers and the Stationers' Company. The complex legal apparatus of the Company at this time is obscure, but, from Arber's Transcript of the Company records, and from miscellaneous sources including colophons and title-pages, it is possible to piece together the history of the Book of Martyrs after 1584.

When Daye died his rights, privileges, and property were divided in three ways.[1] A certain number of copyrights, bequeathed to the poor, were administered by the Company, and the members who printed them did so under the assign of the Company, and not as publishers in their own rights. The largest part of Daye's property and most of his rights and privileges went, either by deed of will or by sale, to Henry Denham, another senior printer. It was certainly Denham who took over Daye's four presses. The third and smallest portion of the business was willed to the son Richard, who seems to have been on poor terms with his father. Never closely associated with the printing business, he had, within ten

1. Arber, A Transcript etc., II, 787-88.

years, all but abandoned printing. To Richard Daye a small but valuable collection of privileges was left. Among these was the Book of Martyrs.

Richard Daye lost no time in assigning his copyrights. In 1585, the printers White, Wright, Butter, Wolfe, and Adams were his assigns.[2] It is uncertain whether the Book of Martyrs had been assigned to any of these booksellers. A "mr wight"[3] was a partner in the publication of the 1596 edition, but may not be the same man.

A little more can be discovered from the colophon of the Fifth Edition, which informs us that it was "Imprinted at London by Peter Short,...at the signe of the Starre: by the assign of Richard Day." However, as we shall see, it was Denham, and not Short, who began this edition. Denham died early in 1589 and Short succeeded to his business. (The "Starre" had been one of Denham's signs.) The Book of Martyrs was not Denham's property and could not pass to Short; it would revert rather to the assignor -- in this case a partnership of ten booksellers to whom Daye had accorded his privilege, which partnership did not at once transfer the

2. Arber, A Transcript etc., II, 790-93.

3. W.W. Greg & E. Boswell, eds. Records of the Court of the Stationers' Company. 1576-1602 (London, 1930), p.51.

assign to Short.[4] It was not until 7 April 1595 that Short was allowed to continue Denham's work on an edition of at least 1200 and not more than 1350 copies:

> Yt is agreed that peter Short shall finishe the Impression of the book of m'tyrs from the place where mr. Denham left And to Deliu' them all to the seid pten's. ffor the Whiche he is to haue after the rate of xvij.s vj.d for a book...Item for the Remaynor that he shall print aboue the xij.c abouesseid which ou'plus shall not excede CL booke moore. The seid peter is to beare the charge therof him self.[5]

Daye had evidently granted his privilege to these booksellers at some date between 1585 (when he appears to still hold the right himself) and late 1588 (by which time Denham would have started the Edition). One further fact invites speculation. On 3 July 1587, Denham registered "an abridgement of the Book of Martyrs with the pyctures" in the Company records.[6] This was never published.

Two hypotheses can be constructed on this entry. When Foxe died in April 1587, it may have been decided to produce a final edition of his great work, at which time Richard Daye either assembled, or was approached by, a partnership of book-

4. The partners were Harrison, Bisshop, Watkins, Wight, Newbery, Coldocke, Norton, Ponsonby, Dewce, and Woodcock. See Greg, p.51.

5. Greg, p.51.

6. Arber, A Transcript etc., II, 473.

sellers, to whom the copyright of the Book of Martyrs was leased. According to this first hypothesis, they would have assigned the work to Denham -- an obvious choice since he already owned John Daye's presses and other materials. Aware that others might try to seize his market with an abridgement, he registered an abridgement himself in order to discourage contenders. With no intention of ever publishing such an abridgement, he then set about his own complete edition.[7]

The other hypothesis is that, after the death of Foxe, Denham shrewdly saw the market for an abbreviated edition and registered his project in good faith. The partnership of booksellers was formed later (i.e. after 3 July 1587) and the assign was offered to Denham -- still an obvious choice -- who accepted it and abandoned his proposed abridgement. This establishes July 1587 and December 1588 as early and late limits for the decision to print a Fifth Edition. The first six months of this period is more probable than 1588.

Whichever hypothesis is closer to the truth, all was not easy for the ten partners. A trespasser on their jealously guarded property appeared in Dr. Timothy Bright, a physician and the inventor of a shorthand.[8] For his writings

7. This view concurs in part with that of L.M. Oliver, "The Seventh Edition etc.," pp. 251-2.

on this subject he had been granted a Royal patent, which removed him from the jurisdiction of the Stationers' Company. Under the protection of what must have been a loosely-worded patent, he produced an abridgement of the Book of Martyrs, entitled:

> An abridgement of the booke of Acts and monvmentes of the chvrch: written by the reuerend father, Maister Iohn Fox: and now abridged by Timothe Bright, doctour of phisicke, for such as either through want of leysure, or abilitie, haue not the vse of so necessary an history.

The book was printed by John Windet who issued several illegal or extra-legal books. Richard Daye learned of this forthcoming publication and complained. On behalf of Daye and his partners, the Company prosecuted Bright, but losing the case in July 1589, exacted over nine pounds in legal fees from the partners.[9] Bright won either on the strength of the patent or on the ineptness of the plaintiffs -- Richard Daye had already lost an extended lawsuit over certain of his father's privileges in 1585. Despite the objections of the powerful Stationers, Bright's abridgement was published in 1589.

One further question about the Fifth Edition remains

8. This is laid forth in his Characterie; or an Arte of shorte swifte and secrete writing by Character (London, 1588), (STC. 3743).

9. Arber, A Transcript etc., I, 534; Greg, pp.30-2.

and for it there is no simple answer. Why did the ten partners wait from early 1589 until April 1595 before they transferred the assign to Peter Short, who had long since taken over Denham's other business? Perhaps an answer may be found in the events and circumstances of the first half of 1589. Not only did Denham's death suspend progress, but the lawsuit against Bright must also have been discouraging. The partners may have feared that this and other possible abridgements would ruin the market, in which case it would be better to halt the work and eliminate further expenses. When, by 1595, no further abridgements had appeared the edition could be restarted. Even at this late stage, the Edition was involved in further difficulties. On 21 June 1596 the following cryptic and unexplained entry was made:

> The controu'sie for the book of martirs is referred to the determinacon of mr. harrison mr. Watkins, mr. Newbery, mr. wight and mr. Norton, They to cast vp th accoumpt and determyne of it.[10]

The nature of the controversy is not known. The foregoing is my own speculation. There may have been several other reasons for the delay, but this alternative seems to be the most plausible.

The Fifth Edition was published in 1596, but in

10. Greg, p.55.

what month we do not know. It was very similar to the Fourth Edition in both appearance and content, though there were considerable additions in the early part of the text. After the 1583 version, Foxe must have continued to examine the records of the Tower of London since many of the insertions are marginally noted "ex. Turris Lond." Usually, Foxe had rewritten one or two paragraphs and left the bulk of the text untouched.[11] One other improvement was the insertion of line numbers down the central space between the columns. The prefatory material was identical with that of the Fourth Edition except that a eulogy on Foxe by John Hopkins now appeared. Nothing new is added to the appendices although, subjoined to the closing address to the reader is a "liuely picture describing the weight and substance of Gods most blessed word against the doctrines and vanities of mans traditions." (1949)

The Fifth is, as I have already suggested, the definitive edition of Foxe's Book of Martyrs. It is of good quality although typographically it is less neat and pleasing to the eye than the Fourth Edition; the page numbers are larger and occasionally the ink is thick and blurred, although this may not be true of all copies in the edition.

11. One example of this change will be found on Ed. IV, p.287a, para.4, and Ed. V, p. 261a, lines 37-66. (I have not collated the entire texts of the two editions, but there are several instances of correction in the first 400 pages.)

With the publication of this edition, the Book of Martyrs comes to another stage in its history. The original architects, Foxe and Daye, are gone, and the initial demand for the work is satisfied. Its enemies, however, are as vigorous as ever, especially Robert Parsons. In 1603 he attacked the Book of Martyrs in his Treatise of Three Conversions of England,[12] and in the following year he renewed the onslaught:

> I have had occasion these months past to peruse a great part of his last edition of Acts and Monuments, printed the fifth time in the year 1596 and do find it so stuffed with all kind of falsehood and deceitful manner of telling tales, as I could never (truly) have believed it, if I had not found it by my own experience.[13]

Meanwhile, the book was passing into the protestant heritage of England. It stood alone on its own merits, and nothing of importance occurred in its history until the death of the assignee, Peter Short, in 1604.

The last fifteen years of Elizabeth's reign were spent in war with Catholic Spain. The threat of invasion never passed and, as a direct result, all non-conforming sects -- Catholics, Puritans, Anabaptists and Calvinists alike --

12. A treatise of three conversions of England by N[icholas] D[oleman] (pseudonym), ([St. Omer], 1603), (STC.19416).

13. A Relation of the triall made before the King of France vpon the yeare 1600 betweene the Bishop of Eureux, and the L. Plessis Mornay ([St.Omer], 1604), p.58, (STC.19413).

were sternly suppressed. Severe laws bound the country to her chosen middle path of Anglicanism. The Bible, and the works of Jewel, Foxe, and (in 1594) Hooker, all of which were published under Royal Patent, constituted the literary vanguard of the movement.

In 1603 Elizabeth died, and James, the son of Mary Stuart, acceded to the throne. To a degree, Spain was appeased and the Catholic threat seemed to recede. There were hopes that James would now remove some of the strictures imposed on non-conformists -- hopes partially realised when he eased some of the penalties for Catholicism. Since the Puritans no longer patently sought to overthrow episcopal government in the church, they were also emancipated. A vast numerical increase of Catholics was the first result of James' moderation. He then panicked and re-imposed the oppressive laws. To this the Catholics reacted violently and the Gunpower plot occurred. Father Henry Garnet, although almost certainly innocent , was hanged, and the Catholic persecution gathered momentum. Episcopal Protestantism made determined moves to consolidate its position. It now had a Puritan wing in its support, although, in only a few years, this wing overwhelmed the moderate episcopalians by whom it had been fostered. Manifestations of the Protestant effort include the King James version of the Bible (1611), the publication

in 1609 of Jewel's Collected Works, and in 1610, the appearance of the Sixth Edition of the Book of Martyrs.

Peter Short died in 1604 and it is difficult to discover what then happened to the copyright of the Book of Martyrs. The issue is confused further by the fact that Richard Daye, the assignor, also died either just before or soon after Short. In one way or another, however, the copyright was obtained by the Stationers' Company and the Sixth Edition was printed in 1610 "at London, for the Company of Stationers'". Possibly Daye willed it to the company either when he died or, if later, at the time when the assignee should die. The legal procedure for such a case is obscure. Short's widow, Emma, succeeded to his business, but it is unlikely that she could or did succeed to his assigns. Within a few months she married the printer Humphrey Lownes, who thereby became Short's successor; since he thus owned the woodcuts and other accessories to the Book of Martyrs, it was naturally he who printed the 1610 edition for the Company. All that it is possible to educe from this is that the Stationers procured the copyright at some time between 1603 and 1605, upon the death of either Daye or Short.

It is unknown why the Company decided on yet another edition. Religious fervour is a less likely reason

than business acumen. They knew their market well, and with the anti-Catholic hysteria at its height, and a new Bible in preparation, they saw the times propitious. Their records tell us nothing of transactions or settlements prior to publication. The project was, most probably, smoothly and simply executed. The long-drawn out controversies over the making of the Fifth Edition and the slightly careless and messy result were not repeated: The Sixth Edition is the most beautiful edition of the Book of Martyrs.

Textually, the Sixth is identical to the Fifth Edition, even in pagination. (Pages 1037-1044 afford an exception since they include the Anglo-Saxon sermon, for which Lownes cut a new type, neater than Daye's. He adjusts the pagination here, but returns to the old order at page 1045.) Before the Index, there is a new appendix by Edward Bulkeley,[14] in which the Huguenot massacre is treated. There is also a very brief note on the gunpowder plot of 1605. Although the text is unremarkable, the typography and general appearance are outstanding. A large variety of typefaces are used, all of which, including a fine Black Letter, are very handsome. The text in general, and the prolegomena are adorned with many new and splended woodcut ornaments and tailpieces, and the illustrations have been set in the forme with the greatest

14. See Chapter 1, page 11.

care, ensuring well-aligned and clear impressions. Although the pagination is the same as that of the previous edition (which enabled several compositors to work at once), the arrangement of the material within the page is much more imaginative and skilful. The Sixth Edition is a great achievement and does honour to both the Company and the Printer.

The years from 1610 to the death of Charles I in 1649 cover a turbulent period in the history of the English Church. The remainder of James' reign was spent in the attempt to secure European peace by a marriage alliance with Catholic Spain. On the failure of this match, Charles, who had been intended for the Spanish Infanta, married Henrietta Maria, sister of the Catholic French King. Charles' own attempts to achieve Protestant unity resulted rather in a sharp division between the High Church Royalists and the Calvinistic Parliamentarians. Circumstances aggravated the rift, and no Parliament sat between 1629 and 1640. The ambitious William Laud, who held high-church opinions about the relation of Church and State, became, in 1633, Archbishop of Canterbury. At around 1637, Charles' court migrated largely to the Catholic fold. The division became a clean break in 1641, and the deaths of Laud and the King, and the supremacy of the Puritan and Parliamentarian party followed.

Whereas the Book of Martyrs had hitherto been a pro-Protestant, anti-Catholic work, at the time of this internal division of Protestant parties it became the exclusive property of the low church. The Royalists, seeking compromise or at least peace with the Catholic powers, found it convenient to ignore Foxe's notorious book. The Puritans, wanting no such compromise, championed the book, even though they were as far as the high-church party from the old middle path of Elizabethan Protestantism. The extent to which the book became almost a symbol of Puritanism was illustrated in 1644 during the trial of Laud when one of the charges brought against him was that he had suppressed the Book of Martyrs and caused it to be removed from several churches. This he strenuously denied.[15] The trial itself does not concern us, but the significance of the Book of Martyrs in that trial should not be ignored. In 1644, eighty years after its first publication, it was still a source of heated controversy.

Between the Sixth Edition of 1610 and the Seventh of 1632, three abridgements of the Book of Martyrs were published. The first, Clement Cotton's The Mirror of Martyrs (1613), was the most popular seventeenth-century abbreviation.[16]

15. The trial is briefly discussed by Oliver, "The Seventh Edition etc." See also Daniel Neal, The History of the Puritans (London, 1732-8); William Laud, The History of the...Tryal of...Laud (London, 1695); and William Prynne, Canterburies Doome (London, 1656), (STC.P3917).

Consisting of 432 pages printed in duodecimo, it was reprinted in 1615, 1631, 1639, and 1685.

Two years later, in 1615, Thomas Mason's Christ's Victorie over Sathans Tyrannie was published.[17] Permission to print was granted by Royal Patent, and a projected reprint after Mason's death caused his widow much trouble; it was never published.

The third abridgement was A blowe for the Pope, published anonymously at Edinburgh at around 1631.[18]

Plans for the publication of a new and complete edition of the Book of Martyrs did not get under way until 8 September 1629, when the Company offered the rights of publication to any ten members at a cost of one penny in the pound, an offer apparently ignored, since nothing more is heard of the work until nearly two years later.[19] On 1 August 1631, a long and important entry in the Records shows the demand for the work:

16. Clement Cotton, The Mirror of Martyrs (London, 1613), (STC. 5848).

17. Thomas Mason, Christs Victorie over Sathans Tyrannie... Extracted out of the Book of Martyrs and divers other Books (London, 1615), (STC. 17622).

18. A blowe for the Pope, touching the Popes prerogatives (Edinburgh, 1631), (STC. no entry).

19. William Jackson, ed. Records of the Court of the Stationers' Company 1602-1640 (London, 1957), p.212.

> Whereas the Book of Martirs being out of print and certayne persons of quality desiring that it might be imprinted for the generall good of the Kingdome, came vnto the Mr. Wardens and assistants and certified that if the Company would not print it for themselues that they would take a Course for the Speedy doeing of it elsewhere.[20]

As we saw, at around this time English Protestants were divided, and the "persons of quality" may have been senior Parliamentarians. To produce the work, the Company found the printers Felix Kyngston, Adam Islip, and Robert Young. Islip and Kyngston were elderly and respected, having printed since 1591 and 1597 respectively. Young was a successful and junior printer with several other businesses elsewhere in England and Scotland. He had been the partner of Humphrey Lownes from 1625 until the latter's death in 1629, and had thus succeeded to all the materials of the Sixth Edition.

The Seventh was to be an edition of 1600 copies; the work was to be evenly divided among the three printers, and for the first time the Book of Martyrs appeared in three volumes.[21] The Preface was identical to that of the previous edition, except for a topical outline and a chronological table of events by Nathaniel Holmes.[22] The text was that of

20. Ibid., p.230.

21. Ibid., p.434.

22. Nathaniel Holmes D.D. (1599-1678) was educated at Oxford, proceeding D.D. in 1637. He was at first a devout Calvin-

the Fifth Edition. Included was Edward Bulkeley's appendix of 1610, which was followed by a new section with its own titlepage:

> A Continvation of the Histories of Forrein Martyrs: From the happy reigne of the most renowned Qu. Elizabeth, to these times...Whervnto are annexed the two famous Deliuerances of our English Nation: the one, from the Spanish Inuasion in 88. The other from the Gunpouder Treason, in 1605.[23]

The subsequent 108 pages of history were written by Nathaniel Holmes, who also revised the Index.

The Division of the work among the printers was as follows: Except for the first thirteen sheets, Kyngston printed Volume I. Islip printed the first thirteen sheets of Volume I, all of Volume II, and the thirty-one sheets constituting the Continuation in Volume III. Young printed the main text and Index of Volume III. The divisions are not quite equal in length and, as L.M. Oliver suggests, certain financial adjustments may have been made.[24] Despite the division of the work, the finished volumes have a uniform appearance.

ist, later becoming a millenarian. In 1662 he retired to the parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate, where, coincidentally, John Foxe is buried.

23. Ed. VII, III, facing p. 1030.

24. See L.M. Oliver, "The Seventh Edition etc", pp. 249-51.

As compared to the Sixth Edition, the borders and ornaments are less magnificent. Many of the old woodcuts have deteriorated in the 22 years since they had last been used: One, which depicts Bonner scourging his prisoners, and which had appeared in every edition including the First, now has a crack from side to side, as well as several chips missing from its frame.[25] The elaborately cut titlepages, likewise dating from 1563, are also chipped and scarred. This is not an especially distinguished edition; the additions by Holmes are the only interesting features. The composition and typesetting, and the clarity of the type, are merely efficient and never rise above average.

The Eighth Edition appeared in 1641 and was printed by Richard Hearn (or Hern or Heron). He had been an apprentice to Adam Islip, and on Islip's death in 1639, he inherited his presses and one hundred pounds. He had received the Freedom of the Stationers' Company on 6 February 1632.[26] This Edition is not a reprint of the Seventh although the pagination is almost identical. The contents are unchanged, but the Index now precedes Holmes' Continuation.[27] There is also one

25. See Ed. I, p. 1689, and Ed. VII, III, 880.

26. For further notes on Hearn see Henry R. Plomer, A Dictionary of the Booksellers and Printers who were at work... from 1641-1667 (London, 1907), p. 95.

27. This is true of the three copies that I have seen, but may not be true of the whole impression.

very important accretion, to which we shall shortly come.

The Eighth is in most respects, however, far superior to the Seventh. The 77 year-old titlepage woodcut has been replaced by a slightly modified copy; the nine-year-old titlepage to the Continuation, however, is the same, with only the date and the printer's name altered. A very large proportion of the woodcuts have been replaced with exact copies in thicker frames and are without exception more pleasing to the eye. The Black Letter type, if not outstanding, is clear and perhaps above average. Although this edition does not have the Royal dignity of the Sixth, it is a well-made book.

The Eighth, however, boasts Simeon Foxe's Memoir of his father, John Foxe. With a few documents reprinted from the First Edition, it is prefixed to Volume II, immediately following the titlepage and preceding page 1 of the text. It appears in both English and Latin. (A manuscript of the latter version, dating from 1611, is preserved in the British Museum.[28]) Mozley plausibly suggests that its position at the beginning of Volume II indicates that it was an afterthought on the part of the publishers.[29] The signature sequence of the titlepage, the Memoir, and the Text is most peculiar. The short-title page (or blank leaf) and the title-

28. BM. Lansdowne MS. 388.

29. Mozley, p. 1.

page are unsigned but we may safely call them Ai-ii. The Memoir is signed as follows: Aiii-viii, Bi-vi, Ai-iv, Bi-iv, *i-iv, **i-iv, ***i-iv. Page 1 of the text is signed Aiii and the gathering runs to Avi: Thereafter the sequence is normal. It will be noticed at once that a regular gathering (Ai-vi) would be achieved if the titlepages (Ai-ii) were adjacent to the text (Aiii-vi etc.); and this was probably the printer's original intention. Moreover, the first gathering of the Memoir does not seem to be honestly signed: Instead of Aiii-viii it should read Ai-vi, thus forming a normal gathering of six leaves, which predominates elsewhere in this edition. Finally, we have to recognise that the first gathering of the text begins at Aiii -- there must have been an Ai-ii, and the only possible leaves to fit this description are, of course, the short- and full titlepages.

It is possible to develop the hypothesis of late insertion further. The English Memoir covers only sigs. Aiii-viii and Bi-vi -- two gatherings of six leaves. The Latin Memoir begins on a separate gathering, Ai-iv. Perhaps the Stationers first decided on an English Memoir, which was rushed into the Edition, and then still later decided to add the Latin version also. I believe that this theory of late insertion would be conclusively proved, if the opportunity to dismantle a copy arose.

One further peculiarity of the Eighth Edition invites discussion. Some copies of Volume III consist of unused sheets from the Seventh Edition.[30] The text, the illustrations and the titlepage to the Continuation are in no way corrected. The main titlepage, however, is corrected. The Woodcut border is, of course, the same. But whereas the 1632 edition read "London, Printed by R. Yovng, Anno Domini, 1632", the unused sheets employed in the 1641 edition read "London, Printed by R. Yovng, Anno Domini, 1641", with a change only in the date, although Young actually had no connection with the 1641 edition. The relevant passage in the genuine Eighth Edition, printed by Hearn, reads "Printed at London for the Company of Stationers. 1641", and, as we saw, was surrounded by a new woodcut.

The proportion of copies in which this peculiarity occurs is probably small and, moreover, the practice of using up old sheets from earlier editions was not uncommon in publishing at that time. It merely remains an interesting bibliographic detail.

The Ninth and last "ancient" Edition of the Book of Martyrs appeared 43 years later, in 1684. Our knowledge of the circumstances of its printing is limited, but the political and religious atmosphere was as propitious as that

30. I believe this phenomenon occurs only in Volume III, I

surrounding any other edition.[31] The years following the Restoration had seen continued attempts to consolidate Protestantism in England and to ensure the country's resistance to Roman Catholicism. There was a fear of extremes and a desire to achieve the traditional middle path of Anglicanism. Foxe's book was taken from the hands of the Protestants and once more adopted by the moderate element in the Church, and, together with Jewel and Hooker, once more reprinted.

The Ninth is physically the largest Edition, and it seems that all copies of this issue were printed on Large-Paper Folio. Among the changes in the format was the novel introduction of Roman type throughout, Black Letter being used only for special effect. The Prefatory matter is identical to that of the Eighth Edition, although an engraved portrait of Foxe now faces the titlepage; the titlepage itself has been simplified, and the wood-block border discarded; the English and Latin Memoirs of Foxe, hitherto in Volume II, are now placed between the dedicatory poems and the chronology in Volume I. The text, including the 1583 closing address, Bulkeley's 1610 additions, and Holmes'

have neither seen nor heard of any "false" copies of Volumes I or II of the Eighth Edition.

31. There is extant a broadside dating from 1683, Proposals for printing the Book of Martyrs (STC.F2044), which may shed some light on the making of the Ninth Edition. The only copy of which I know is in the Guildhall, London, and I have not yet had the opportunity to see this.

1632 Continuation and Index, is identical to that of the preceding editions.

In the Ninth Edition all the old woodcuts have been replaced by copper engravings, some of which are closely copied from the old illustrations. The picture of Bonner, for example, is still there, although the costumes of the spectators have been "modernised", the genuinely Elizabethan dress being replaced (or covered?) with flowing robes.[32] There are fewer illustrations than there were in the previous editions.

The Edition is of no great bibliographic interest. It must have been a large impression for this is the edition most often found in churches today, and copies can be easily obtained.

The lack of information about the Stationers' Company and the Ninth Edition is disappointing. This must have been by far the most expensive edition, if only on account of the new illustrations. The historical circumstances were certainly ideal for a reprint but it would be interesting to know whether one individual or a group of individuals, actually pressed for a new edition, and whether the Stationers at once agreed or resisted. It is ironic that we know least about the latest of the nine "ancient" editions.

32. Ed. IX, III, 740.

Within a few years of the publication of the Ninth Edition the whole complexion of the Church of England was to change. The image of the persecuting church faded and a new doctrine of benevolence took its place. The Catholic Church was still, to English congregations, the stronghold of Anti-Christ, to be abhorred as the devil. But for the first time in the Church's history, toleration and compromise became a reality. This trend, however, hardly accounts for the fact that no further complete editions of the Book of Martyrs were ever to appear.

Publishing was undergoing no less momentous a change than was the Church. The Copyright Act of April 1710 removed much of the power of the Stationers' Company.[33] Although no bookseller could afford to produce a complete edition, the Book of Martyrs became common property. To satisfy and stimulate the popularity of the book, numerous abridgements at once appeared. There was, however, no Tenth complete Edition.

In its career since 1550, the work had become an inseparable part of Protestant England. A relation can always be shown between the religious milieu and the appearance of a new edition: The Second Edition appeared at the time of the Queen's excommunication, and of the meeting of the Convo-

33. 8 Anne cap. 19.

cation of Canterbury. The Sixth Edition was brought out when the anti-Catholic fever was at a new pitch following the Gunpowder plot. The Seventh was produced as propaganda for the Puritan party during its strife with the high-church Royalists. The Book of Martyrs was an indispensable instrument in England's religious controversy, development and growth. When, at around 1700, Protestantism seemed to have won its victory, the Book of Martyrs lived on in compressions and extracts which were frequently published. Its survival was henceforth to be largely independent of the Church.

Between 1550 and 1700, Foxe's work had grown into the history of the country, and it had grown up with the Protestant cause. It had served that cause in an important office, and after 1700 it remained as a symbol and record of early Protestantism. The role of the book after 1700 constitutes a separate and different story. It was no longer part of the religious struggles, but a record of them. At first it had been a part of the faith itself, and its story in this period is not only intrinsically fascinating, but it explains the extraordinary fame it enjoyed for the ensuing two hundred years.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Texture, Method, and Style of the Book of Martyrs.

The first part of Foxe's Book of Martyrs differs from the close in texture, method, and style, and all the parts vary according to the sources of the material. Foxe had access to material through diverse channels. Whereas he could question an inn-keeper about the events of 1555, he had to rely on the 600-year-old writing of a pious monk to discover the events of the year 500. Where the inn-keeper's tale would reflect local colour and opinion, the monk's account might be impersonal and factual. The Book of Martyrs must, therefore, be examined in chronologically-determined divisions. Although I am presuming here to create divisions, it is not my purpose to indicate what may, however, be our final conclusion -- that the book is not an homogenous and organic whole.

The first arbitrary division consists of Books I, II, and III, which cover material from the death of Christ to the invasion of William the Conqueror. These books form a unit for several reasons. Composed in 1563-70, after the First Edition, they were written in English, not as was the bulk of the work, in Latin, which was afterwards translated.

They are, therefore, samples of Foxe's own English style. They stand as a unit also because they present a continuous historical narrative, unbroken by the serious controversy in which Foxe was an active participant. Salient features of texture, method, and style emerging in this unit will be developed in the subsequent divisions.

The second division (Books IV-IX) constitutes the bulk of the work, and in this section Foxe often enters the fray himself. Some of the material in this, Books V and VI especially, was based on the 1554 Commentarii and is thus the earliest part of the history. Books IV, VII, VIII and IX were composed in Latin between 1555 and 1559; they appeared in the 1559 Basil Edition, and show the results of different methods of compilation. Since more documents and more personal opinions than in the first division are included, the texture varies too, and new aspects of the style become apparent.

The third division covers Books X-XII, the Marian period. This was sketched for the 1559 edition, but was translated and greatly expanded by Foxe and his assistants between his arrival in London in 1559, and 1563, when it appeared in the First Edition. Texture, method, and style vary considerably, and they can be treated conclusively.

Foxe's appendices, added between 1563 and 1583

and never integrated with the main text, comprise a fourth and brief division. They are often exceptionally interesting, as well as informative with respect to the printing of the work.

These are the divisions and the justifications for making them. We cannot expect to find very sharp contrasts between, say, the style of one and the style of another; but such a breakdown will permit a cumulative and therefore comprehensive examination of the whole work. Since the texture of a book is largely dependent on the method of compilation, the terms texture, method and even style, overlap to a certain extent. This is another reason for examining the book in divisions, rather than considering each term independently, and applying it to the whole book as a unit.

Books I, II, and III are usually dismissed as being "of very mediocre value" and "in every way the least valuable part" of the Book of Martyrs.[1] Foxe is condemned because "he relies on the obvious authorities."[1] Indeed, the early Books have been completely overshadowed by the great Marian narratives, and of all the many compressions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there was not one which retained even extracts from these early books.

1. Clive S. Lewis, English Literature in the Sixteenth Century (Oxford, 1954), p.299.

However, it is wrong to believe that these books are without value. Foxe, of course, had to rely on such authorities as he could find; there was no alternative. The value of these books lies in his extensive collation and comparison of his sources. If his text is a motley patchwork of old authorities, his patience and thoroughness has assimilated them into an astonishingly complete and well-documented whole. He is not a great Church Historian because he does not offer much opinion or commentary -- he merely presents material without drawing conclusions.

When we turn to the text itself, Foxe's method is immediately apparent. The margins are lined with italicised references to "Galfridus Monomentensis", "Polychron. lib. 5 cap 10", "Fabyan part 5 cap.109.120", and so forth, not only giving a vivid impression of meticulous documentation, but also indicating the method of composition. Foxe's reliance on diverse sources is apparent within the text itself:

> So that, as Malmesburie witnesseth, Magis optarent honestum exitium, quam tam acerbum imperium, that is, They rather wished honestlie to die, than with such trouble and sorrow to reigne. And thus this king not long after deceassed when he had reigned (as Fabian saith) eight yeares, or as Malmeburie writeth, but fiue yeares. (127b)

This is an average example. Often the references are even more numerous:

> ...as they be described in the Latine histories of Roger Houedon, and Huntington: whome Fabian also seemeth in this part somewhat to follow. King Alfred therefore, the first of all the English kings, taking his crowne and vnction at Rome of pope Leo (as Malmesburie and Polychronicon doo record)... (127b)

At no time does Foxe forget to give credit where it is due even though it might turn a light tale into an unwieldy unit of scholarship. For instance, after an hilarious account of King Edgar's "incontinent and lasciuious lust", the paragraph drily ends: "Ex Matthaeo Paris. lib. de regib." (140b)

In sustained passages of historical narrative, the method cannot be considered other than sound. The information Foxe amasses is unified by a readable style, to which we shall shortly come. Quite often a document is reproduced in the original Latin, sometimes in full, sometimes abbreviated. Wherever Foxe abbreviates, he explains either that what he has reproduced he deems "at this present to our English eares sufficient" (106b) or else that he has had to conserve space. Such epistles and proclamations do not break up the steady march of the history since they are always strictly relevant to their context. It should also be noted that in many cases Foxe supplies the only extant copy of these writings, the original manuscripts having perished since his time.

The general rule he follows in arranging his material is by the reigns of the kings of England. The Third Book opens with an elaborate genealogical table of the Saxon Kings and every book closes with a list naming and dating the monarchs referred to in the preceding pages. The Archbishops of Canterbury, regularly mentioned in the text, are also listed at the end of each book, and, with the kings, form textual milestones, methodically holding the material to a chronological frame. The lists are sometimes entertaining. Those, for example, at the end of Book II are paralleled by caustic comments such as that beside the name of Archbishop Lambertus:

> In his time, K. Offa translated the metropolitan see from Canturburie to Lichfeeld by the grant of pope Adrian, being ouercome with apostolicall argument, as saith Flor. hist. that is, with monie. (121b)

The method of the first three books, each of which covered approximately 300 years, may be described as the assimilation of all available material, and the division of this material into the reigns of the English Monarchs. The first Book occupied itself with the Ten Persecutions of the Early Church, and with Book II the history settles into Britain and King Lucius. Here we are told of the arrival of Christianity and are presented with an interesting map (98) of Saxon England. From this point forth the method is

meticulously regular.

The texture is largely dependent on the method and is thus rather predictable. When Foxe relies on many sources, in the desire to obtain a comprehensive picture, the texture is frankly dense. He must discuss every point and his thoroughness slows the pace of the tale.

> Now as concerning those kings, which made themselues moonks (which in number be seuen or eight) although the example be rare and strange, and much commended of the chroniclers of that time: yet I cannot rashlie assent to their commendation, albeit the case thereof is no matter of our historie. First in altering their estate from kings to moonks, if they did it to find more ease, and lesse trouble therby: I see not how that excuse standeth with the office of a good man, to change his publike vocation for respect of priuat commoditie. (103b)

Although Foxe's style contributes to an unhurried effect, it is his method that has made the texture of the passage so thick and ponderous and gross. Since his method does not change in these early books, it is seldom that the texture lightens or that the pace increases; and his style, as we shall see, fails to make such solid material sparkle. However, when the texture and method of the compilation became more imaginative, the style also brightened. Foxe's method was to allow his narrative-thread to hand slack, and this lack of tension between parts results in the blurring of our view of the line on which they are hung. The foregoing example is excerpted from a forty-line digression in which

Foxe discusses a point of Saxon ethics, which digression, unfortunately inserted in an extremely exciting description of the martyrdom of King Edmund, is not only tedious in itself, but at a blow it destroys the vivid drama of the narrative. This patient method of leaving no stone unturned thickens the texture and delays the reader. This is probably why this section is generally considered the least important part of the Book of Martyrs.

The tendency to confuse style with method and the consequent thickness of texture is responsible for the low repute in which Foxe's style is commonly held. Foxe had a good English Prose Style, a style capable of an extensive range of expression and with an eloquent command of nuance.

The first and most general aspect of his style that we should consider is his normal narrative voice. Immensely articulate, he manages to record exact shades of meaning.

> For so much as God of his mercie and prouidence, who is onelie the maker of heires, thought it so good, after the wofull captiuitie of this English nation, to grant now some respit of deliuerance, in taking awaie the Danish kings without anie issue left behind them: who reigning heere in England, kept the English people in miserable subiection, about the space of eight and twentie yeares, and that from their first landing in the time of king Brightricus, wasting and vexing this land the terme of 255 yeares. Now their tyrannie heere comming to an end, the next election and right of the crowne fell (as apperteined) to Edward the yoonger

sonne of king Egelred and Emma, a meere Englishman: who had beene now long banished in Normandie, as is aboue declared; a man of gentle and soft spirit, more appliable to other mens counsels, than able to trust to his owne; of nature and condition so giuen from all war and bloudshed, that being in his banishment, he wished rather so to continue all his life long in that priuat estate, than by war or bloudshed to aspire to anie kingdome. This Edward after the death of Canutus the second, or Hardicanute, being sent for of the lords into Normandie to take possession of the realme, although he something mistrusted the vnconstant and fickle heads of Englishmen (yet hauing sufficient pledges laid for him in Normandie) came ouer, with a few Normans accompanied, and not long after was crowned at Winchester, in the year 1043, by Edsius then archbishop of Canturburie. (148a)

Some features of Foxe's narrative style are absent from this -- the address to the "gentle reader", for instance -- and often when dealing with facts he is brisker. However, this excerpt strikes a mean between brisk impersonality and, at the other pole, rich rhetoric, into both of which he occasionly steps. At once this is seen to be Tudor Prose, many traits of which were common to writers from Caxton to Painter and Pettie. Pleonasm is an obvious feature -- "wasting and vexing", "vnconstant and fickle" -- and elsewhere this habit is almost excessively exploited.[2] The other typically Tudor device is antithesis which at times appears in nearly every sentence. It is used mildly here, but is suggested in "more appliable to other mens counsels, than able to trust in his owne." The sentence between lines 11 and 14 contains a device often used. After naming Edward, Foxe inserts two phrases qualifying him, the longer and less significant first, and then

2. See quoted excerpt on pp 130-1.

the brief and pertinent statement about his nationality, which after all is the most important fact in Edward's history.[3] Logically the main idea in the sentence is Edward, and his main feature, his nationality, is suitably presented at the end of the sentence (just before the colon) where the heaviest weight falls. Although in terms of modern grammar the seven lines following the colon are part of the same sentence, they actually constitute a separate, almost parenthetical, second sentence, which is logically dependent on the first sentence before the colon. Foxe is consistent in this practice and it reads well. After the heavy stress on "Edward...a meere Englishman", the "who" prepares us for a continuation of the stressed idea before the colon, Edward. Thus, in the course of the narrative (lines 1-11 and 22-30) we are given a brief, digressive but remarkably comprehensive sketch of Edward's parentage, life and character (lines 11-22). In a history where so many figures had to be identified, Foxe achieved considerably facility in this style of writing.

At other times, when greatly moved, he breaks into fervid and pious eulogy. His sentiments on the burning of St. Laurence evoked an extraordinarily florid outburst:

> ...that most constant and couragious martyr of Christ S. Laurence, whose words and works deserue

3. "meere", of course, here means pure; it is not humorously used in the sense of "no more than", although this too would have been characteristic of Foxe.

> to be as fresh and greene in christian hearts, as is the florishing laurell tree. This thirstie hart longing after the water of life, desirous to passe vnto it through the streict doore of bitter death... (64b)

In passages like this, though somewhat rare, we should notice how Foxe raises his voice in song without quickening the pace. Its piety and unusualness save it from charges of insipidity or tawdry imitation. Such a flash of colour is just sufficient to sweeten without cloying. Patriotism is similarly marked by a quiet fervour that removes it far from chauvinism. The dry brevity of the following achieves a devastating effect with minimal means:

> England, hath bene hitherto by fiue sundrie outward nations plagued. First, by the Romans, then by the Scots and Picts; thirdlie, by the Saxons; fourthlie, by the Danes;...fiftlie by the Normans, which I praie God be the last. (122b)

Humour and scorn appear less vividly in this division than in the later books of the History. The first three books have a steady purpose which makes them rather more serious and conventional than are the later parts. The style for the most part is sober and unmoved and only occasionly lit by a flash of exceptional vigour. Soon we shall come to periods about which Foxe has very strong feelings and about which he will write with powerful humour and scorn. In this section however, his scorn is aroused by the implicit belief of the age in ridiculous legends. He made mock, for

instance, of a story about Ethalstan who, as a symbol of his power over Scotland, smote a great hard stone,

> ...that with the stroke thereof the stone was cut a large elne deepe (with a lie no lesse deepe also than was the stroke in the stone.) But of this poeticall or fabulous storie, albeit Polychronicon, Fabian, Iornalensis, and others more constantly accord in the same, yet in Guliel. and Henricus no mention is made at all. But peraduenture he that was the inuentor first of this tale of the stone, was disposed to lie for the whetstone: wherfore in my mind he is woorthie to haue it.[4] (133b)

In such a passage we get an inkling of the incisive and bitingly ironic Foxian style which is to be more frequently employed later. Such taut muscular sarcasm is one of those devices which every now and then illuminate the steady prose.

As Humour is also at a premium in these books, a discussion of this aspect of Foxe's style will be deferred until the examination of the later books.

These first few books have revealed several basic qualities of the Book of Martyrs. Although in the books following Book III the method and texture vary to a greater or lesser degree from this narrative norm, it is the material only that dictates changes in a method, which may be termed, fundamentally, historical narrative. The same is true of style. The stories that Foxe himself found more interesting seemed to challenge his stylistic powers, and produce new

4. "To lie for the Whetstone" was a Mediaeval expression meaning to be a great liar. Whetstones were hung around the necks of such liars.

and different effects. Basically he adheres to a narrative pattern although henceforth it is more copiously infused with zest and vigour of one sort or another. Stylistically, these books represent a comparatively unexciting standard, in comparison with which later variations can be appreciated. These books, generally unspectacular in manner and material, fail to achieve the dynamic fame of the rest of the work, especially that concerning the Marian persecution.

The second division (Books IV-IX) dates from the arrival of William of Normandy to the death of Edward VI. The early pages of this division are strikingly similar in manner to the three early books; and the pages concerned with the early sixteenth century often have the quality of the great and final narratives of the reign of Mary Tudor. These six books were not written in chronological sequence. The tales of Wycliffe and the Lollards of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, sketched out between 1550 and 1554, and first published in the Commentarii, were amplified between that time and 1570, and occasionaly even later. Book IV, covering the period 1066-1360, was written almost entirely between 1559 and 1563. The early Tudor period was begun in 1550, continued after 1554, partly published in 1559, expanded by 1563, and revised by 1570. Unravelling the order in which these parts were put together is a com-

plex task. Material was inserted into its chronological position as it came to hand. If new material affected the veracity of a narrative, it was usually placed at the end of that narrative with explanations for contradictions. To explain and illustrate this method of compilation, let us take a part of a single book and examine its progress and growth between 1550 and 1570. After this we shall turn to Foxe's methods of presenting material.

The Fifth Book, covering the period 1360-1422, from the last years of Edward III to the death of Henry V, seems suitable as an example. Although Foxe breaks his text only at the end of each book, it is possible to reduce it into units according to the date of composition. Having done this we shall briefly examine each unit in turn and take note of its development. These are the artificial units:

1	The Introduction to Book V.	p.365
2	The Ploughman's Complaint.	p.366
3	The story of Armanachus; narratives of Parliament and the Papacy.	p.375
4	John Wycliffe.	p.390
5	The Story of William Swinderby.	p.428-38

The relevant passage in the First Edition consists of pages 85-143.[5] In the present instance, the text of 1563 is a

close translation of that of 1559. Thus the five units will not really show any development between these two dates.

The Introduction to Book V was written after 1563, when Foxe decided to extend the Book of Martyrs backwards to Apostolic times. He uses the Introduction to reaffirm and discuss the historical framework of the story. He looks back to the Bible and sees, in the growth of Protestantism, a fulfilment of the prophecies of Revelation Chapter XX, where the binding of Satan for 1000 years is predicted. He discovers that this period expired in 1324, observing that since then the Satanic Roman Church has maintained its persecuting doctrines. Protestantism is shown to be the true exegesis of the divine ordinances contained in the Bible.

Having thus established historical continuity, Foxe enters into his narrative. It might be explained here that his attitude to this Apocalyptic scheme of devilry was one of pious respect rather than of devout belief. He was very ready to recognise logical flaws in such an argument.

The second unit consists of an "olde auncient writing" (366) that had been rescued from oblivion by

5. References to the text of the First Edition will also be made parenthetically, immediately following the relevant quotation. They will be preceded by the letter "A": Thus (A85-A143).

William Tyndale.[6] The Ploughman's Complaint is a Lollard tract, one of the many writings of the late fourteenth century that deplores the times. Tyndale had modernized the spelling but preserved the archaic language, and the result is a piece with real literary merit and interest. Foxe may have come across it when he was editing the works of Frith, Barnes and Tyndale in 1571.[7] Incorporated for the first time in the Edition of 1570, the tract forms an excellent preface to the numerous Lollard narratives in Book V.

The story of Richard Armanachus, the Primate of Ireland, and the chronicle of events of circa 1360, also first appeared after 1563. Foxe may have wished to insert this unit into the 1563 Edition but perhaps lacked the time in which to prepare it. The story of Armanachus is comprehensive and may have been sent to him by an interested reader of the First Edition. Its comprehensiveness suggests the work of a researcher more careful than Foxe himself. The chronicle consists largely of a general tidying up of detail before launching into the topic of Wycliffe. Thus we have "Notes of the 50. yeare of king Edward the third" (389a) and similarly for other years. This unit was merely the mechani-

6. Foxe is the only authority for the information that this tract was revised by Tyndale.

7. see above p.57.

cal completion of a piece of the entire history.

The fourth unit dealing with John Wycliffe, certainly the oldest section of the Book of Martyrs, is very complex. The Commentarii of 1554 covered the years from Wycliffe to 1517 and its contents were largely unchanged in the editions of 1559 and 1563: Foxe was preoccupied with other parts of the history and did not have time for revision, expansion, or modification of older sections until after the First Edition. The nature of the revision may be studied by collating the texts of the First and Second Editions.[8]

The original introduction to Wycliffe (A85-A89) was graceful and quite brief. By 1570 it has been totally revised and considerably expanded (390-397). Definitely an historical assessment, it elaborates on Wycliffe's relation to his age and to his antecedents. Several passages have been retained and often a phrase is reworked into the new text. This was the most extensive revision in this unit. In Edition I Wycliffe's articles, an important protestation of faith, were reproduced in full (A91-A95). In Edition II these articles have been abbreviated to definitions of a

8. Since the text of the Fifth Edition is, at this point, identical to that of the Second Edition, the page numbers will continue to refer to the later edition.

single sentence, each of which is followed by a brief explanation or exposition (398-399). Thus even the character of this part is altered. The change is really a reflection of the different audiences to whom the Commentarii and the Second Edition were devoted: The former was a Latin Ecclesiastical treatise and the latter, a popular English History. Without condemning this change, one may describe it as a vulgarisation. Shortly after this part Foxe makes a considerable expansion by inserting and commenting on a letter relevant to Wycliffe (401).

Between pages A98 and A107, and 407 and 412 there is total revision. The clearest manner in which this can be demonstrated is in a table. The following is a list of contents to the First Edition, with the relevant pages.

1	Two letters to Pope Urban and King Richard II, by Wycliffe.	A98-A101
2	The story of Robert Rigges and Nicholas Herford.	A101-A103
3	The Council of Constance and the Articles of Wycliffe.	A103-A104
4	The Council's decree against the exhumation of Wycliffe's bones.	A104-A106
5	The Oxford Testimony to Wycliffe and John Huss's praise of Wycliffe.	A106-A107

Each of these topics was in some way altered by 1570.

The first part became, for no apparent reason,

part two in the new version (410-412), thus following the story of Rigges and Herford. The two letters are preserved intact, but inserted between them is a very long commentary on Pope Urban VI and his relation to Wycliffe. This is quite new. Inserted after the second letter is some matter concerning Richard II and public feeling in England, which had no place in the earlier work.

The second part (407-410), enormously expanded, was placed, as we have noticed, before the preceding part. It is not strictly relevant to the story of Wycliffe, being concerned with events in which he had no actual part, although they took place in his lifetime. What Foxe had discovered in the intervening years (1563-1570), he added, and the two versions have but little in common.

The third part (413-414), being a document, is retained intact, but again its order is shuffled. In the Second Edition it appears, for no obvious reason, after part five and before the remainder of the narrative. The fourth part, a document also, is retained intact with some added comment. This, however, is transferred to the very end of the narrative of Wycliffe, fifteen pages from where it might have been expected to appear. The fifth part is largely documentary (412-413). There are some slight changes in the connecting text and, once more, the position of this fifth

part has been moved forward so that in 1570 it comes between sections one and four, that is, third in the rearranged list.

The remainder of the Wycliffe narrative (A107-A130 or 414-427), the fourth unit from this excerpt from Book V, is straightforward. There are no revisions and the original order is preserved.

The fifth unit, the story of William Swinderby, is an example of a change that was often effected. It deals with a Lollard, whose name the First Edition states was "Swinderbie a priest" (A143). There then follows a skeletal and conjectural account of his martyrdom.

> This lawe brought a certaine priest vnto punishement the same yeare, who was burned in Smithfield, in the presence of a great nomber, this we haue drawen out of a piece of an olde storie, and it is moste certayne that this man was burned for the affirmation of the true faith, so that it doth not appeare by the storie, what this priestes name was, notwithstanding by diuers coniectures it appeareth vnto me, that his name was Swinderbye, who as we haue before saide was forced to recant by the byshop of Lyncolne, but whether he retourned to his first song again, let other men iudge, I haue declared what I thinke therein. (A143b)

As the marginal note in the Second Edition, "Ex. Registro. Episcopi Herfordensis" (428), declares, at some time after 1563 either Foxe himself or a deputy visited Hereford. The result was a comprehensive history of William Swinderby, replete with the text of his examination, the citation of his supposed offences, the articles which were submitted to him, and many other

pertinent documents. Oddly enough, the only part of the history that remained obscure was the very end. Foxe never did obtain proof positive of Swinderby's death, so that the narrative closes with the section quoted above, taken directly from the First Edition. It is in no way revised although, by 1570, much of the paragraph was redundant. Such developments are characteristic of the Book of Martyrs -- redundancies abound in the latter part of the work.

This small section of a single book is only a tiny fragment of the whole work. But it has revealed the salient features of Foxe's method of gathering, arranging, and revising his material. In places it was careless, but such faults slide into insignificance when seen in the context of the entire work.

These Books also demonstrate the methods used by Foxe in ordering his material on the page. Documentary evidence was the determining factor in his arrangements. The further we read, the more documents there are, until in the Marian Books we have at one point seventy consecutive pages of letters. At other times the book seems a depository of ecclesiastical manuscripts. Although the documents slow down the reading, they are invariably relevant.

The documents, however, have several accidental effects on Foxe's method. The standard narrative or chronicle

is the method most obviously affected. Even in Book IV the prose is tending away from assimilated narrative and towards factual listing. The suspicion arises that Foxe is being overwhelmed by his material and that he is having understandable difficulty in condensing and reducing it into his history. The tendency to list is the unfortunate outcome. At its best this method involves short unconnected sentences conveying scattered scraps of English local history, such as famous buildings begun, new taxes exacted, civil unrest, exceptional weather conditions, and even coughing epidemics! At its worst it is a tabular presentation of facts. "A Table of the names...of...Martyrs" (809) occupies the greater part of Book VII. Here, the column is subdivided into three further columns in which the Persecutors, the Persecuted, and the reasons for Persecution are set down. Information about foreign martyrs is largely taken from Jean Crespin's martyrology[9] and from that of Henry Pantaleon.[10] Tabulating is a singularly unimaginative way of presenting material and one likely to tire the reader.

One redeeming feature of Foxe's method is his use of marginal comments. Not only is the margin employed for

9. Jean Crespin, Histoire des Martyres (1554). See Bibliography Part III.

10. Heinrich Pantaleon, Martyrum historia...pars secunda (1563). (Nominally, this was Part II of Foxe's edition of 1559.) See Bibliography Part I.

footnoting and subject guides, but it is also sprinkled with many caustic asides, some of which are refreshingly scurrilous. His transcript of the Mass (1270-8) is fully annotated, and at the words "Here let him smite once vpon his breast" (1273a), Foxe comments "Down great hart". Such notes are calculated to raise the ire and horror of any Roman Catholic.

In the method of these books there is a certain amount of editorial clumsiness. The grossness of the matter has not been refined as in many other Tudor Histories. Nevertheless, in spite of the ruggedness, a thorough record is offered, and the method, for all its angular immensity, is well suited to Foxe's purpose. Some obscurity in the narrative is the price to be paid for encyclopaedic fullness.

The texture of this division varies with the method of compilation. A documentary density preponderates, but with Henry VIII and the approach of the Marian tales the style becomes more fluid. When excited by near-contemporary events, Foxe is often moved to a racy clarity of narrative. This raciness appears with increasing frequency until the later Marian tales, when it permeates the whole text.[11]

Just as the greater part of the discussion of the second division has been devoted to Method, so in the third

11. For an example of this racy style see the quoted excerpt on page 119 .

division the discussion will concentrate on Style.

The style in this division ranges with the matter from pious and respectful eulogy to vituperation. Foxe's praise of the humanists Colet and Lily exemplifies the former style. As he becomes more lyrical, sentences grow longer (but remain crisp), and he adopts a singing tone that is marked especially by perfectly balanced antitheses. "The first moderator of this schoole was Guiel. Lilius, a man no les noteable for his learning, then was Colet for his foundation." (766b) Foxe exploits the opposite attitude in his treatment of St. Francis of Assisi. One would have thought that even the most hardened Protestant would have respected this saintly man. But Foxe's most vicious scorn is unleashed, and St. Francis is mercilessly flayed as an "Assisian asse, whom I suppose was some simple and rude idiot." After further abuse of "frantike Francis" and his "doltish religion", Foxe concludes that Friars "differ in many things, but accord in superstition and hypocrisie." (236b) However much this may jar our personal sentiments, the style is extraordinarily powerful. Such power becomes more common as the book proceeds.

Humour recurs more frequently in the later parts of the book. Besides incidental anecdotes, there is the long and humorous account of a supposed fire in an Oxford

Church: When someone outside the church, seeing a nearby chimney on fire, shouted "Fire, Fire!", the congregation within the church understood that the church was burning and panicked. The dust raised from the earthen floor at once completed the delusion, and, as Foxe delightedly records, many persons "felt" hot lead dripping from the roof onto their heads. Since the press of people rendered it impossible to swing the doors inwards to open them, they became blocked. One lad tried to escape through a window above the doors, but was foiled by the small size of the window. His solution is well worth reproducing:

> When hee had taried there a while, hee aduised himselfe what to doe: neither didde occasion want to serue his purpose. For by chance, amongst them that gat out ouer mens heads, he sawe a monke comming towardes him, which had a great wide Coule hanging at his backe. This the boy thought to bee a good occasion for him to escape by. When the monke came neere vnto him, the boy which was in the top of the doore, came downe, and pretilie conueyed himselfe into the Monkes coule, thinking (as it came to passe indeed) that if the Monke did escape, he should also get out with him. To bee briefe, at the last the Monke gat out ouer mens heades, with the boy in his Coule, and for a great while felt no waight or burthen.
>
> At the last, when hee was somewhat more come to himselfe, and did shake his shoulders, feeling his Coule heauier then it was accustomed to bee, and also hearing the voice of one speaking behinde his coule, he was more afraid then he was before, when he was in the throng, thinking in very deed, that the euil spirit which had set the church on fire, had flien into his Coule. By and by he began to play the exorcist: In the name of God (said he) and all saintes, I command thee to declare what thou art that art behind at my back. To whome the boy answered: I am Bertrames boy, said he (for that was his name.) But I saide the monke, adiure thee in the

> name of the vnseparable trinitie, that thou wicked spirite doe tell mee who thou art, from whence thou commest, and that thou get thee hence. I am Bertrames boy, saide he, good maister let me go: and with that his his Coule began with the waight to cracke vppon his shoulders. The monke when he perceiued the matter, tooke the boy out and discharged his coule. The boy tooke his legs and ran awaie as fast as he could. (1103)

The style is filled with life and realism and the tone of the dialogue is excellently caught. Here is the end of the story:

> The next daie, and also all the weeke following there was an incredible number of bils set vp vppon the church dores, to inquire for things that were lost, in such varietie and number, as Democritus might heere againe haue hadde iust cause to laugh. If any man haue found a paire of shooes yesterdaie in S. Marie church, or knoweth any man that hath found them, &c. Another bill was set vp for a gowne that was lost. Another intreateth to haue his cap restored. One lost his purse and girdle with certaine money: another his sword. One inquireth for a ring, & one for one thing, and another for another. To be short, there was fewe in this garboile, but that either through negligence lost, or through obliuion left something behind him.

Happily there will be much more of this sort of writing in the following and final division.

Books X, XI, and XII, comprising in length one third of the Book of Martyrs, cover in time merely the six years (1553-1558) of the reign of "Bloody" Mary. Their publication in 1563 caused a tremendous stir, and it is by these books that Foxe is best known. They have been reprinted countless times, and scores of engravings have been prepared to illustrate them. For three and a half centuries

they excited the imagination of innumerable Protestants and the anger of as many Roman Catholics.

This emotional appeal was not only due to the content, but was materially aided by Foxe's dramatic and literary abilities. He was as moved as anyone by the martyrdoms and his horrified chorus expressed the feelings of his readers. More than this, he saw these years as a single fateful drama which slowly unfolded, flourished, and then, at a swift and happy blow, decayed. He preserved throughout, however, a sense of History and as we move from scene to scene, we feel that each event was but one detail of an extended tragedy. Dates and, in the case of many narratives, the time of day assume great importance as each episode unfolds and moves the drama one small but fateful step nearer its conclusion. This dramatic presentation accounts in part for the fame of the work. This was why succeeding generations continued to turn to Foxe, to read with awe the terrible tragedy of Mary's reign. Foxe's pious comments and eulogies, his popular and solid style, and his biting scorn all contributed to the huge and lasting emotional appeal of these narratives. His style and method were exactly congruent with the mood of the stories themselves, for the martyrdoms are draped in a most fitting pall of monumental gloom. To read, or to hear read, a few pages from those vast folio volumes was a solemn and edify-

ing experience. And, as the nine "ancient" editions testify, this experience was demanded by many.

Foxe's method in these books involved a chronological arrangement of all available material. So strong is the dramatic unity, that one can divide the text into Acts: in Act I the wrangles over the monarchic succession on Edward's death establish the tragic situation; Act III is 4 February 1555, with the news of the first terrible burnings; in Act V the powers of goodness triumph and the villainess dies. By seeing it in this light one is able to realise the tight-knit and thorough unity of the books.

In presenting his material, Foxe usually gave either a very full and long account of a martyr, completely documented with letters and transcripts of examinations; or a medium length and undocumented narrative, but one in which he has nevertheless obtained a comprehensive report; or a short notice of martyrdom about which he has had difficulty in procuring much information. Most of the material can be conveniently divided into these three categories. On occasion, of course, both within and between these narratives, Foxe himself steps forward and addresses the reader, either to eulogize the preceding or succeeding incident or to fill in historical details.

The comparatively short notices are often based

on fragmentary rumours of persecutions and deaths that had taken place outside London. Although the central drama was in London, reports from the provinces support and solidify the atmosphere of imposition and repression, which was, after all, prevalent everywhere. Indeed, the very incompleteness of the provincial narratives adds a weight and depth which would be absent from the work if only a selected number of very full narratives had been included. This fullness makes the final effect persuasive. The notices follow a typical pattern:

> In the month of October following, was burned at the town of Northhampton, a Shomaker, a true witnesse and discipline of the Lord, who according to the grace of God giuen vnto him, cleauing fast to the sound doctrine and preaching of Gods word, renounced the vntrue and false coloured religion of the Romish sea, wherein many a good man hath been drowned.
>
> After whom, not long after in the same moneth of October, died also in the Castle of Chichester three godly Confessors, being there in bondes for the like cause of Christes gospel, who also should haue suffered the like martyrdome, had not their naturall death, or rather (as it is to be suspected) the cruell handling of the papistes made them away before, and afterward buried them in the field.
>
> I read moreouer that in this present yeare, to wit, An. 1556, was burnt one called Hooke a true witnesse of the Lords truth, at Chester. (1772b)

Such incomplete accounts of anonymous martyrs, ordinary men, make the story much more credible, and provide an excellent setting for the more spectacular tales. By the time Foxe had written the history of the ensuing twelve months, he had come to know a little more about the Northampton martyrdom,

and among other unrelated short notices, he refers to the Shoemaker treated some fifty pages earlier.

> In the story before, something was touched of a certain Shoomaker suffering at Northampton, being vnamed, whome because wee vnderstand by a letter sent from the saide parties, that he suffered in this yeare, 1557. and in the moneth of September, therefore wee thought there to place him. His name was Iohn Kurd a Shoomaker, late of the parish of Syrsam, in Northampton shire, who was imprisoned in Northampton Castle for denying the popish transubstantiation, for the which cause William Binsley Bachelor of lawe, and Chancellor vnto the bishop of Peterborough, and now Archdeacon of Northampton did pronounce sentence of death against the said Kurde, in the church of all Saintes in Northampton in Aug. an. 1557. And in September following, at the commandement of sir Thomas Tresham, sheriffe then of the Shire, he was led by his Officers without the Northgate of Northampton, and in the stonepits was burned. (1833b)

This practice of inserting a second notice is very common in the Marian tales. The vignettes are eminently readable and provide a welcome change from the long narratives.

At the opposite extreme, the martyrdoms of John Bradford, Laurence Saunders, and Bishops Hooper, Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer are treated at great length. Bradford's tale, for example, is told in minute detail. His public examinations are reproduced, as well as interrogations in prison, and private conversations; a thorough character-sketch is provided, and there is a detailed account of the martyrdom itself. In all, this occupies twenty pages (1456-1475). Appended to it are fifty-five letters printed in full, which swell the account to a total of fifty-seven

pages (1456-1512). The long narratives sometimes include fewer letters but, as in the case of Ridley, longer theological disputations. The first advantage gained by this mode of writing is in the characterization of the central figure. Because we see Bradford, for example, under varying circumstances, and personally through his letters, we come to know him intimately as a man. The letters reveal his selfless exhortations and his tremendous humanity. His examinations and disputations reveal his quickness in repartee; his brilliance often reduced the session to uproar and all this is strangely well caught in the language and dialogue. In the different facets exposed, Bradford appears as a strong and courageous man. A further advantage of this prolificacy of material is that the persecutors too assume real characters. Many of the London clergy become vital and alive; the dialogues no longer remain theological disputes, but become arguments between distinct and violently conflicting personalities. Bishop Edmund Bonner, in particular, becomes, as the villain of the piece, a very familiar figure. In the examinations of John Philpot especially, Bonner and his lieutenant, a Dr. Story, distinguish themselves as a pair of singularly ignorant bullies (1630-1672). The dialogue here is remarkably and consistently alive. Scorn, Humour, and even Ribaldry illuminate the text. Philpot vigorously mocks the Papist belief in the

Real Presence of Christ in the sacramental host by refusing to hear Mass because "My stomacke is too raw to digest such rawe meates of flesh, bloud and bone this morning." (1645a) Such instances of an individual's sense of humour render his personality and character memorable.

There can be little doubt that it was this immediacy or realism that appealed to the early readers. The result was not an evangelic and semi-miraculous legend. Foxe preserved rather the racy human drama of the times. For instance, at one point Philpot says to Dr. Morgan:

> Me thinke you are liker a scoffer in a plaie, then a reasonable doctor to instruct a man: you are bare arsed and dance naked in a nette, and yet you see not your owne nakednesse.
> Morgan What (I praie you) be not so quick with me. Let vs talke a little more coldlie togither. (1653a)

This is typical of the earthy scorn of these battles of wit. The audience could understand, believe, and appreciate this sort of dialogue. Such realism became and remained famous. It had the direct impact possessed by raw facts. A semi-fictional, or modified account would perhaps have emphasised more the workings of God in the deeds of these Martyrs; but the stark truth of Foxe's work would be gone. Its fame would have been considerably less.

At times the long narratives become tediously repetitious. Many of the letters understandably express

similar sentiments, and some of the examinations followed a rigidly formal and thus predictable pattern. In large part, however, this disadvantage was overcome by the means of what may be called the medium length narrative.

Of course, it would be wrong to suggest that Foxe decided for a conscious literary purpose to write a long or medium length narrative as he came to each martyr. Some tales emerged as lengthy accounts according to the material available, while others were brief. From our point of view, however, Foxe's most successful achievements were the comparatively undocumented narratives. In these we find few papers and fewer letters, but either a full prose narrative, or an account written by the martyr himself or perhaps a close friend. These tales can be read very easily and our attention is not divided, nor our minds irritated by prosaic and prolix documentation. One example of an account written by a subsequent martyr is that of Thomas Hawkes (1440-1447). Hawkes emerges as a gentleman and a wit who had the courage to back up his words and his brilliance with his life. His undocumented narrative breathes an air of reality throughout. The environment emerges naturally and in detail and the character of Bonner is a splendid foil for the keen-minded Hawkes. His wonderful impertinence in taunting one Miles Huggard (1445a) is perfectly drawn, as are his flippant re-

quests for alterations in the wording of his death-sentence (1445b). Space permits only one illustration, an excerpt that will exemplify not his scorn and wit, but the easy though serious charm of his style:

> The next day came thither an old Bishop, who had a pearle in his eye, and he brought with him to my Lord a dish of apples, and a bottle of wine. For he had lost his liuing, because he had a wife. Then the Bishop called me againe into the Orchyard, and sayd to the old Bishop: this young man hath a childe, and will not haue it christened.
>
> . . . . .
>
> After dinner I was called into the Hall againe, and the Bishop desired the old bishop to take me into his chamber, for I would be glad (said he) if ye could conuert him. So he tooke me into his chamber, and sate him downe in a chayre, and sayd to me: I would to God I could doe you some good. Ye are a young man, and I would not wish you to go too farre, but learne of youre elders to beare somewhat.
> Haukes: I will beare with nothing that is contrary to the word of God. And I looked that the old bishop should haue made me an aunswere, and he was fast asleepe. Then I departed out of the chamber alone and went to the Porters lodge againe, and there saw I the old bishop last: I suppose he is not yet awake. (1442-3)

Such gentle humour deserves fame. The affection in which the Book of Martyrs was so long held was largely owing to this natural and pleasant manner of writing.

Among Foxe's own narratives of this length there are many equally endearing and exciting. That of the martyrdom of saintly Robert Farrar (1403-14) is cloaked in mystery and darkness. His removal from London by night and his meeting with his wife and children in the half-light of

dawn as he leaves for Gloucester and his death, are tense and dramatic incidents in a remarkable story. The story of George Tankerfield is also one of Foxe's best narratives (1534-5). The tale is packed with local colour, factual detail, and charming anecdote. The arrest is a characteristic excerpt.

> On a certaine daie to take the aire abroade, hee rose vp and went and walked into the Temple fields to see the shooters. In the meane season came Beard home to his house, and inquired for him, pretending to his wife, that he came onlie for to haue him to come and dresse a banket at the lord Pagets: The wife because of his apparell (which was verie braue) tooke him to be some honest gentleman, and with all speede prepared her selfe to fetch her husband, hauing a good hope he shuld now earne some money: and least this gentleman shoulde not be noyed with tarying, she fet him a cushion to set him soft, and laide a faire napkin before him, and set bread thereon, and came to her husband: who when he heard it, said: a banket woman? Indeed it is such a banket as will not be verie pleasant to the flesh: but Gods will be done. And when he came home he saw who it was, and called him by his name, which when his wife perceiued, and wherefore he came, like a tall woman, woulde play Peters part, and in steed of a sword tooke a spitte, and had runne him thorough, had not the Constable which Beard had sent for by his man, come in withall, who rescued him: yet shee sent a brickbat after him and hitte him on the backe. (1534a)

The style is fluid and meticulous and Foxe's impersonality allows the reality of the scene to emerge in all its vividness. The walk out to see the archers, and the domestic preparations all contribute to this sense of reality. The phrase "she fet him a cushion to set him soft" perfectly

describes the wife's actions, motives and even feelings. Such style continues throughout the tale; and Tankerfield's martyrdom on the green at St. Alban's is no less clearly and immediately imaginable. The following brief extract is an example of Foxe's skill in retaining supervenient details of fact which raise the story from the level of a gloomy report to that of a splendidly colourful and tragic drama.

> Thither also was brought a loade of Broome fagot, with other fagots and talwood. Vnto which place resorted the people of the countrey in great number, and there taried his comming. Insomuch that thither came diuerse Fruiterers with horse loades of cherries, and sold them. (1525a)

One further and last example might be made of Foxe's immediacy. The following excerpt is concerned with the rumoured pregnancy of Queen Mary. Because of Foxe's manner, the mysterious and whispered discussions of this strange affair can still, 400 years later, set a reader wondering.

> There came to me whom I did both heare and see, one Isabel Malt, a woman dwelling in Aldersgate streete in Horne alley, not far from the house where this present booke was Printed, who before witnesse made this decleration vnto vs, that she being deliuered of a man childe vppon Whitsunday in the morning, which was the xi. day of Iune an. 1555. there came to her the lord North, and an other lorde to her vnknowne, dwelling then about olde Fishstreet, demanding of her if she would part with her child, and would sweare that she neuer knew nor had no such child. Which if she would, her son (they said) should be well prouided for, shee should take no care for it, with many faire offers if she would part with the child.
>
> After that came other women also, of whome one she saide should haue bin the Rocker, but she in no wise would let go her son, who at the writing hereof being

> aliue and called Timothe Malt, was of the age of xiij. yeares and vpward.
>
> Thus much (I say) I heard of the woman her selfe. What credit is to bee giuen to her relation, I deale not withall, but leaue it to the libertie of the Reader, to beleeue it they that list: to them that list not, I haue no further warrant to assure them. (1450b)

What reader can fail to feel himself drawn irresistibly into the gossip of Tudor London? The direct warmth and intimacy, the reference to locale, and the local incident and colour, must have added its own contribution to the successive fame of the book. Such writing is frequent in the last three books.

This examination of the twelve books has attempted to expose the characteristics of the work on which its fame has grown. It is easily apparent why the last books have claimed the lion's share of the fame; and it should also be apparent why the earlier books have not been read. It is not merely because they have been overshadowed by the late books, but because fundamentally they lack that intangible and fascinating ingredient, realism. All other factors in the fame of the book are contributory; but the sense of Reality is the paramount factor.

It remains to add an appendix on the appendices. Appendices appeared from 1570 onwards; and the fact that the Book of Martyrs was as current and up-to-date as a newspaper

must have contributed considerably to its appeal. This is why Foxe's book was never superseded by any other martyrology but has always remained the definitive work on the subject. One American edition of 1857 concludes with a narrative dated 1853.[12] Martyrdom and persecution were still flourishing and to Foxe's record all good Protestants turned. Foxe's own appendices are particularly interesting. There are brief "notes" and additions including a valuable contemporary account of the Huguenot massacre of 1572. Also interesting are the aftermaths and consequences of the publication of the First Edition. The following is an example of an amusing repercussion.

> This said Drainer afterward, being chosen Iustice, to shew himselfe diligent in seeking the trouble of his neighbors, made in the Roode loft nine holes, that he might looke about the church in masse time...Whereby he purchased a name there, and is called to this day Iustice nine holes: who now (God be thanked) is Iohn out of office, and glad of his neighbors good will.
>
> It so fell out, that since this was published, the said Drayner came to the printers house, with other associat, demanding: Is Foxe here? To whome answere was giuen, that maister Foxe was not within. Is the Printer within (quoth Drainer?) It was answered, yea: Whereupon being required to come vp into his house, was asked what his will was. Mary, saith he, you haue printed me false in your booke. Why saith the printer, is not your name master Drainer, otherwise called Iustice nine holes? It is false saith hee: I made but fiue with a great Augure, and the Parson made the rest. It was answered: I haue not read that a Iustice shoulde make him a place in the Roode loft to see if people held vp their handes. Hee saide where as you alleadge,

12. John Foxe, The Book of Martyrs...with important additions by Charles A. Goodrich (Hartford, 1857).

> that I did it to see who adored the Sacrament, or who not, it is vntrue: for I set as little by it, as the best of you all. In deed saith the printer, so we vnderstand now, for you being at a supper in Cheapeside among certaine honest company, and there burdened with the matter, saide then, that you did it rather to looke vpon faire wenches, then otherwise. He being in a great rage, sware to the purpose, saying: Can a man speake nothing, but you must haue vnderstanding thereof?...And so he departed in a rage: and is since deceased, whose death and order thereof, I referre to the secret Iudge. (1913b)

Note especially the "Can a man speake nothing, but you must haue vnderstanding thereof!", indicative of the reputation Daye and Foxe had as anecdote hunters. Not only is this passage amusing in itself, but it recreates Daye, Foxe, and their printing house. This quality of writing deserves fame today; it certainly achieved fame for very many years.

CHAPTER SIX

The Integrity of Foxe and the Reliability of the Book of Martyrs.

Of obvious significance in assessing a work are its integrity and reliability. Controversy over the accuracy of the Book of Martyrs has long raged. As we have seen, the First Edition invoked a storm of obloquy from the Papist camp in which both Foxe and his book were furiously abused. In the preface to subsequent editions he calmly and rightly observed that "No English Papist almost in all the Realme thought himselfe a perfect Catholike vnlesse hee had cast out some word or other to giue that booke a blowe."[1] In varying degrees this has been true ever since.

Most assailants of Foxe's book have avoided specific and analytic criticism, having recourse rather to sarcastic and contemptuous generalities by which their literary abilities and their wits have been well excercised, but which have made little mark on Foxe's reputation.

Certain scholarly critics have attacked the work in a careful and serious manner, and they have met with signal success. For too long, however, there were no capable scholars to defend the book with comparable care. As a re-

1. From the Preface "To the Right Vertuous, most Excellent and Noble Princesse, Queene ELIZABETH."

sult, Foxe's reputation deteriorated throughout the nineteenth century. By 1900 and for the next forty years, the value of the Book of Martyrs seemed doubtful. Only with Mozley's study of 1940 was the reliability of the book convincingly demonstrated.

We have already seen the sixteenth-century feud over Foxe's honesty.[2] Although subsequent assaults lacked the topical or even personal interest of such writers as Parsons and Harpsfield, there was no dearth of critics to undertake such attacks. The seventeenth century, moreover, produced several eloquent defences of Foxe. William Prynne and the Puritans zealously and uncritically promoted the book, and Foxe himself was lauded by several writers, including Thomas Fuller.[3] In 1670, Anthony Wood praised Foxe as "a person of good natural endowments, a sagacious searcher into historical antiquity, incomparably charitable, of exemplary life and conversation."[4] Controversy over the book was still fierce at the beginning of the eighteenth century, though the endeavours of Wood, Fuller, and others had vindicated the integrity of Foxe himself. The worst offence

2. In Chapters Three and Four.

3. Fuller's comments on Foxe occur in The Church-History of Britain and in The History of the Worthies of England.

4. Athenae Oxonienses, 2 vols. (London, 1721), 230-33.

with which he is charged by this time is naivety. Since the time of Wood (c. 1690) his character has been respected even the most unsympathetic of his many critics.

Probably the last of the bitterly anti-Foxe writers, as distinguished from those who were bitterly anti-Book of Martyrs, was Jeremy Collier, the high-church nonjuror, who, in 1708, found Foxe failing

> in decency and temper...I mention this because a vein of Satire and coarse language runs through his Martyrology.[5]

> In short, Fox, by questioning...authentic proof, does but discover the strength of his wishes and the bias of his inclination. And though I have no design to charge this historian with insincerity, yet it is plain his prejudices and passions governed his pen in some cases.[6]

A more characteristic picture of Foxe comes from Martin Madan,[7] who describes him as

> a man of rare and excellent endowments, both natural and acquired...his integrity, learning and piety, equalled by few, by none exceeded; the credibility of his testimony can be called in question, only by those, whose interest or principles lead them to espouse and promote the cause of Popery.[8]

Foxe was vindicated but the reliability of his book was still unproved. This actually mattered little as long as

5. An Ecclesiastical History (London, 1852), V, 211.

6. Ibid, III, 325.

7. see Chapter One, footnote no. 9.

no scholarly condemnations of the work appeared. An example of the pallid and pseudo-scholarly critiques of the Book of Martyrs common in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is that of Sir James Mackintosh, the historian, who advised that

> The stories in Fox's "Martyrology" are not, indeed, to be indiscriminately believed. That honest but zealous and credulous writer would himself have rejected the commendation of impartiality...His account of the sufferings of his fellow-religionists under Mary was, perhaps, the most effectual of all dissuasives from reconciliation with Rome. He abhorred falsehood, but was often deceived.[9]

This gentle criticism did not call for any defence since its power to harm the book was negligible. The criticism of Samuel Maitland, however, was of a different order.

It was while Cattley and Townsend were preparing their edition of the Book of Martyrs, that Maitland, a serious student of the English Reformation, began his campaign to expose Foxe as a fraud.[10] Although he was inaccurate and mistaken in very many points, his attack had sufficient scholarship to succeed in its purpose. When Townsend reprinted his edition in 1843, he made an incompetent attempt to defend Foxe, but failed to remove the shadows cast by

8. Preface to Madan's edition of The Book of Martyrs (London,1761).

9. The History of England (London, 1830); 2nd. ed. 2 vols. (London, 1853), II, 217 and 220.

10. For a list of Maitland's anti-Foxe writings see Bibliography II.

Maitland, whose views were then widely accepted for over one hundred years. It was Mozley who, in 1940, methodically answered Maitland and restored the lustre of the Book of Martyrs.[11] Mozley's reasoned defence is now generally accepted, although both scholarly and popular works have appeared since in which Foxe is still portrayed as the author of semi-fabulous tales, which, with puritan zeal, he published as truth.[12] However, the view of Foxe as a sincere and moderate editor, who was occasionly mistaken, but who never deliberately lied, now predominates.

Integrity and scrupulous scholarship are one's first impressions of the Book of Martyrs. Foxe's patient, and at times pedantic, search for factual accuracy in the smallest detail, and his willingness to acknowledge ignorance at any point, cannot fail to enlist the sympathy and trust of an impartial reader. Putting aside, for the present time, the problem of attitude, interpretation, and opinion, it is almost certain that Foxe was invariably honest in compiling his book. Several factors and incidents support this hypothesis.

In the early parts of the Book, where he depends on many miscellaneous authorities, he took care to mention

11. For Mozley's refutation of Maitland see pp.1-8, 85, 153 etc.

12. Evelyn Waugh's Edmund Campion is a popular, modern history

his sources and to give variants wherever the sources conflicted. His practices and method seem to indicate an intense desire for truth; and the whole apparatus of his research is too complicated and complete to be false.

In 1566, Nicholas Harpsfield attacked Foxe for his account of Lord Cobham; and Foxe crisply answered in his Second Edition that he had followed his sources and that, furthermore, he was entitled to his own opinion in interpretative matters. Some of his statements in this controversy demonstrate his reaction to charges of dishonesty. He particularly wished to defend his "former edition of Acts and Monuments, so hastely rashed vp at that present, in such shortnesse of time" (645b), and he expands on this at length:

> I denie not but in that booke of Actes and Monuments containing such diuersitie of matter, some thing might ouerscape me: yet haue I bestowed my poore diligence. My intent was to profit all men, to hurt none. (534a)
>
> But here partlie I heare what you will saie: I should haue taken more leisure and done it better. I graunt and confesse my fault, such is my vice, I cannot sit all the daie (M. Cope) fining and minsing my letters, and ceming my head, & smoothing my selfe all the day at the glasse of Cicero. (534b)
>
> The first edition...was begun in the far partes of Germanie, where few friends, no conference, small information could be had: And the same edition afterward translated out of Latin into English by

in which, with glib and characteristic contempt, the Book of Martyrs is dismissed as "Foxe's highly inaccurate chronicle."

> others, whiles I in the meanetime was occupied about other registers. And nowe the saide Cope hearing moreouer and knowing that I was about a newe edition...for the amending of diuers thinges therein to be reformed: if he had known anie fault needfull to be corrected, he might gentlie by letters admonished me thereof. Gentlenesse so woulde haue required it. Time would well haue suffered it. (534b)

With great reason he justifies the publication of the Second Edition, for "if I had thought no imperfections to haue passed in my former edition before, I would neuer haue taken in hand the recognition therof now the second time, whereby to spunge away such motes." (646b) He answers Harpsfield in every point, and successfully defends the facts of his narrative.

Harpsfield also assailed the tale of the three Windsor martyrs. Foxe had heard that four men were burnt, not being told that one had received an eleventh hour reprieve. This story went into the 1559 Basil edition and was carried unchanged into the 1563 edition. However, when this latter edition was in the press, Foxe heard of the reprieve and noted it in the table of <u>errata</u> at the end of that volume. Harpsfield did not see the correction, so made mock of the story, jeering at Foxe for including "living martyrs" in his book. Foxe, of course, was innocent of these charges, and answered Harpsfield with considerable asperity:

> Wherefore against these crooked cauillers, which make so much ado against my former booke, because in a certain place I chanced to saie that Bennet

> and Filmer had their pardon (when indeede it was Bennet and Marbecke) bee it therefore known, protested, denounced, and notified, to all and singuler such carpers, wranglers, exclamers, deprauers, with the whole brood of all such whisperers, railers, quarrelpickers, corner creepers, faultfinders and spidercatchers, or by what name else so euer they are to be titled, that here I openlie saie, affirm, professe, hold, maintain and write the same as I said & wrote before...that Iohn Marbecke, was with the other condemned, but not burned, cast by the law, but by pardon saued...and yet to this present daie singeth merrilie, and plaieth on the Organes, not as a dead man, amongst Foxes martyrs ...but as one witnessed and testified truelie in the booke of Foxes Martyrs to be aliue. (1114a)

He continues in this angry, ironic tone for several paragraphs.

Foxe's honesty in his account of the infamous Guernsey martyrdoms has been fully attested elsewhere.[13] The narrative has been attacked often but no one has yet disproved it. In fact, none of Foxe's narratives have been successfully disproved, and this is the most convincing argument for his integrity. Despite the unceasing attacks to which he has been subject, he has defied the ability of all to prove him guilty of distortion, falsification, or dishonesty. This failure to convict him of any one of the multitude of crimes with which he has been charged must lead us to conclude that he is innocent and his integrity immaculate.

The Reliability of the book is a subject on which

13. Mozley pp. 223-235. I have briefly summarised the narrative in a footnote on p.46.

no such straightforward stand may be taken. It is a problem which has always troubled historians, and which troubled Foxe himself. The demonstrable integrity of the author ensures that, with regard to matters of fact, the book is as reliable as any work of comparable size and date. There are minor errors throughout the work; years are confused, names are misquoted, places are mistaken, and stories are occasionly incomplete. But apart from these inevitable flaws, for which Foxe himself asked indulgence,[14] the Book of Martyrs may be accepted as a record historically sound.

The charge that the Book of Martyrs is unreliable stems from Foxe's interpretative attitudes, rather than from his channels of information, for his personal reactions often colour an event or personality. We have already seen his short-sighted opinion of St. Francis of Assisi,[15] and his opinion of Thomas More is similarly biased. It is customary now to exalt More as the perfect example of practical Christianity, and this trend removes us still further from the spirit of Foxe. His contempt of More is astonishing.

> M. More...a man so blinded in the zeale of poperie, so deadlie set against the one side, and so part-

14. "As thou seest the worke to be great, so consider agayne how hard it is for no faultes to escape." First Edition, p. 1742.

15. See Chapter Five, p. 108.

> iallie affectionate vnto the other, that in them whom he fauoureth, he can see nothing but all faire roses and sweet vertue: in the other which he hateth, there is neuer a thing can please his phantasie, but all as blacke as pitch, vice, abhomination, heresie and follie, what soeuer they doe, or entend to doe. (934b)

Some might caustically suggest that this describes Foxe better than More. Foxe admits elsewhere, however, that More was a man "in degree worshipfull, in place superiour, in wit and learning singular." (743a) Because Foxe's opinions are frequently peculiar and violently partisan, they naturally affect the value of the book. Therefore, the account of Stephen Gardiner, a brilliant and learned churchman, is, like that of St. Francis and More, of uncertain value.

These are the grounds on which the Reliability of the Book of Martyrs is attacked. It is Foxe's Protestant attitudes, interpretations, and opinions that anger critics, who have nevertheless been unable to contradict his facts. But to attack Foxe for these reasons is to mistake the purpose of the book. It was never intended to be a detached and objective Ecclesiastical History. It was expressly written as a history and defence of the Protestant cause, with the events of history being expounded in the light of the growth of Protestantism. Foxe, with a pious belief in what he was doing, emphasised those aspects of history, which seemed to him to have the most relevance to his theories. Selection is

the prerogative of any historian, and Foxe does not ignore the comprehensive duty of the historian in reporting facts. The facts, however, are so arranged as to contribute to a portrait of the Protestant movement. The book was not written by a professionally impersonal historian, but by a fervid and patriotic churchman. It is a record of history as Foxe saw it, and therefore inevitably a biased record. If, in order to be adjudged reliable, the Book of Martyrs has to conform to the criteria of modern historians, then we shall have to recognize it as unreliable.

This seems a narrow view. Foxe must not be judged by a false and impossible standard. If the question "Is the Book of Martyrs reliable?" is modified to "Is the Book of Martyrs a reliable record of Protestant thought and feeling in England during the reign of Elizabeth?" the conclusions will be more constructive. Today, "reliable" histories abound. We do not need to demand that Foxe should be reliable according to the standards of these works. His book is far more valuable to us as a Tudor History in which Tudor beliefs and Tudor feelings are reliably recorded. This was what Foxe set out to do. Since he has succeeded, by his own criteria the Book is reliable. The modern reader will only find this to be true when he considers the book according to these standards, and not according to those of a modern

historian. If one fails to recognize the tenets and terms of Foxe (or of any comparable historian) unreliability will be the inevitable conclusion.

The Book of Martyrs affords a priceless insight into the period during which it was written. Since Foxe himself was intimately connected with the excitements of his time, the book is less a prescription to Englishmen, and more an articulation of their emotions and memories.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusions and Evaluations.

The popularity of the Book of Martyrs has rested on religious fervour and partisanship, and the changing values of the last seventy years have meant that but few readers now respond emotionally to these issues. To the book's ultimate disadvantage it has been acclaimed hitherto only by religious partisans, whose numbers and zeal have considerably dwindled. Either the book's fame must be re-established on a different basis, or it must die. It has now to be evaluated by disinterested readers, to whom its own merits are the only criteria of judgement. Criticism, however, has not yet decided what, if any, these merits are.

The value of the Book of Martyrs as an Ecclesiastical History is slight, and the new basis for its fame will not be found here. Contemporary interest in antiquarian Church histories is not great, and only the specialist will turn to Foxe as a historian. We have seen in the previous chapter what the student of history will find of value in Foxe's martyrology. He will discover a remarkable record of the attitudes current in the development of Protestantism in the years 1550 to 1600. This importance, how-

ever, is too esoteric to sustain the fame of the Book. In the field of Church history, the work is valuable as a source of documents otherwise lost and of biographical facts about certain eminent churchmen. It joins Fabian, Hall, and Polydore Vergil as a storehouse of Tudor information, of which some parts are important, but which, on the whole, lacks novelty and originality. As an Ecclesiastical History it is given, instead of fame, a secure place in semi-obscurity.

As a Social Record perhaps, rather than as a Church History, the book will be of greater interest to a modern reader. When discussing the initial impact of the work on the public we saw that its pervasive realism contributed largely to its popularity. It permitted its readers to recognize and re-live the events about which they read. For us, removed by many years from these events, the realism performs a slightly different function. We cannot achieve the acutely subjective experience of the early readers, but we gain an insight into the environment and the social atmosphere, manners, and tastes of the period Foxe describes. An understanding of the society enables us to appreciate more fully the tangible legacy -- literature, music, architecture, and so forth -- which that society has left to us. Such an understanding, usually termed "background knowledge", is of obvious use in a study of a society as productive and cli-

mactic as the Tudors. With the possible exception of the later tract and pamphlet writers such as Robert Greene, Thomas Dekker, and Thomas Nashe, Foxe in his martyrology provides the best means of appreciating the sixteenth-century social background. He performs for that century the service that The Paston Letters offers for the previous. Apart from any literary values which these works may or may not have, they both offer a revealing introduction to the ways and customs of men and women in the periods with which they deal. Foxe, even more than Stow or Holinshead, imparts a realistic view of Tudor life.

A principle feature of Foxe's social observation and recording is the language of Tudor England. Very little of the work is written in a conscious literary style. Foxe and his various contributors recount their tales in a spoken, not written, language, employing either dialogue, or conversationally reported speech. Whatever voice addresses us from the page, it is invariably colloquial and informal. Thus, by turns, the language is calm or passionate, gracious or bawdy, but always the language of men. Most of the excerpts in Chapter V give us a clearer impression of the spirit of the sixteenth century than do the more stilted and formal literary compositions of that time. As a recorder of language, Foxe is more deserving of fame than he is as a

Church historian.[1]

Foxe's casual references to the environment in which his tales take place brightly colour our understanding and enjoyment of the Tudors' social life. Many provincial towns such as Gloucester and St. Albans are vividly portrayed. We are told of the inns, the market-places, the prisons, and the churches, and can imagine without difficulty the physical appearance of such places. It is in his portrayal of London, however, that Foxe excels. There are the different activities of various streets, and the festivities and informal incidents occurring on special occasions are faithfully recorded. The arrival at London in 1554 of Philip and Mary was marked by great celebration, and as well as the formal entertainments, there was also "the sight at Paules church side of him that came downe vppon a rope tyed to the battlements with his head before, neither staying himselfe with hand or foote: which shortly after cost him his life." (1338b) Foxe's inclusion of such superfluous incidents has meant that his book is now possibly more valuable for the circumstantial and secondary information than for the central historical facts. The Book of Martyrs contains

1. Professor James Sutherland includes the extract from Foxe in The Oxford Book of English Talk (Oxford, 1953) in which an Elizabeth Driver insolently answers her persecutors. The passage may be found in this work on p.43 and in the First Edition of the Book of Martyrs on p. 1670. See also Ibid. pp. 46-48.

countless fascinating details of town and country, of courtly and of simple life, which impart a vital sense of the era. The Book is, in short, a comprehensive record of the achievements of the Tudors. Foxe is able to tell us much of the public that, for instance, enthusiastically supported the beginnings of modern English Drama.

Even if we regard the Book of Martyrs solely as a source for English Social History, it is still unlikely that it will be assured of fame. Certainly it will be better known as a Social than as an Ecclesiastical History, but nevertheless its importance will not be great. Only if the book has intrinsic literary merits and is studied for its own sake can we expect its remarkable reputation to be maintained. We have to discover what its merits are.

It is evident from Chapter III that the literary merits of Books I-IX are doubtful, and it is improbable that any informed person would recommend this drab and often monotonous part as a representative example of Tudor Prose. The bright passages are few and very far between. To stake the literary reputation of the work on Books X-XII, the Marian narratives, is a more feasible proposition. We have already seen that Foxe's style is in general competent, and characteristically Tudor. Beyond this, he has an impressive range of narrative skills. By adhering to his patient and thorough

chronicle method of narrating, he can take an ordinary and unspectacular tale, spin it out to an almost pedantic length, yet still maintain the reader's interest by suffusing the tale with the atmosphere of the occasion. Some martyrdoms are marked by an air of brooding suspense, others by an air of violence, and still others by a mood of almost festal gaiety. He achieves this by two means. The first is his intuitive grasp of dramatic pace. A slowing down seldom causes disinterest in the reader; usually the change comes either as a welcome relief or as a stimulant to the tension of the story. A similar dramatic purpose is served by the quickening of the pace. We are taken to a climax and there left, our attention not dulled by overstatement or unnecessary detail. His narrative skills in total create excitement, an asset sometimes overlooked. Several of the individual tales have been, and will continue to be, included in anthologies. These few tales are assured of future fame, but it is unfortunate that the context from which they are taken is ignored, for the tales are immeasurably improved when read in their proper place in the sequence of narratives. Stirring as the episodes are, they need to be appreciated in their historical and dramatic contexts. Foxe's huge collection of tales has, besides individual points of interest, a cumulative excitement which, of course, can be enjoyed only when it is read through from beginning to end. The tendency

to introduce Foxe to new readers by means of an anthology does considerably less than justice to both the Book of Martyrs and its author.

The documents by which the Book of Martyrs is liberally supported constitute another literary asset. It is the personal letters in particular that are of interest to modern readers. Most of them are carefully written, and each author has his own distinctive style. The letters of John Philpot (1662-72), for instance, are marked by an exalted joyfulness not unlike that found in the writings of Tyndale. The letters and other documents of the Book of Martyrs are now never reprinted and consequently little read. Unless a reader of Foxe breaks away from the anthologies and turns to the Marian books themselves, he can never realize the richness of this personal literature, or the diverse scope of Foxe's great work.

The Book of Martyrs in general, and the Marian narratives in particular, demonstrate many interesting critical attitudes to various English writers. As a literary History therefore, the book is of considerable value. Accustomed as we are to modern and supposedly impersonal biography, it is refreshing and instructive to read near-contemporary critiques of distinguished writers and humanists. Foxe shows considerable literary judgement in the respect he pays and

the importance he attaches to such men as John Colet and William Grocyn. He regards Chaucer as "a right Wickleuian" and admires his skill in covertly inserting Protestant doctrines in his works. He recommends to the Protestant student of Chaucer, of all works,

> the Testament of loue for there purely he toucheth the highest matter, that is the communion: Wherin except a man be altogether blind, he may espy him at the ful. Although in the same book (as in al other he vseth to do) vnder shadows couertly, as vnder a visour, he suborneth truth in such sort, as both priuily she may profit the godly minded, & yet not be espied of the crafty aduersary: And therefore the bishops belike, taking his works but for iestes and toies, in condemning other bookes, yet permitted his bookes to be read. (767a)

The Book of Martyrs is an unmistakably sixteenth-century work. Its intrinsic merits and its value as a window onto the period from which it comes are inseparable. Not only, however, must the Marian tales be regarded as a handbook of Tudor life and customs; they should be recognised also as a collection of genuine literary distinction. They deserve to remain famous in their own right.

The literary merits of the Marian narratives invite discussion of one further point. Foxe is not, today, reckoned as one of the great Tudor Humanists. Sir Thomas More, Roger Ascham, Sir Philip Sidney, and Sir Thomas Smith are all considered humanists of the first rank, chiefly on account of their writings. Foxe, however, who wrote more than any of

them, is not included in the same category. The paradox is heightened, moreover, when we realize that, with the probable exception of Sir Thomas More, Foxe and his book were better known to the Elizabethan court and public than was any other with philosophical attitudes marked by the contemporary trend towards humanism in Government, Letters, and the conduct of affairs. Foxe's charity and tolerance were boundless, and as his son Simeon later attested in the Memoir, these characteristics were observed and praised by all. His writings, however, have become known only as lurid and dismal records of suffering and death. This is a misunderstanding. The Book of Martyrs gives rather a sense of exaltation and an impression of human dignity. This is because Foxe, even in his martyrology, extols human achievements (such as printing) and the propagation of human knowledge. His underlying interest in the problems of man and society illuminates the otherwise dark stories of the martyrs. Unlike the zealots who edited the book two and a half centuries later, he does not see the burnings as apocalyptic signs of ultimate salvation; he regards them in their social context as an unfortunate if inevitable part of man's struggle towards God. To Foxe they represent human folly. At times he adopts a point of view less intimate and more broadminded than that of the narrow sectarian squabbles in which he, and many others, frequently indulged. This is the humanist viewpoint, and

Foxe's statement of it is every bit as lucid and persuasive as that of More and Ascham. His statement was the most widely read in the sixteenth century, and for that reason warrants acknowledgement today.

That Foxe deserves a position among the Tudor humanists is shown even in the prefaces to his Book. The Grace, for example, with which he concludes the prefaces, implies both the feeling of the author and the purpose of his work. Both are humanist: "The grace of our Lord Iesus blesse thee gentle Reader, that long mayst thou reade, and much mayst thou profite, Amen." Presumably Foxe would be accorded a more just recognition among the literary figures of his time if his book of Marian Martyrs was more widely read. At the present time, however, there are no signs that Foxe will emerge from the undeserved obscurity into which he has sunk.

Of the more than 150 editions and versions of the Book of Martyrs published since 1554, not one has been a literary edition, but nearly all have been motivated by religious interests. This has meant that the work has been of severely limited accessibility to students of literature. The nineteenth-century compressions and revisions are of little use for literary study, for not only is the text invariably mutilated, but the spirit of Foxe is also missing.

Except, therefore, for those who have access to one of the "ancient" editions, the Book of Martyrs must remain unknown.

In the past 100 years many sixteenth- and seventeenth-century works, less famous than the Book of Martyrs, have been republished, replete with the apparatus of research and criticism. It is disappointing that Foxe has been passed over. The probable reason for his being ignored is that publishers and perhaps editors too, have considered that any demand for the work could be met by the abbreviations, and that the cost of a critical edition, in terms of money and effort could not be justified -- a conclusion unquestionably valid for the first six, or even the first nine, books, the material of which does not warrant such an enormous expense of time and care. It is harder to understand why Books X-XII, the Marian narratives, have not been re-edited. To perform this task would still require considerable labour, but an unbiased edition would be clearly justified by the lasting controversy which this part of the Book of Martyrs has provoked. Not only do such famous writings need to be preserved intact, but there is also a need for a new edition to show precisely Foxe's method of compilation, and the resulting texture of the book. These obviously cannot be satisfactorily demonstrated by extracts. Furthermore, a scholarly examination of the Marian books would conclusive-

ly resolve the recurring problem of the reliability of the Book of Martyrs.

It is hardly surprising that when literary historians come to Foxe, whose reputation demands attention, they retire behind nebulous critical attitudes. This situation, arising from the lack of any critical edition of the Book of Martyrs, or at least of the Marian tales, can only result in Foxe's fading into deeper obscurity. It will be serious literary loss if this is allowed to happen.

APPENDIX

The Illustrations of the Book of Martyrs.

From the First Edition of 1563, pictorial illustrations have played a prominent part in most editions of the Book of Martyrs. A few comments may help in assessing their purpose and importance.

Not many books of the mid-sixteenth century were illustrated, but since this book was to be an obviously popular work, John Daye went to considerable expense in furnishing the First Edition with woodcuts. There are fifty-one illustrations in this edition.[1] Of these, forty-two are half-page blocks measuring approximately seven by five inches, elaborately detailed and cut to illustrate specific scenes. One famous block (A1689), depicting Bishop Bonner scourging prisoners in his orchard at Fulham, was said by Bonner himself to be a remarkable likeness of him. There are also six smaller blocks ($3\frac{3}{4}$ by $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches) each depicting a figure standing amidst furious flames. From the mouth of the figure flows a ribbon inscribed with a pious utterance. Three of these smaller blocks are used twice to illustrate different martyrdoms, although in each case the "dying words"

1. Daye planned 53 as blank spaces on pp. 25 and 41 (sigs. E.i recto and F.iii verso) indicate.

have been altered.

These nine illustrations indicate the purpose of all fifty-one. They were symbolic, vulgar devices inserted to allure and impress readers. The small blocks are simple and crude, although they are actually far more dynamic and stirring than the static and posed larger cuts.

Above all, however, it must be recognized that even at this early date the illustrations are not in the same spirit as the text. The artist has seized on the lurid and the violent without attempting to preserve the all-pervasive humanity and poetry of Foxe, thus establishing a trend that was never to be reversed.

The next seven "ancient" editions, up to and including that of 1641, employed the same blocks and added many others. The quantity of the smaller blocks increased enormously and reduplication of prints off a single block multiplied accordingly. In the Fifth Edition (1596) one block illustrates at least ten different martyrdoms.[2]

For the Ninth Edition (1684) the old woodcuts were finally discarded and a complete set of copper-plates was engraved, several being copied with some care from the old

2. See pp. 746, 749, 910, 949, 1033, 1160, 1527, 1834, 1845, 1862. This list is probably incomplete. Other blocks recur with similar frequency.

blocks, while others provided a medium for the artist's imagination. This was the first move in a never-ending sequence of modernized illustrations, which progressively removed the pictures yet further from the spirit of the text.

The eighteenth-century editions, especially those of Wright,[3] were copiously adorned with engravings. These were very "modern", and portrayed romanesque figures in sumptious and flowing gowns, moving among fluted columns across the beautifully tiled floors of churches. Simultaneously the text, deprived of all humour and warmth, was whittled down to its crudest and harshest facts. The mood of the whole work, pictures and text, was undergoing a radical change.

The nineteenth century developed this taste to its limits. The brutally edited stories were lent emotional power by sentimental pictures of Lady Jane Grey on the scaffold, or of Dr. Rowland Taylor bidding his family farewell. Costume, pose, and expression became insipidly pathetic. The purpose was to solicit the readers' emotional support for the Protestant cause. The defects of the imagination had to be made good and striking pictures were the simplest and most powerful method.

3. [1782,] 1784, [1785;] [1795.]

It is remarkable how many copies of nineteenth-century editions survive today in which the illustrations have been coloured or tinted by children's hands -- evidently a nursery practice sanctioned by many families. Some of the illustrations are sufficiently lurid, one may think, to impress a child for life.

BIBLIOGRAPHIES

I

A CHECKLIST OF ALL EDITIONS, COMPRESSIONS, ADAPTATIONS, TRANSLATIONS, AND EXTRACTS OF JOHN FOXE'S BOOK OF MARTYRS, PUBLISHED BETWEEN THE YEARS 1554 AND 1699.

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1 Commentarii rerum in ecclesia gestarum, maximarumque, per totam Europam, persecutionum, à Vuiclevi temporibus ad hanc usque aetate descriptio. Liber primus.
8vo. ff. 212. Strassburg: Wendelin Rihelius, 1554.

2 Rerum in Ecclesia gestarum, quae postremis et periculosis his temporibus evenerunt, maximarumque; per Europam persecutionum, ac Sanctorum Dei martyrum, caeterarumque rerum,...digesti per regna et nationes commentarii. Pars Prima. In qua primum de rebus per Angliam et Scotiam gestis, atque in primis de horrenda sub Maria nuper Regina, persecutione narratio continetur.
Folio. ff. 750. Basil: Nicholas Brilinger and John Oporinus, 1559.

3 Actes and Monuments of these latter and perilous dayes, touching matters of the church, wherein ar comprehended and described the great persecutions & horrible troubles, that haue bene wrought and practised by the Romishe Prelates, speciallye in this Realme of England and Scotlande, from the yeare of our Lorde a thousande, vnto the tyme nowe present. Gathered and collected...by Iohn Foxe.
Folio. pp. 1742. London: John Daye, 1563.

4 Martyrum historia...pars secunda. Quum autem in prima parte Martyres salte Angliae et Scotiae... sint annotatae, hac demum secunda...res memorabiles Martyru per Germaniam, Galliam, et Italiam à J. Hussi tempore ad praesentem 1563 annum gestae, copiosissimè quàm uspiam alibi continentur. (By Heinrich Pantaleon.)
Folio. Two parts. Basil, 1563.

5 Chronicon Ecclesiae, continens historiam rerum gestarum, maximarumque per totam Europam persecutionum à Vuiclevi temporibus usque ad nostram aetatem. Hiis...acesserunt Aphorismi J. Vuiclevi, cum collectaneis quibusdam R. Pecoki, etc.
8vo. Strassburg, 1564.

6 The first [second] volume of the Ecclesiastical History, contayning the Actes and Monumentes of thynges passed in every kynges time in this realme, especially in the Church of England... Newly...inlarged by the author.
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Folio. Two Volumes. London: John Daye, 1573,72.

8 The first [second] volume of the Ecclesiasticall history, contayning the actes and monumentes of thinges passed in every kinges time in this realme, especially in the Church of England... Newly recognized and inlarged by the author.
Folio. Two Volumes. London: John Daye, 1576.

9 Actes and Monuments of matters most speciall and memorable, happenyng in the Church, with an universall history of the same...Newly revised and recognised, partly also augmented, and now the fourth time agayne published.
Folio. Two Volumes. London: John Daye, 1583.

10 An abridgement of the booke of Acts and monvmentes of the chvrch: written by the reuerend father, Maister Iohn Fox: and now abridged by Timothe Bright, doctour of phisicke, for such as either through want of leysure, or abilitie, haue not the vse of so necessary an history.
4to. Two Volumes. London: John Windet, 1589.

11 "The worthy voyage of Richard the first, King of England into Asia, for the recovery of Ierusalem out of the handes of the Saracens, drawen out of the booke of Actes and Monuments of the Church of England, written by M. Iohn Foxe."
in The Principall Navigations, Voiages, and Discoveries of the English Nation,...by Richard Hakluyt Master of Artes, etc. (See pp.6-13)
Folio. London, 1589.

12 Acts and Monuments of matters most speciall and memorable, happening in the Church, with an universall historie of the same...the fifth time newly imprinted.
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12mo. pp. 572. London, 1631.

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12mo. pp. 622. London, 1639.

23 Acts and Monuments of matters most speciall and memorable, happening in the Church, with an universall Historie of the same...Now againe, as it was recognised, perused, and recommended to the studious reader, by the Author...the eight time newly Imprinted. Folio. Three Vols. London: Richard Hearn, 1641.

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II

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