ENGLISH RELIGIONS
MEMOIRS OF THE 17 TH
& 18 TH CENTURIES

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ENGLISH RELIGIOUS MEMOIRS

of the

SEVENTEENTH and EIGHTEENTH

CENTURIES

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S O U R C E S.

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2. Encyclopaedia Brittanica.
3. Chambers' Cyclopaedia of English Literature.
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5. Moulton: Library of Literary Criticism.
6. W. B. Selbie: Nonconformity.
7. Buckle: History of Civilization in England, (ed. 1877, 2 vols.)
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9. J. R. Green: A Short History of the English People, (ed.1875)
10. Macaulay: History of England, and Essay on Bunyan, (ed. 1871)
11. Reliquiae Baxterianae, (ed. 1696)
12. Boyle: Richard Baxter.
13. Bunyan: Grace Abounding.
14. Venables: Life of Bunyan.
15. Royce: Studies of Good and Evil.
16. Dowden: Puritan and Anglican.
17. Journal of George Fox, 8th. ed. reprinted, 1902.
18. A. C. Bickley: George Fox and the Early Quakers.
19. The History of the Life of Thomas Ellwood, ed. C. G. Crump,1900.
20. Edmund Calamy: An Historical Account of My Own Life, 2 vols. 1830.
21. Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mr. William Whiston, (London, 1749)
22. Memoirs of the Life, Times, and Writings of the Rev. Thomas Boston, written by himself, in complete works, vol.12, (ed. 1852)
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25. Augustine Birrell: Miscellanies, (ed. 1902)
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In addition, a number of other sources have been consulted, many of which are cited in the foot-notes.

I N T R O D U C T I O N.

"Il y a peu de Mémoires ecclésiastiques, et, dans le nombre, très peu qui soient intéressants."[1] Such is the way in which St. Beuve opens his essay on the Memoirs of the Abbé Legendre. A statement of this nature may hold good for the literature of France but surely St. Beuve could not have known the "mémoires ecclésiastiques" of English literature, especially those of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Many of these palpitate with human interest, are often clearly and vividly written, and certainly hold a prominent place in English literature.

Previous to the seventeenth century the only valuable contribution to this class of literature is the Diary of James Melville.[2] Even this might be included in our period, for it was the product of the same influences that gave rise to many of the early seventeenth century memoirs, but it has been thought better to omit it.

Like the Diary of Melville, most of the early memoirs were written by Scotchmen. A number of these have been collected for the Wodrow Society, including those of Robert Blair and James Fraser, but the majority are of little interest or value except in so far as they reveal the peculiar mentality of the Scottish

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1 St. Beuve: Nouveaux Lundis, V: 150.

2 1556-1614.

religious leaders of that time. This atmosphere continued to exist down into the eighteenth century, where it is seen in the writings of Thomas Boston and even later.

What were the causes that produced such an out-put of religious autobiographies in Scotland at that particular period, and that too having such decided characteristics? The answer is to be found largely in what might almost be called the despotism of the Scottish Kirk during the latter part of the sixteenth and most of the seventeenth centuries.

During the last few years of the sixteenth century, the Presbyterian ministers gained a position of great influence over their people. They took a most active part in the defence of their country against the intrigues and machinations of the English; they fought with might and main to retain the supremacy of their system; and thus they gradually assumed a position of leadership - Buckle would apply a much harsher term. "When the Scotch Kirk was at the height of its power," he writes, "we may search history in vain for any institution which can compete with it except the Spanish Inquisition. Between the two, there is a close and intimate analogy."[3] And this point he proves by means of abundant illustration.

The pious Scots spent a great part of their time in religious exercises, the length of which was limited only by the strength of the speaker; often the meetings lasted for ten hours with only

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3 Buckle: Hist. of Civil. in Eng. II:322.

short intermissions and as many as thirty sermons were preached in a single church within a week. One of the best means by which the ministers kept their people in a state of bondage was their doctrine of evil spirits and future punishment. "The language which they used, was calculated to madden a man with fear, and to drive them to the depths of despair."[4] They strained every nerve to terrify their hearers with vivid pictures of the torments of hell, using such words as these: "See the poor wretches lying in bundles, boiling eternally in that stream of brimstone.""When one is cast into a fiery furnace, the fire makes its way into the very bowels, and leaves no member untouched: what part then can have ease, when the damned swim in a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

Another doctrine strongly enforced was that of the special providences of God; defeat, victories, material successes or failures, all were the work of a God, vindictive or benign, as the case might be.

All pleasure, all joy and happiness were also to be rooted up; "the great object of life was to be in a state of affliction."

Such teaching and such views so insistently preached could not but have their effect upon the minds of the people. But not upon them alone; those who spent long hours in propounding such doctrines could not escape being wounded by their own weapons. They themselves became introspective to a degree almost diseased.

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[4] ibid: II: 288.

That such was the case is most clearly revealed in the memoirs written by these Scotch ministers, in those of Melville, James Fraser and Boston for instance.

Such were some of the causes that produced these early Scotch memoirs. Somewhat similar tendencies were also playing upon the Nonconformist leaders to the south of the border, though in a modified degree.

It will be noted that none of the writers taken up before Wesley was a lifelong member of the Anglican Communion. Whiston it is true spent much of his life in that church, but how different was he from the majority of the Anglican clergy, and even he seceded and formed a new society of his own.

Wesley, and later Newton and Scott, were all Anglicans, but of a new order and for our purpose might almost be classed as Nonconformists or Dissenters.

Why was it that this type of literature sprang up amongst the Dissenters and not amongst the clergy of the Established Church? One has only to read the memoirs of the period to find the answer. Time and again the charges are brought up against the Anglican clergymen of self-seeking, of apathy to the higher things of life, of indifference to the performance of their duties. In such soil as this religion was not likely to have so vital a growth as to produce fruit in the form of religious autobiographies. It was not until a number of the clergy of the Established Church became so imbued with the doctrines of Wesley and his contemporaries, that we get the first memoirs from the

beneficed clergy of England.

When we turn to consider the Dissenters we find that the very opposite holds good. For many years a small party fighting against the harsh enactments and persecutions of their stronger enemies, they were forced back more and more upon themselves, upon their own resources, but above all upon the God in whom they believed with an all-powerful faith. While this absolute devotion of the Puritan to a Supreme Will tended more and more to rob him of all sense of measure and proportion in common matters, as Green declares,[5] nevertheless it produced characters much deeper, richer and more sincere than did the more superficial beliefs of the Anglicans.

The Conventicle Acts of 1592 and 1664, the Act of Uniformity of 1662, and the Five Mile Act of 1665 may be cited as amongst the harsh measures passed against the Puritans. The last act was especially effective in its results, which are summed up by Baxter: "Many of the ministers," he wrote, "being afraid to lay down their ministry after they had been ordained to it, preached to such as would hear them in fields and private houses, till they were apprehended and cast into jail, where many of them perished."[6] All this tended to unite the Nonconformists more closely than ever and at the same time to make them more rigid and dogmatic in the enforcement of their own religious views. All these causes together had their effect in producing the mentality and bent of

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5 Hist. of Eng. p.461.

6 Quoted, W.B.Selbie:Nonconformists, p.127.

character which resulted in such memoirs as those of Baxter and Bunyan.

But there is another group of memoirs which has to be taken into account, namely those of the Quakers. The intolerance of the stronger body of Puritans, the strict enforcement of their own ideals and views, led to a second religious revolt on the part of many who resented this breach of what they considered to be the true spirit of Nonconformity, and from this movement sprang up Seekers, Ranters, Anabaptists, and countless other sects. While we must not think of Quakerism as being closely united to any of these various sects, still it arose from the same spirit of discontent. This is most clearly revealed in the Journal of George Fox, and indeed its pages are one of the best explanations of the causes which produced them.

When we come to generalize about the memoirs themselves, we find that we are face to face with a difficult task. So varied is the genre, embracing as it does such widely differing works as the subjective writing of Bunyan and the almost entirely objective recollections of Carlyle, that general tendencies and attributes are hard to discover and classify. For this purpose the Autobiography of Alex. Carlyle has almost to be put into a separate class by itself, as being rather made up of the reflections and observations of a typical man of the world.

To begin with, the great majority of these memoirs were written with a distinct and clearly expressed purpose. The writers hoped that a simple relation of their strivings, their successes

and their failures would strengthen the faith of their readers and guide them more easily over the rough places of life.

One of the causes which made them so ready to relate their spiritual experiences was the fact that they believed with their whole hearts that they had been the objects of special providences from God. Their's were no ordinary experiences and this very fact laid the greater necessity upon them of proclaiming to the world the wonderful dealings of the Lord with them. This is true in most cases, with the notable exception of Baxter, who expressly states his belief that he had nothing extraordinary to glory in, which was not common to the rest of his fellow believers; but even he relates special providences in answer to prayer.

This idea that their cases were peculiar and specially marked out, led to another element appearing quite frequently in these religious writers, namely a strong spirit of self-consciousness, frank and unobtrusive in some cases, but in others leading to spiritual self-complacency and pride, notably in the case of Fox and Ellwood.

But through all these memoirs, there is one note that sounds out clearly and unmistakably and that is the note of sincerity and earnestness. Different as were the characters of the writers, some narrow and almost bigoted, others broad-minded and liberal, still one cannot doubt that they were sincere in their endeavours to further the good of their fellowmen, in their own peculiar ways. Truly the charges of hypocrisy and cant cannot be brought against these men.

That all these points may be brought out clearly and distinctly and also that the various peculiarities of the different memoirs may be emphasized, it is necessary to take them up separately and examine them more minutely.

R I C H A R D B A X T E R.

The first memoirs with which we have to deal are those of Richard Baxter, the great Presbyterian schoolman and leader. These were edited a few years after his death under the title of Reliquiae Baxterianae by his friend Matthew Sylvester. The fact that the great mass of writing left had to be edited without the oversight of the author will probably account somewhat for the disjointed narrative and the inequalities of style. Another thing that tended to bring about such a result was the fact that the work was divided into three parts written chiefly in the years 1664, 1665, 1670 with additions in 1675 and the following years. Any memoirs written in such a fashion would be very liable to lack continuity both of thought, narrative and style and this we find to be the case with Reliquiae Baxterianae.

Baxter was born on the twelfth of November, 1615 at Eaton Constantine, his father being only a competent freeholder. The religious condition of the community was not such as would tend to develop any profound religious life in the youth. "We lived in a Country that had but little Preaching at all," he writes: "In the village where I was born there was four Readers successively in Six years time, ignorant Men, and two of them immoral in their lives." One "took Orders, when he had been a while an Attorney's Clerk, and a common Drunkard, and tipled himself into so great Poverty that he had no other way to live."[1] The three or four who

[1] I: 1.

were good preachers "were the common Marks of the People's Obloquy and Reproach, and any that had but gone to hear them, when he had no Preaching at home, was made the Derision of the Vulgar Rabble, under the odious Name of a Puritane."[2] In spite of all this, however, Baxter's father had been converted by means of reading the Bible and became the instrument of his son's first convictions. But in spite of his home training and of the remonstrances of his conscience, he was addicted to many sins; he sets down a list of eight, amongst which are falsehood, gluttonous eating of apples and pears which led to the robbing of orchards, love of romances, fables and old tales, and so forth, no very serious or imposing array.

A great part of the Sabbath was spent by the villagers in dancing around the Maypole and the young boy would join with them on occasion, but the fact that the people, especially the drunkards called his father a Puritan helped to cure him of his frivolity. Another factor in the strengthening of his spiritual life was his reading of Bunny's Resolution at the age of fifteen, which awakened his soul and showed him the folly of sinning. "The same things which I knew before came now in another manner, with Light, and Sense and Seriousness to my Heart.

This cast me first into fears of my Condition; and those drove me to Sorrow and Confession and Prayer, and so to some resolution for another kind of Life: And many a-day I went with a

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2 I: 1.

throbbing Conscience, and saw that I had other Matters to mind, and another Work to do in the World, than ever I had minded well before."[3] Other religious works fell into his hands which still further strengthened him.

When Baxter was ready and eager to go to the University, he was turned from his purpose and sent to Ludlow Castle where he found a serious companion who did him much good but who later fell into drunkenness.

After some time, he returned home and plunged early into the study of controversies and the schoolmen. Many things were there to make him fear his religious condition, but there were many others which brought him peace and comfort: these he sets down in detail. And because he believed that his bodily condition had much to do with his religious state, he goes at length into the frightful condition of his health and of his suffering many things at the hands of many doctors (sometimes as many as thirty-six at one time) who made many mistakes.

Next he went to London to stay with the Master of Revels but soon became disgusted and returned home. On his journey home, the greatest snow storm of the age began and he had a narrow escape from death. This mercy of his Protector recalled other deliverances that he had had; a providential escape when his horse bolted, how God cured his inclination to gaming and so forth.

Doubts now began to assail the young man grievously but they

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3 I: 3.

only drove him to a deeper study of religion and at last he satisfied himself that Christianity was the best religion and that "nothing is so firmly believed, as that which hath been sometime doubted of."[4] We are not given a great many further details of his introspective life except in one passage. Baxter became a minister and after some time was settled at Kidderminster. He took such an active part in the objective religious and political life of those stirring times that these form his chief interest in writing his memoirs. But there is one famous passage in which he sums up the change in his attitude towards life and religion. One writer, somewhat over-valuing this passage it would seem, calls it "the most impressive record in our own language, if not in any tongue, of the gradual ripening of a powerful mind under the culture of incessant study, wide experience, and anxious self-observation."[5] Although this may be a slight over-statement, yet the passage certainly has exerted a wide influence and was much valued by such men as Dean Stanley and Sir James Stephen, while Boyle says that there are few things in the whole range of Christian biography to be compared with it.[6] At the very outset there is one striking difference between this relation and that of most religious writers. "Nor have I any thing extraordinary to glory in, which is not common to the rest of my Brethren, who have the same Spirit, and are Servants of the same Lord."[7] But if he is

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4 I: 22.

5 Edin. Rev.: Oct. 1839.

6 Boyle: Baxter, p. 86.

7 I: 124.

more inclined to reconciling principles. He saw less good in good men and more good in the evil; he admired gifts of utterance and bare profession of religion less; was not so narrow in his principles regarding church communion; was more sensible of the evils of schism which had "wofully hindered the Kingdom of God;" and did not "lay so great a Stress upon the external Modes and Forms of Worship, as many young Professors do."[9] He had been severely tried by experience, had seen the evils of the world and the need of some uplifting force, not only for his own countrymen but for the world. Here we find a most passionate longing expressed for the salvation of the heathen. "My Soul is much more afflicted with the thoughts of the miserable World, and more drawn out in desire of their Conversion than heretofore."[10] He was not so prone to pass sentence of damnation on them, while his attitude towards the Papists too, showed great broadmindedness and tolerance.

The whole passage reveals a personality of tenderness, depth and sincerity; one which had passed through the refining fire of tribulation and controversy and which had come out ringing all the truer and stronger. And in it all there is no posing, no spiritual pride or self-complacency. "He dresses up nothing; he does not project before his imagination any ideal self, and fit things to correspond to that ideal; he aims simply at telling what he knew or what he believed to be true."[11]

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9 I: 135. 10 I: 131. 11 Dowden: Puritan & Anglican, p. 215.

But for the average reader who is not directly interested in such subjective relations there is also much of value to be found in these pages. "I read Mr. Baxter's Account of his own Life and Times," writes Wesley. "It seems to be the most impartial account of those times which has yet ever appeared: and none that I have seen so accurately points out the real springs of those public calamities."[12] One has only to think for a few moments of the great events that were moving England to the core and to remember that Baxter was right at the front, to realize how much of interest he had to relate, and he does relate it at some length. He tells of the convening of the Long Parliament in 1640 and of their legislation. "The Parliament being sate, did presently fall on that which they accounted Reformation of Church and State, and which greatly displeased the King as well as the Bishops."[13] When the people heard of this, they began to send in their complaints and petitions against the existing state of affairs. Later parties and divisions grew up in the Parliament and dissension resulted.

The causes that prepared the way for the great civil war are discussed at some length, the thing that proved to be the last straw being the sudden massacre of 200,000 Protestants in Ireland. The preparations for war on both sides are described and the claims of both parties are gone into thoroughly. After the Covenant had been taken, the Scots sent help and the English army

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12 Journal, II: 382.

13 I: 18.

really passed under the power of Oliver Cromwell who defeated the King at Naseby. "After a short hot Fight, the King's Army was totally routed and put to flight, and about 5000 Prisoners taken, with all his Ordinance and Carriage."[14]

The army, according to Baxter, lost much by being under the dominance of violent sectaries whose power grew when most of the ministers left the force after the battle of Edgehill. Baxter himself became an army chaplain and stayed with the soldiers for about two years. He held the view that if there had been more ministers the King, Parliament and Religion might have been saved.

We are given further information about the King's flight to Scotland, Oliver Cromwell's treachery and the beheading of the King. The Commonwealth was formed, the new King was defeated, and then it was, according to Baxter, that Oliver showed his real hand, his desire to be made governor. Baxter was on the side of the Parliament but he felt that Cromwell was going too far and kept his people from signing allegiance to the Commonwealth.

On Cromwell's death, he takes the opportunity of giving his estimate of his motives and actions in a judicious, moderate tone, though not revealing Cromwell in an altogether favourable light.[15] He then goes on to speak of the way in which Richard Cromwell was set up, of his death, of the state of confusion into which the army brought the country and finally dwells on the wonderful way in which God at last brought about the downfall of the army

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14 I: 50.

15 I: 98-100.

and the Restoration.

In addition to this, one finds in Baxter's reminiscences the best account, in works of this nature, of the excessive persecution, through legislation, of the Nonconformists. In Fox and Ellwood will be found much better and more vivid accounts of the actual sufferings and persecutions but they do not give the legislative or political aspect of the question in anything like the same detail. Those were very troubled times in religious circles, controversies were being waged fiercely amongst the Erastians, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Imdependents and minor sects, and the whole country was in a turmoil. Baxter sums up his views on the various sects, finding that each had some truths peculiar to their own body. After commissions had been appointed to draw up a list of fundamentals, meetings had been held to suggest changes in the Liturgy and the country had been thrown into great confusion by the rising of the Fifth Monarchy men, the matter at last came to a head. The Act of Uniformity was enforced on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1664, and some eighteen hundred or two thousand Nonconformist ministers were silenced or cast out of their charges.[16] This resulted in grievous suffering and divisions in the church.

But this was only the beginning. In 1663, the Conventicle Act was passed, putting almost supreme power into the hands of the Justices and giving rise to much injustice. One thing that

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16 II: 385.

alleviated the sufferings of most of the Nonconformists was the fact that in spite of persecution and imprisonment (so vividly described in the Quaker memoirs), the Quakers went right ahead with their religious services and in this way drew the attention of the officials upon themselves.

Shortly afterwards, the Five Mile Act was passed which further increased the hardships of the ministers who found it very difficult to keep body and soul together. Baxter himself was imprisoned and after being released, found himself with a large house on his hands for which he had to pay a high rent and was unable to use owing to the harsh law. And his case was but typical of that of many others.

Soon the Conventicle Act was renewed with harsher clauses but after some time the King passed a measure of toleration which was thought to be chiefly in favour of the Papists. Baxter now for the first time in ten years got a license and preached in a tolerated public assembly. The Parliament declared this toleration illegal, and after the country had been deeply stirred by the prevalence of Popery, all officials were made to conform and the King finally withdrew his toleration. Informers were set to work and Baxter was the first to be arrested, being a special object of persecution. His house was burst in upon, there being a warrant out against him for coming within five miles of a town, and five others, fining him £190 for preaching five sermons. He was ill but they sold his books and even the bed upon which he was lying. Other details are given as to the

persecution he suffered but no mention is made of his infamous 'trial' by 'Bloody' Jeffreys.

We are also given other interesting details on various subjects. The case of Titus Oates[17] is dwelt on at some length; we are told of the great fire of London, of the plague which resulted in the death of one hundred thousand,[18] of various murders and outrages[19] and of other interesting events. The chief interest of the book however lies in what has been already dwelt upon.

These memoirs have been highly valued by such literary men as Dr. Johnson, Coleridge and others and rank high amongst religious memoirs, perhaps not so much for their intrinsic literary merit, which varies greatly and possesses no very striking qualities, but rather for their sincerity, earnestness, keen insight and great value as giving a first-hand account of that period which played so great a part in the fashioning of the English nation.

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17 III: 183.

18 II: 448, III: 1.

19 III: 83.

B U N Y A N.

When we turn to Bunyan and his "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners." we find ourselves in a different atmosphere. Here we have a record of religious experience at once the most powerful and the most interesting to be found in English literature during the period under discussion. One writer, indeed, goes much further and asserts that "it is a work which, in spite of its being specifically English, has the significance for the seventeenth century that the 'Confessions' of St. Augustin have for the fifth, and the 'Confessions' of Rousseau for the eighteenth. In these three books beats the full and living pulse of the times in which they were composed."[1] If it be true that "the living pulse of the times" beats in these pages, it is also true that the spirit of the times had much to do in moulding the character and personality of their author. Macaulay goes so far as to say that "the history of Bunyan is the history of a most excitable mind in an age of excitement."[2] Yet this is a somewhat sweeping statement to make and it does not pass unchallenged by Dowden. "Undoubtedly Bunyan's religious perturbation was extreme," the latter writes; "but we interpret the drama of his soul in the poorest and shallowest way if we ascribe the vividness of his sense of sin to excitement

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1 J.Scherr: Hist. of Eng.Liter. p.126 note; quoted Moulton,II.392.

2 Essay on Bunyan, ed.1870, p.189

in an excitable age."[3] We shall dwell at some length on the psychology of Bunyan's religious experience for it is this aspect of his memoirs that is really the most interesting.

'Grace Abounding' was published in 1666, having been written during Bunyan's imprisonment in Bedford jail for his persistence in propagating the beliefs of Non-conformity. Here indeed we have "a fragment of life; we touch, in reading it, a quivering human heart."[4] Bunyan portrays in a vivid way his religious struggles, torments and triumphs through the various stages of his development from childhood to maturer years. Of objective information we get but little, except in so far as it directly tends to illuminate his subjective experiences. "It is something of a relation of the work of God upon my soul, even from the very first till now."

The purpose of this soul-drama is clearly indicated in the preface. "I have sent you here enclosed a drop of that honey that I have taken out of the carcase of a lion. I have eaten thereof myself, and am much refreshed thereby." He has called to mind the grace of God in leading him through his manifold troubles, has derived much strength therefrom, and thinks that others may be helped in the same way.

One suggestion is that the cause which produced the state of mind which Bunyan describes was fear. We find, it is true,

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[3] Dowden: Puritan and Anglican, p.247.

[4] ibid. p.236

such expressions as, "he did scare and affright me with fearful visions," "fearful torments of hell," "to flee from God, as from the face of a dreadful judge." These show that fear was an important factor as a psychological stimulus, but one should rather look behind this for the ultimate cause. Bunyan, if healthy in mind and body, would have been enabled much sooner to throw off these youthful terrors. We find that his early dreams and religious experiences were very vivid and acute, whereas the stimuli do not appear to have been severe. This fact adds further weight to the view that his mental condition was abnormal. "That the nocturnal terrors and the despair were in part primary symptoms of nervous irritability," says Royce, "one can hardly doubt."[5] At the same time, fear must be set down as the agent which stimulated this nervous irritability. These terrible dreams seem to have exerted their greatest influence when Bunyan was a mere child of nine or ten years of age.

As he grew older and stronger physically, he conquered his morbidity to a great extent and in the full glow of his youthful strength gave himself up to sin and became "the very ringleader of all the youth that kept me company, in all manner of vice and ungodliness." Nevertheless such a statement must not be interpreted too literally. Looking back, after

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5 Studies of Good and Evil, p.39, from which a number of other suggestions have been taken.

such an experience as he had passed through, Bunyan would naturally be led, quite sincerely, to magnify his own guilt, even as St. Paul did when he wrote, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."[6] "God has given no one any power of knowing the true greatness of any sin but his own, and therefore the greatest sinner that everyone knows is himself."[7] His chief sins seem to have been swearing and indulgence in harmless sports. Most vehemently does he deny the charge of sensual vice brought against him in later years.

As Bunyan looks back over this period of his life, the providences of God in twice saving him from drowning, in protecting him from the bite of an adder, and in preventing his going to war and thus getting shot, stand out prominently in his mind's eye. Yet even these mercies did not turn him from his sin.

Shortly afterwards, a young woman whose dowry consisted of "The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven," and "The Practice of Piety" became his wife. She was of godly parentage and Bunyan at last decided to reform his vicious life. But it was not until some time later that he first became convicted of sin, through hearing a sermon on Sabbath observance.

After the service, the young husband went home with a great

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6 I Timothy 1:15.

7 Law's: Serious Call, chap.23, quoted P.C.Simpson: Fact of Christ, p.152.

burden on his spirit which was quickly removed by the soothing influence of a good dinner. Going out in the afternoon to enjoy a game of cat, "a voice did suddenly dart from heaven into my soul, which said 'Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or have thy sins and go to hell?'"[8] Looking up he saw, pictured in his mind's eye, Christ gazing down at him in threatening fashion. (Such automatic internal visions are of frequent occurrence hereafter and form the key to the explanation of much of Bunyan's genius in his later writings.)

Immediately he begins his characteristic dialectic reasoning and comes to this conclusion: "I can but be damned; and if I must be so, I had as good be damned for many sins as be damned for few."[9] The full course of sin was now pursued, until one day a woman, herself of not unstained character, reproved him for swearing and he was enabled by some strange power to overcome that habit.

Learning from the example of a poor man to derive pleasure from reading his Bible, Bunyan decided to reform and systematically began a vigorous course of inhibition of all suspicious acts. By this regimen, he acquired great honour as a changed man, and rather gloried in it.

This summary conversion, however, together with the material worries of married life, exacted a severe mental penalty from him and the first signs of the coming storm were the motor

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8 sect.22.

9 sect.23.

reflexes produced by the sound of the church bells. Most vivid is the description of the depths of morbidity and conscientiousness to which he sank in this connection.

A recent writer[10] on this point criticizes Royce and contends that, "No doubt what has led some writers to call a man like Bunyan morbid, when he blames himself so bitterly, is that a good and godly man should bewail him over actions that were not sins at all. But they misunderstood him. While they were thinking only of bell-ringing he was thinking of its associations and the state of his own mind that made it possible for him to find his pleasure there while the fellowship of God was in his offer." While trying to give others the right view-point, this writer seems to lose the proper perspective himself. The essential point of this episode seems to be the abnormal condition of mind which could produce such mental agony, perverted reasoning and fear. This passage however does serve one useful purpose. It impresses upon our minds the fact that there is a danger of interpreting all Bunyan's struggles as due to mental derangement whereas many of them ought to be considered as the real soul-agonies of a man seeking peace with God.

Bunyan next fell into the hands of some godly women of Bedford who convinced him that he had not been born again. Then followed a period of deep introspection and of meditation on the Scriptures, by which his mind was "so turned, that it lay like

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[10] G.Steven: The Psychology of the Christian Soul (1911) pp.107-108.

a horseleech at the vein, still crying out, 'give, give.'"

"I was never out of the Bible either by reading or meditation."[11] This too had an evil effect upon him and caused him days, months, even years of mental agony. In this connection it might be well to quote an instructive passage from Prof. James.[12] "Poor Bunyan's troubles," he declares,"were over the condition of his own personal self. He was a typical case of the psychopathic temperament, sensitive of conscience to a diseased degree, beset by doubts, fears and insistent ideas, and a victim of verbal automatisms, both motor and sensory. These were usually texts of Scripture which, sometimes damnatory and sometimes favorable, would come in a half-hallucinatory form as if they were voices, and fasten on his mind and buffet it between them like a shuttlecock. Added to this were a fearful melancholy self-contempt and despair."

It was about this time too that Bunyan was tempted to prove whether he had a living, vital faith or no by trying to make the puddles in the horse-pads dry.

"Thus I was tossed betwixt the devil and my own ignorance, and so perplexed, especially at some times, that I could not tell what to do." At last however he decided to delay the experiment for a time. "In this account it is of course the hesitancy and the brooding, questioning attitude that is symptomatic."[13] The problems which were worrying him now were those of faith and election. Now he would be raised to the mountain-tops of faith

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[11] sect.46. [12] James: Variety of Religious Experience, p.157.
[13] Royce, p.46.

and joy, now cast to the lowest depths of despair, all by the varying passages of Scripture that "leaped out upon him, now like angels waving swords of flame, now like winged messengers of consolation."[14] The sections which express his feelings in this regard are amongst the most passionate, the most vivid, the most sincere of the whole book.[15]

The people of Bedford now took a hand in treating Bunyan's religious ailments and gave him over to Mr. Gifford, their minister. The latter proved but a poor physician, turning the unfortunate man's thoughts from the larger and more objective questions of faith and election to the subjective state of his own heart, with the result that his soul began "to hanker after every foolish vanity." "Nay, thought I," he cries out, "now I grow worse and worse; now I am further from conversion than ever I was before." "My conscience now was sore, and would smart at every touch: I could not now tell how to speak my words, for fear I should misplace them."[16]

A period of self-reproval and introspection followed, which resulted in his becoming self-conscious to an inordinate degree. "Thus being afflicted and tossed about my sad condition, I counted myself alone, and above the most of men unblessed."[17]

We now find that internal speech and 'pseudo-hallucination of hearing' become prominent symptoms in his case, which

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14 Dowden, p.248.
15 sects. 72-75.
16 sect. 82.
17 sect. 87.

my affections cleaved unto him. I felt love to him as hot as fire."[20]

Exalted, only to be plunged deeper into despair. The Devil laid a most desperate and long-continued siege upon Bunyan, endeavouring to make him sell Christ. "I could neither eat my food, stoop for a pin, chop a stick, or cast mine eye to look on this or that, but still the temptation would come, Sell Christ for this, or, sell Christ for that; sell him - sell him."[21] This led Bunyan to perform certain senseless motor acts, as he tells us: "my very body would be put into action or motion, by way of pushing or thrusting with my hands or elbows; still answering, as fast as the destroyer said, Sell him: 'I will not, I will not, I will not, I will not; no, not for thousands, thousands, thousands of worlds."[22] The evil here, as Royce points out, "lay in the systematized character of the morbid habits involved, and in the exhausting multitude of the tempter's assaults."[23]

At last Bunyan consented to yield in thought to the tempter. "Now was the battle won, and down fell I, as a bird that is shot from the top of a tree, into great guilt and fearful despair."[24] This was the beginning of the end; Satan, by his very act of conquest, had sounded his own death-knell so far as Bunyan was concerned. "The nervous crisis thus passed served to introduce a condition of extremely lengthy, quasi-melancholic, but to

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20 sect. 131. 21 sect. 135. 22 sect. 137.
23 p. 62. 24 sect. 140.

Bunyan's consciousness wholly seondary depression. ------One overwhelming idea and grief inhibited all these inhibitory symptoms. The insistent associative processes with the Scripture passages became, however for a while, all the more marked, automatic, and commanding. Thus the whole mental situation was profoundly altered."[25] And it was this change, that finally proved Bunyan's salvation. "Methought I saw as if the tempter did leer and steal away from me, as being ashamed of what he had done."[26] The poor beaten soul now entered upon a long and arduous course of refined reasoning, searching the Scriptures and comparing his sin with that of others, without much comfort to himself. If one passage of Scripture would leap into his mind and give him hope, just as surely would another arise to bring him to despair. Often do we find the clash of two such passages, see the keen dialectic of his mind, which- abnormal in respect to his religious life - seems to have retained its other powers practically unimpaired, and finally observe the victory of one of the passages, dependent somewhat on his mood at the time. We find, however, that the Devil had not the same power over him that he used to have. Though tempted, Bunyan clung to the only hope that he had. Satan urged certain texts against Bunyan, but the latter said, "These places did pinch me very sore; yet my case being desperate, I thought with myself, I can but die; and if it must be so, it shall once be said, That such an one died

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25 Royce, p.66.

26 sect. 144.

at the foot of Christ in prayer."[27] By degrees, Bunyan worked out his salvation; he gradually gained such assurance that the Devil lost much of his power and many of the passages which used to condemn him were seen in a new light. "And now remained only the hinder part of the tempest, for the thunder was gone beyond me, only some drops did still remain, that now and then would fall upon me."[28] Finally, "As I was passing in the field, --------suddenly this sentence fell upon my soul, Thy righteousness is in heaven; and methought withal, I saw with the eyes of my soul Jesus Christ at God's right hand."[29] "Now did my chains fall off my legs indeed; I was loosed from my afflictions and irons, my temptations also fled away; so that from that time those dreadful scriptures of God left off to trouble me."[30]

Not yet however was he freed from the attacks of the tempter. No; so deeply had they burned themselves into his being that they could not be altogether blotted out; they always remained with more or less force, though without the power really to conquer him again. Especially were they active when his physical powers were at a low ebb.[31] When he regained his strength of body, his faith and assurance returned to him.

One may be safe in saying that the objective turn which Bunyan's mind now took was one of the most potent factors in keeping him from morbidity and despair. Of this he gives us an account in the rest of his treatise, dealing with his call to

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27 sect. 178. 28 sect. 228. 29 sect. 229. 30 sect. 230. 31 sects. 255-257; 260.

and entrance upon the active work of the ministry and also of his imprisonment for his perseverance therein. His self-contempt, which we find so sincerely set forth in these last few pages, also led him to take a more objective view of life.

When we turn to consider Grace Abounding as a work of literary merit, we find that we are dealing with what might almost be called a masterpiece, certainly the masterpiece among English religious memoirs. Let Bunyan speak for himself: "I could have enlarged much, in this my discourse, of my temptations and troubles for sin; as also of the merciful kindness and working of God with my soul. I could also have stepped into a style much higher than this in which I have here discoursed, and could have adorned all things more than here I have seemed to do, but I dare not. God did not play in tempting of me; neither did I play, when I sunk as into a bottomless pit, when the pangs of hell caught hold upon me; wherefore I may not play in relating of them, but be plain and simple, and lay down the thing as it was. He that liketh it, let him receive it; and he that doth not, let him produce a better. Farewell."[32] One can only feel gratified that Bunyan was led to be 'plain and simple' for therein lies one of the chief merits of this work. There is no striving after effect, there is no straining or artificiality in the style. What we have is a simple, straightforward account, written however with the simplicity that only such a genius could attain to.

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32 Preface.

It is a commonplace to say that the language of Bunyan is that of humble life, that it is Biblical, that it is chiefly of Saxon derivation, but once more this point has to be emphasized.

As for the sentence structure it is very varied, aptly fitted to express the changing feelings of the writer. At times it is rapid, concise, vivid; at others, long, balanced, antithetical, often characterized by an indefinite and appealing eloquence and melody.

The book is dotted here and there with imagery and similes, not elaborate and exquisitely wrought, it is true, but none the less effective for all that. These are drawn from the rural conditions of the time; gipsy life,[33] poor currency,[34] a poor child who has fallen into a mill-pit,[35] these and other such simple matters give him material for some most expressive similes. Closely connected with this, we get a foretaste of that art which he developed to so high a degree in his later work,"The Pilgrim's Progress."[36] We see his visualizing power too in the most vivid way in which he portrays for us his struggles with the tempter so as to make them almost live before us.[37]

All these qualities of style must be subordinated however to the one, great outstanding attribute which characterizes almost every section in the book, namely its passionate earnestness and sincerity, resulting often in outbursts of true

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33 sect. 102. 34 sect. 232. 35 sect. 198. 36 sects. 53-55.
37 sects. 200 and 215, etc.

eloquence. As one writer puts it, this is "a book which in some passages seems as if it had been written with a pen of fire."

In closing, let us give an extract from Canon Venables, which may appear somewhat long but which seems to sum up the discussion and form a fitting conclusion to the treatment of such a work. "This book," he says, "if he had written no other, would stamp Bunyan as one of the greatest masters of the English language of his own or any other age. In graphic delineation of the struggles of a conscience convicted of sin towards a hardly-won freedom and peace, the alternations of light and darkness, of hope and despair, which chequered its course, its morbid self-torturing questionings of motive and action, this work of the travelling tinker, as a spiritual history, has never been surpassed. ------ Never has the history of a soul convinced of the reality of eternal perdition in its most terrible form as the most certain of all possible facts, and of its own imminent danger of hopeless, irreversible doom - seeing itself, to employ his own image, hanging as it were, over the pit of hell by a thin line, which might snap any moment - been portrayed in more nervous and awe-inspiring language. And its awfulness is enhanced by its self-evident truth. Bunyan was drawing no imaginary picture of what others might feel, but simply telling in plain unadorned language what he had felt. The experience was a very tremendous reality to him."[38]

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38 Venables: Life of Bunyan, in 'Great Writers' series:p.127.

G E O R G E F O X.

Motives very similar to those which gave rise to Bunyan's Grace Abounding also caused Fox "briefly to mention how it was with me in my youth, and how the work of the Lord was begun, and gradually carried on in me, even from my childhood."[1] As we proceed in our discussion of Fox's Journal we shall discover other points as well which reveal how closely connected are the writings of these two sorely tried souls.

Fox was born July, 1624, at Drayton-in-the-Clay, the son of 'Righteous Christer,' 'by profession a weaver, an honest man,' in whom 'there was a seed of God,' and Mary Fox, 'of the stock of the martyrs.' From an early age, as he tells us, he had 'a gravity and stayedness of mind and spirit, not usual in children,' and at the age of eleven, he 'knew pureness and righteousness' and was a great lover of integrity.

As the youth grew up, he was apprenticed to a shoemaker and grazier and was well regarded for his honesty.

It was not long before the deciding crisis of his life arrived. At the age of nineteen, he went to a fair on business. His cousin Bradford and another 'professor' taking him in for a glass of beer, began to drink healths, at which George was much aggrieved, laid a groat on the table for payment and left."So I went away," he writes in his simple, direct fashion; "and when

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[1] Journal I:1.

I had done what business I had to do, I returned home, but did not go to bed that night, nor could I sleep, but sometimes walked up and down, and sometimes prayed and cried to the Lord, who said unto me, 'Thou seest how young people go together into vanity, and old people into the earth; thou must forsake all, both young and old, and keep out of all, and be as a stranger unto all.'

Then at the command of God, on the ninth day of the seventh month, 1643, I left my relations, and broke off all familiarity or fellowship with old or young."[2] That was the turning-point in Fox's life; from that time he became a seeker after truth.

Of his mental condition at this time Macaulay writes: "He was then a youth of pure morals and grave deportment, with a perverse temper, with the education of a labouring man, and with an intellect in the most unhappy of all states, that is to say, too much disordered for liberty, and not sufficiently disordered for Bedlam. The circumstances in which he was placed were such as could scarcely fail to bring out in the strongest form the constitutional diseases of his mind."[3] Lecky too speaks of the vein of insanity which ran through his nature as forming one great element in his power.[4]

Certain it is that Fox had a peculiar bent of mind and perspective of life and that he was a religious enthusiast but to say that he was fundamentally and chronically insane seems to be

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2 I:3. 3 Hist. of Eng. II: 687, ed London, 1871.
4 Eng. in the 18th. Cent. II: 687.

too strong a statement of his case. There were times however when his actions could hardly be explained by any other cause than mental derangement, as, for instance, when he went crying through the streets of Lichfield, "Woe to the bloody city of Lichfield," and saw "a channel of blood running down the streets, and the market-place appeared like a pool of blood."[5]

Another writer probably comes nearer to the truth when he says, "Mysticism formed his whole character. It penetrated his intellect. It pervaded his spirit. It was the soul of his religion, and the mainspring of his morality."[6]

After leaving home, Fox entered upon a period of great mental and spiritual stress and strain which lasted for a number of years and of which he gives us a very careful account. He went about the country conversing with priests and others in a vain endeavour to find peace. They could not help him in his infirmity. One told him to take tobacco and sing psalms; another, to take physic and have his blood let.

"Fox turned from them, with tears and a sacred scorn, back to his Leather-parings and his Bible. Mountains of encumbrance, higher than Aetna, had been heaped over that Spirit; but it was a Spirit, and would not lie buried there. Through long days and nights of silent agony, it struggled and wrestled, with a man's force to be free: how its prison-mountains heaved and swayed tumultuously, as the giant spirit shook them to this hand and that,

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5 I: 77-8.

6 Stoughton: Ecclesiastical Hist. of Eng., II:352 (ed. 1867

and emerged into the light of Heaven!"[7]

We see his extreme self-consciousness at this time in the of solitary roaming life which he led; "for I durst not stay long in any place, being afraid both of professors and profane, lest, being a tender young man, I should be hurt by conversing much with either."[8]

As in the case of Bunyan, so too in the case of Fox, internal speech functions - at times striving with one another for the mastery - were prominent symptoms of his disordered state. "One morning," he writes, "as I was sitting by the fire, a great cloud came over me, and a temptation beset me; but I sat still. And it was said, 'All things come by nature;' and the elements and the stars came over me, so that I was in a manner quite clouded with it. But as I sat still, and silent, the people of the house perceived nothing. And as I sat still under it, and let it alone, a living hope arose in me, and a true voice which said, 'There is a living God who made all things,' And immediately the cloud and temptation vanished away, and life rose over it all; my heart was glad and I praised the living God."[9] What nearer parallel to some of Bunyan's experiences could be desired.

Again we find the same despair about the sin against the Holy Ghost. "I was tempted again to despair, as if I had sinned against the Holy Ghost."[10] And there are other passages which in their directness, simplicity and power, as well as in substance, closely resemble the work of Bunyan.

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[7] Carlyle:Sartor Resartus, Bk.III.chap.1. [8] I:10 [9] I:26.
[10] I:14, see also I:22.

But there is one feature in the work of Fox which is almost entirely lacking in Bunyan, and that is a somewhat marked tone of spiritual self-complacency and conceit, albeit of sincerity.

Along with this spiritual assurance, we find scattered throughout the pages of this Journal, accounts of numerous visions and of the spirit of discerning which God gave to his servant. "The Lord had given me a spirit of discerning," he says, "by which I many times saw the states and conditions of people, and could try their spirits. For not long before, as I was going to a meeting, I saw some women in a field, and I discerned them to be witches; and I was moved to go out of my way into the field to them, and to declare unto them their conditions."[11]

Another element which we find in the religious constitution of Fox - an element common to most religious writers of this period - is a strong belief in a protecting Providence. Constantly, when referring to wrong-doers and those who had been persecuting his followers, he adds, "and not long after the Lord cut him off," or words to that effect.

Once, while holding a meeting, Fox was rudely interrupted by a rabble amongst whom were 'divers butchers.' Shortly after one of them committed murder and was imprisoned at York. "Another of those rude butchers, who had also sworn to kill me, having accustomed himself to thrust his tongue out of his mouth,

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[11] I: 166.

in derision of Friends, when they passed by him, had it so swollen out of his mouth, that he could never draw it in again, but died so. Several strange and sudden judgments came upon many of these conspirators against me, which would be too large here to declare."[12]

Though there were these elements in the religious life of Fox which to modern minds seem strange and fanciful, yet there was also much to be admired. The greatest fervour, faith and pertinacity were shown by this indomitable enthusiast in the carrying on of his work; one has only to read the stories of hardship, slander and persecution set forth in his works to get some idea of his sincerity and steadfastness of purpose; a mere hypocrite would never have endured such frightful woes. "I was so exceedingly weak," he writes, "I was hardly able to get on or off my horse's back; but my spirit being earnestly engaged in the work the Lord had concerned me in, and sent me forth about, I travelled on therein, notwithstanding the weakness of my body, having confidence in the Lord, that he would carry me through, as he did, by his power."[13]

It was only natural that the strange doctrines and actions of the Quakers should have drawn down upon their heads bitter persecution and indeed the sufferings which they had to endure were greater than those of any of the other Nonconformists in that age of persecution and tyranny. The portrayal of this

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12 I: 196-7.

13 II: 82.

aspect of his life, which occupies many pages, forms one of the most interesting parts of the work.

Almost at the opening of his mission, the Lord forbade him to take off his hat or perform other customary acts of civility to persons, whether of high or low degree. This at once caused a great outburst. "O! the rage and scorn, the heat and fury that arose!" exclaims the innovator. "O! the blows, punchings, beatings and imprisonments that we underwent, for not putting off our hats to men! for that soon tried all men's patience and sobriety what it was."[14]

A concrete example may be found in the treatment accorded to him at Mansfield - Woodhouse. "The people fell upon me in great rage, struck me down, and almost stifled and smothered me; and I was cruelly beaten and bruised by them with their hands, Bibles and sticks."[15] This is but one case of many, but it will suffice to show in what manner the 'professors' and people treated him, and it was the same with many other Quakers.

The magistrates seem to have been specially unjust and zealous in imprisoning Friends. "So eager were the magistrates about this time to stir up persecution in those parts, that some offered five shillings, and some a noble a day, to any that could apprehend the speakers amongst the Quakers."[16] Indeed matters came to such a pass that the situation will hardly bear description, especially after the insurrection of the Fifth-monarchy men.

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14 I.39. 15 I.45-6. vide also I.132 for an exceptional case.

16 II. 16.

"In the country they dragged men and women out of their houses, and some sick men out of their beds by the legs.----- The prisons were now everywhere filled with Friends, and others, in the city and country, and the posts were so laid for the searching of letters, that none could pass unsearched. We heard of several thousands of Friends being cast into prison in several parts of the nation. ------ Next week we had an account of several thousands more being cast into prison."[17] The Friends, on whom the least suspicion could fall, seemed to fare the worst.

Nevertheless the impression must not be given that Fox and his followers were altogether blameless, for such was not the case. On many occasions, 'the Lord's power was so mighty on him' that he was led to enter 'steeple-houses' and interrupt the services, with the natural result that he was haled before the magistrates and imprisoned.[18] Still for the most part, the indictments were false upon which the Friends were tried.

In this connection another important point must be dwelt upon, namely Fox's attitude in the law-courts. True to principle, he never doffed his cap, even when addressing the judge. On one occasion this led to a most amusing scene. On being commanded to put off his hat, the Quaker asked the judge to give him an instance from Moses to Daniel where that had been done, or to show him where the laws of England made any such order legal. "Then

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17 I. 493.

18 e.g. I. 43.

the judge grew very angry, and said, 'I do not carry my law-books on my back.' 'But,' said I, 'tell me where it is printed in any statute-book, that I may read it.' Then said the judge, 'Take him away, prevaricator! I'll 'jerk' him.' So they took us away, and put us among the thieves. Presently after he calls to the jailer, 'Bring them up again.' 'Come,' said he, 'where had they hats from Moses to Daniel; come, answer me: I have you fast now,' said he. I replied, 'Thou mayest read in the third of Daniel, that the three children were cast into the fiery furnace by Nebuchadnezzar's command, with their coats, their hoze, and their hats on.' This plain instance stopped him: so that not having any thing else to say to the point, he cried again, 'Take them away jailer.'"[19] This quotation is given at length both because it illustrates a practice, very common amongst the early Quakers of quibbling over details, and also because it is one of the most vivid pictures of any incident to be found in the Journal, for Fox, as a rule, does not seek to give to his descriptions any dramatic setting. As for quibbling, Fox was a past master at the art and cites many instances of his finding flaws in the wording of indictments.[21]

The prisons in which the Quakers were confined were by no means savoury or wholesome places, judging from the descriptions given by Fox. "So I was had away and put into a lousy, stinking[23] place, without any bed, amongst thirty felons," is the manner in

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19 I. 272-3.

which he described one of his experiences. "Then I was put into a tower," he writes on another occasion, "where the smoke of the other prisoners came up so thick, that it stood as dew upon the walls, and sometimes it was so thick that I could hardly see the candle when it burned; and I being locked under three locks, the under-jailer, when the smoke was great, would hardly be persuaded to come up to unlock one of the uppermost doors, for fear of the smoke, so that I was almost smothered. Besides it rained in upon my bed, and many times, when I went to stop out the rain in the cold winter season, my shirt was wet through with the rain that came in upon me, while I was labouring to stop it out. And the place being high and open to the wind, sometimes as fast as I stopped it, the wind blew it out again. In this manner did I lie, all that long cold winter, till the next assize; in which time I was so starved with cold and rain, that my body was greatly swelled, and my limbs much benumbed."[20] Surely conditions could not be worse than these; but they were. Fox gives us another description, simply frightful, revealing conditions that can hardly be believed to-day - so unsavoury indeed, and at the same time so long, that it is omitted here.[21]

Other details we have, too, which reveal the social conditions at the time, - the propensities of some of the people to theft,[22] the plundering of wrecks on the Cornwall coast,[23] the

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20 II. 51. 21 I. 282. 22 I. 374-5 23 I.458.

drunkenness at election time[24] and so on, - but these are but of minor interest compared with what has been dwelt on already.

Another interesting feature of this Journal is the account it contains of Fox's visit to the North American colonies. He travelled very extensively and endured many hardships of which he gives us a simple yet interesting story - through woods and bogs he went, across rivers and over snow and ice, often sleeping beside a camp-fire in the open. Almost everywhere, both amongst the whites and the Indians, a kindly and attentive hearing was given to the message he had to bring and the Society of Friends was greatly strengthened in that land.[25]

Shortly after the return of Fox from America, he and a party of Friends set out on a missionary journey to the Continent and spent some time there.

One thing in this connection differentiates Fox's Journal from that written by Wesley at a later date. Both visited America and the Continent, both journeyed up and down throughout the British Isles, but while Wesley gives us many descriptions of scenery and architecture, this element is almost lacking in the work of Fox. Hardly ever does he give us even a few words of description - except, it is true, when depicting the loathsome dens into which he was thrust as a prisoner. As in the case of Wesley, Fox's one burning passion was to carry his message to the multitudes; that was his chief interest, and it is with that aspect of his life

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24 I. 466.

25 II. 143-195.

that he deals chiefly in his Journal.

When we come to discuss the literary qualities of Fox's work, we find ourselves on somewhat difficult ground. He had received but a poor education and was incapable of writing grammatic, fluent prose. Macaulay is rather harsh when he declares that, "He (Fox) was so far from knowing many languages, that he knew none; nor can the most corrupt passage in Hebrew be more unintelligible to the unlearned than his English often is to the most acute and attentive reader."[26] Still he backs up this assertion by a quotation from Fox and there is a good deal of truth in what he says. The authorities agree that the Journal, as it is usually printed, has been greatly revised from the original manuscript. "There is not one book of Fox's," wrote F. Bugg, a renegade Quaker in 'A Seasonable Caveat,' "that I can find, that is printed as it was writ, nor do I think there is four lines of G. Fox's manuscript called his Journal, printed as wrote by him."[27] This revision was entrusted to the capable hands of Thomas Ellwood, whom we are to consider next.[28]

As it stands, the Journal, while not a literary masterpiece, still has its merits, especially those of sincerity and simplicity. Very little, if any, attempt is made to make the scenes vivid and effective; they are set down simply, without elaboration, and at times even become monotonous.

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26 Macaulay: History of England II. 252.

27 Quoted, Bickley: Fox, p.344.

28 Ellwood's Life. p.211.

The vocabulary is singularly varied and adequate, though at times the writer weakens over the correct use of a word and even the revision does not reveal a firm grasp of lucid sentence structure.

The true merits of the work have been well expressed by one critic in the following words. "For originality, spontaneity and unconscious power of sincere self-expression, (the Journal) is probably without a rival in English literature; ------ his narrative burns with the flame of truth and often shines with the light of artless beauty."[29]

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29 Cambridge Hist. of Eng. Liter. VIII. 103 & 104.

T H O M A S E L L W O O D.

Amongst the early Quakers, in addition to Fox, there were many men who left fervent and passionate accounts of their trials, sufferings and religious experiences. Many of these were written with great sincerity and force but were on the whole of an ephemeral nature, and having served their purpose, were justly neglected, at least as works of literature.

Some of these memoirs have survived, however, amongst them that of John Gratton. He was the child of a well-to-do farmer and as a boy tended his father's sheep and delighted "in playing cards, and shooting at bulls and ringing of bells."

Later he was "visited with the light," and, after going from one dissenting body to another, at last joined the Quakers and became a regular preacher. "He writes with ease and clearness, but lacks the crisp, pungent manner of Fox and Ellwood."[1] A mystic, he was subject to internal visions and proves an interesting study for the psychologist.

Apart from Fox's Journal, the only memoirs of the early Quakers that really hold a place in English literature are those written by Thomas Ellwood, entitled "The History of the Life of Thomas Ellwood." Ellwood held a prominent position in the sect, and being much better educated than the great majority of his

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[1] Camb. Hist. of Eng. Liter. VIII: 106.

fellow Friends, took a very active part in the controversial writing which abounded at the time.

Ellwood's Life gives us a most entertaining and valuable account of the stress and strain of those early days when persecution of the Quakers was rife. As one critic has put it, it would be hard for a novelist to write a story so full of interest as this simple narrative of a life lived in those turbulent times.

The early part of the book gives an account of Ellwood during his early years. He seems to have been very bright and an apt scholar, though rebellious of discipline. "Few boys in the school wore out more birch than I," he declares, "----- Being a little busy boy, full of spirit, of a working head and active hand, I could not easily conform myself to the grave and sober rules and, as I then thought, severe orders of the school."[2] For all this, he seems to have been of a most sober disposition, for he 'loathed scurrilities' and immoderate drinking. Owing to circumstances, the boy had to leave school at an early age, and soon forgot most of his learning. We shall see later that he by no means gave up intellectual pursuits but was ambitious and applied himself with the utmost diligence to recover the time which he had lost.

Just here we have a good example of his powers of narration. Going with his father to the Petty Sessions, the coachman drove through a cornfield, and on the way home they were held up by the irate farmer and a pal. Ellwood gives us a rapid and vivid descrip-

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2 p. 3

tion, somewhat tinged with self-consciousness and egotism, of the events; of his drawing his rapier and all but running his opponent through and so forth.

Ellwood now relates how he came into contact with the Quakers and tells us of his spiritual struggles and triumphs. There is not a great deal of this introspective element in the book but what there is gives us an interesting insight into the psychological aspect of Quakerism. He and his father paid a visit to Wm. Penington and found the family greatly altered; while still kind and hospitable, there was a feeling of restraint and soberness about their conduct which struck the visitors, who were surprised to find them Quakers. Going with the Peningtons to a meeting at the Grove, Thomas's heart was warmed by the words of Edward Burrough, who later spoke to him, making him sad and troubled and heavy of heart. He went to another meeting at John Raunce's and "this latter meeting was like the clinching of a nail, confirming and fastening in my mind those great principles which had sunk into me at the former." His trouble gradually wore away and light broke in on him. "Now was all my former life ripped up, and my sins by degrees were set in order before me."[3] An inward law was revealed unto him, a straight and plain path of duty. While he had been preserved from the grosser evils, he felt that he must get rid of vanity and superfluity in apparel, the giving of flattering titles, the respecting of persons by uncovering the head and bowing in salutation,

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3 p. 16

and the using of the plural to a single individual. He emphasizes the point that, while some of these may seem but trifling details of conduct, still under the conditions that then existed, it behooved true Quakers to be very strict in their observance of them.

The "Enemy" was not to be thus easily vanquished, but worked subtly and powerfully to trip him up. Contrary to the practice of the Quakers, Ellwood didn't wait for the guidance of the Spirit but read much in the Bible and prayed long, with the result that, "this will-worship was a great hurt to me, and hindrance of my spiritual growth in the way of truth."[4] It wasn't long before Ellwood overcame this fault and on many occasions he tells us of his retiring inwardly for communion with God, for quiet periods of spiritual comfort and rest, even while suffering imprisonment.

His new confession led to much discomfort and trouble. Once on being sent by his father on business to the Quarter Sessions he met some friends who were surprised at his attitude. "What, Tom! a Quaker," said one. "Yes, a Quaker," he replied. "And as the words passed out of my mouth I felt joy spring in my heart."[5] Ellwood's style seems to have been little influenced by some of the weighty and conventional stylists who preceded him; there is little of the antique about it and it is well suited to reporting conversations such as the above.

This extract reveals another element which runs through the

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4 p. 21.

5 p. 24.

subjective religious portion of these memoirs, though not to any very marked degree, namely a certain priggishness, religious pride and self-consciousness. This is better exemplified in a passage found much later in connection with his marriage. Although he was fond of Mary Ellis he did not want to marry except for love and with the assurance that he was right. Accordingly he often retired in spirit to the Lord about it. "At length," he says, "I felt a word sweetly arise in me, as if I had heard a voice which said, 'Go, and prevail.' And faith springing up in my heart with the word, I immediately arose and went, nothing doubting,"[6] and was successful. [illegible] is to be found. Milton.

At last Ellwood became convinced that he must give up the outward honouring of his father and this naturally led to much trouble. His father tried to prevent his going to meetings, fell upon with his fists, snatched off his cap, beat him with a birch rod and in other ways made his life miserable, but to no purpose. At last he was forced to let his son go his own way, though on his marriage, he refused to give him the promised portion. com-

Ellwood was soon taken down with smallpox and during his convalescence, he worked hard to better himself intellectually, reading many of the old fathers, including St. Augustine. That is an interesting detail, for it is generally held that the Confessions of St. Augustine have had a marked influence on nearly all subsequent writings of a similar nature. While Ellwood, as so

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6 p. 155. cf. Fox's experience. Journal II. 117-8.

has already been remarked, has little of the deeply religious element in his work, still it is quite possible that he may have been affected by these famous Confessions.

Let us now turn to what is perhaps the most noted feature of this Life and to what is certainly the most interesting from a literary point of view. Ellwood had complained to Penington that he needed a guide in his studies. His friend bestirred himself and, through the influence of a Dr. Paget, had him introduced to John Milton as his volunteer reader.

Ellwood has left what is regarded as the best account of the latter years of this great man that is to be found. Milton, as he tells us, was at this time living a private and retired life in London, having wholly lost his sight. The young Quaker used to go to read to him whatever Latin books he desired. Milton, noticing that he used the English method of pronouncing Latin, corrected him and taught him the better method, assisting him in other ways as well. This continued for about six weeks, when Ellwood's health failed and he was forced to retire to the country, returning after some time, only to have his duties further broken in upon by his arrest.

Later Milton desired him to engage a house for him in the country. This Ellwood did, renting a house at Giles Chalfont and it was here that Milton showed him the manuscript of Paradise Lost and Ellwood suggested Paradise Regained. This passage is so well-known that it would be superfluous to quote it here. After

the pestilence was over, we are told that Milton returned to London and later showed Ellwood, 'Paradise Regained.'

The chief merit and interest, however, of Ellwood's work are to be found in the minute accounts which are presented to us of the persecutions of the Quakers and the conditions of the jails at the time. Penington, Ellwood himself, and numerous other Quakers suffered imprisonment on many occasions and it would be quite beyond the scope of this thesis to deal with these cases minutely. Only a few outstanding instances of persecution and injustice can be noted.

Ellwood gives a long tale of the efforts of 'informers' to confound some of the Quakers. These informers were employed by the clergy and many were the wiles which they practised. Some of them were worsted however and indicted, the appeal being put into the hands of Ellwood. We are told how this practice of informing spread; "the worst of men for the most part being set up for informers; the worst of magistrates encouraging and abetting them; and the worst of the priests who first began to blow the fire, now seeing how it took, spread, and blazed, clapping their hands, and hallooing them on to this evil work."[7]

There is nothing in the whole volume, however, which equals in historical value, literary merit and general interest the description of the conditions in Old Bridewell and Newgate. There was a sudden outbreak against Dissenters and a meeting of Quakers at the Bull and Mouth was broken up, thirty-two in all being

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[7] p. 180.

taken to the Old Bridewell. Ellwood was the first to enter the prison and he describes very pointedly his first impressions of this stately building which had once been used as a palace. The room into which they were put was about three score feet in length, was well lighted and contained a number of tables, while the floor was covered with a layer of rushes.

As soon as word came to the ears of the other Quakers that their comrades were in prison, provisions were brought and arrangements made for procuring further supplies of food.

Many of the prisoners engaged in their several trades, Ellwood himself helping the tailors, for which he was but poorly paid.

After a long time the Friends were at last brought to trial. Ellwood, who was one of the last to be brought before the judge, listened carefully to the proceedings, seeking to discover the attitude of the judge and forming his plan of defence. When called, he revealed his cleverness at casuistry and quibbling by refusing to take the oath because he was not a free man and, by the terms of the oath, only such could swear to it. This plea was not considered and all the prisoners were committed to the common side of Newgate. The room in which they slept was so crowded that the hammocks had to be hung in three tiers. "And indeed, though the room was large and pretty airy, yet the breath and steam that came from so many bodies, of different ages, conditions and constitutions, packed up so close together, was

enough to cause sickness amongst us, and I believe did so." One of the prisoners died, and a coroner's jury was empanelled, 'an ancient man, a grave citizen' being seized upon and made to act as foreman. But the authorities had reckoned without their host for he insisted upon inquiring into the conditions in the prison. On seeing the room, he exclaimed, "Lord bless me! what a sight is here! I did not think there had been so much cruelty in the hearts of Englishmen to use Englishmen in this manner."[9]

Before going to Bridewell, whither the prisoners were now all transferred, Ellwood takes the opportunity of dwelling further on the frightful state of affairs at Newgate, a regular school of vice, "usually stocked with the veriest rogues and meanest sort of felons and pickpockets."[10] He tells of the whoredom and other forms of wickedness which were abetted by the keepers; but above all, of the quartered bodies of three men, lying in a closet. Their heads were buffeted about and jeered at by the felons, were boiled and then set up in various parts of the city, as an example to other wrongdoers.

It is interesting to find confirmation of such a state of affairs existing at Newgate at a much later time. "Of all the seats of woe, on this side hell," writes Wesley, "few, I suppose, exceed, or even equal Newgate."[11] But the scene as he had last beheld it had suddenly changed. Everything was now clean and sweet; there was no brawling, no drunkenness, no whoredom; many

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8 p. 107. 9 p. 109. 10 p. 112. 11 Journal, III: 33.

were working at their trades, whilst religion also played an important part in their lives.

A few words ought to be said in closing our discussion of Ellwood's Life about the literary qualities which it possesses. It reveals the finished style of an educated man, free for the most part, from ponderousness and unseemly mannerisms. As one critic[12] has said, these pages are written in a vivid, racy style, the interest of which rarely or never flags. That is a true criticism of the book, for the style does possess, especially in the narrative passages, a vigour and directness which is very effective.

Another critic has said that there is nothing affected about the style, that it is entirely free from the fanaticism and intolerance so generally displayed in the writings of the early Friends. A careful perusal of the book will show that such statements will not hold good. We certainly do find passages that have a measure of pompousness and 'fine writing' in them, while other passages are extremely virulent in their attack upon opponents. This is especially the case in the so-called poems which are liberally scattered throughout the pages of the Life.

But in spite of such minor faults, the work will continue to be full of interest both for the student of religious history, for the student of social conditions, and for the student of English literature.

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[12] Camb. Hist. of Eng. Liter. VIII: 105.

E D M U N D C A L A M Y.[1]

Leaving these most interesting narratives of the early Quakers, we next have to deal with a work much more ambitious yet very much less valuable for our purposes, Edmund Calamy's "Historical Account of My Own Life." It is true that he makes no very great claims for himself, declaring, "All that I pretend to is, to trace Divine Providence, in the several parts of its conduct towards me; to relate facts that occurred within my compass, and events that I was able to recollect as they presented themselves to my thoughts, or as they appeared to me upon the strictest inquiry I could make."[2] This "Account" tends to become much more of a formal history, extending to various parts of the Continent, rather than a series of personal recollections. From a reading of the introduction, too, one can hardly help forming the opinion that Calamy had high ambitions when he penned these words. There he tells of the great interest he has always taken in the Lives and Epistles of writers both ancient and modern. He reveals his wide reading in this field but leaves the impression that he almost expects to vie with these classics, equalling their virtues and avoiding their vices, as literary productions. Absence of self-consciousness was not one of the marked traits

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[1] 1671-1732. Son of Ed. Calamy, the younger.

[2] I: pp. 47,48.

of Calamy's character and one can hardly believe that it was lacking on this occasion.

Calamy came of learned ministerial stock, his father and uncles being Cambridge men who had had educated forefathers. Very few are the details of early life that are given to us, especially on the growth of his religious views; indeed there is very little of the introspective element to be found anywhere throughout the two large volumes that contain his life. As he tells us, he had moderation instilled into him from his very cradle and was early bent on being a scholar, though weak in health.

After pursuing his studies for a time under different tutors, Calamy like so many of the students of his day, passed to the Continent where he studied for some time at Utrecht. He gives us some interesting details as to the freedom enjoyed by the students, their mode of living, the state of the country, the methods and traits of the various professors, chief amogst whom was Johannes Grevius, and so forth. With many others, Calamy went to Rotterdam to see the expedition of the Prince of Orange set out for England and tells of the consternation when the Prince was forced by a storm to return.

During one of his vacations, as was the custom, Calamy paid a visit to the University of Leyden. Soon he paid a return visit to Leyden and on this occasion nearly lost his life from exposure during a skating trip, being saved by the favour of a "kind providence." This[3] is one of the most interesting personal experiences

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[3] I: 176-178.

to be found in the work. It is narrated in a clear, direct fashion but without any great vividness or force.

On another occasion, with five of his countrymen, he passed through North Holland into Friesland. There the little town of Molquerum especially interested them, built as it was "after the fashion of the old German villages described by Tacitus, without any use or observation of lines or angles, but as if every man had built in a common field just where he had a mind!"[4]

After returning to England, Calamy studied at Oxford for some time. The question arose as to whether he should become a Conformist or a Nonconformist. He went into the question very carefully and at last decided on the latter course of action. Although wanted as an assistant at Bristol, Calamy finally settled down as assistant to Mr. Sylvester in London but he did not remain there long, shortly afterwards accepting a similar position under Mr. Williams at Hand Alley in Bishopsgate-street, where he proved himself to be acceptable, earnest and fair-minded. In 1703 Calamy was called by the Dissenters of Westminster to be their minister and this was the last charge he held.

As for the religious state of the country as revealed in this Account, there were great divisions both in the Anglican Church and amongst the Dissenters on the accession of William III. to the throne. The suggestion is brought forward[5] that this dissension was largely due to the intrigues of the Jacobites who

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4 I: p. 183.

5 I: 374.

hoped in this way to further their own ends.

We are also given an interesting account[6] of the Camisars, a body of prophets which had arisen in France, committed great irregularities, been suppressed and had come to England in 1706. They proclaimed that with England as their base, they would spread over the world in the short space of three years. A number of people fell in with their views, chief amongst those mentioned being a Mr. Lacy.[7] Being cast in a suit, he became despondent, delirious and subject to "inspirations." One of these seizures is minutely described and his halting prophetic utterance recorded. One of these inspirations led him, as he said, to quit Hagar, his lawful wife, and betake himself to Sarah, one Betty Grey, who had snuffed the candles in one of the theatres but was now an inspired prophetess. With her he lived for a number of years, had several children and was at last tried for adultery.

In 1709, Calamy with a number of friends took a trip to Scotland, travelling in all about twelve hundred miles. He had a number of interesting experiences which he relates in a simple fashion, by no means striving to make his stories vivid or dramatic. On arriving at Berwick in the evening, they found the gates locked and the bridge up but after bribing the sentinel they were allowed to enter. Passing on to Edinburgh, we have a long account of the General Assembly and a description of the interesting sights that were visited. After visiting St. Andrew's

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6 II: 71-78.

7 II: 94-99, 112-114.

University, they came to Aberdeen where the people were at first unfriendly, thinking them to be a party of French prophets. While there the masters of King's College invited them to a salmon feast on the Don. The salmon were caught and put into a pond, prior to being cooked and the dogs would sometimes try to catch them. "The fish would, ever and anon turn, and either give them a flap with their tails, or bite them with their mouths, which set them a howling, and gave an odd sort of diversion to the standers-by."[8] Next Glasgow was visited. During this trip Calamy received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from three universities and was much honoured. At the close of the narration, Calamy sets down a number of observations on the Scottish people, their hospitality, the poor position of their chaplains, the excessive number of bursaries given by the universities, causing an oversupply of ministers, and so forth.

During his life Calamy was an eyewitness of a number of famous scenes; he saw Titus Oates whipped at the cart's tail,[9] was very close to Alderman Cornish at his execution[10] and noted the mobs that followed Dr. Sacheverell to his trial.[11] All these are made the subjects of brief but interesting remarks. In addition we are given details as to the inhuman treatment of a Mr. Story by Judge Jeffreys;[12] of the currency reform caused by the excessive counterfeiting and clipping of coin that was carried on;[13]

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8 II: 201. 9 I: 120. 10 I: 121. 11 II: 228.
12 I: 481-91. 13 I: 368.

of the visit of the Russian Czar in strict incognito to England;[14] while notice is taken of the most violent wind storm ever known in England, which did damage far in excess of one million pounds sterling.[15]

Besides this, there are a number of interesting anecdotes and experiences related, a number of reflections are made on the state of the country, on the death of Louis XIV[16] and on other important public events. Many of these pages are taken up with historical accounts which Calamy could not have obtained at first hand. Indeed many extracts from the works of others are inserted and the impression is given that a history is being written. One of the most interesting accounts, and one dealt with at the greatest length, is that of the Scottish Darien scheme which created such a stir not only in England and Scotland, but also in European politics and was one of the prime causes in bringing about the union of England and Scotland.

On the whole these memoirs are not of any great value for our purpose, they are rather of interest to the historian and even then much of their material is not original. They are the work of a well-educated gentleman who knew how to write directly and clearly but who had no great power or facility in making his writings live or palpitate with interest; indeed he had few experiences which would lend themselves to such a style of writing.

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14 I: 403. 15 II: 19. 16 II: 321-323.

W I L L I A M W H I S T O N.

The 'Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mr. William Whiston' bring us into an altogether different atmosphere. In an age when new sects were springing up on all sides, when there was hardly any limit to the extravagances of religious enthusiasts, one of the strangest figures was that of Whiston, "paradoxical to the verge of craziness, --- intolerant to the verge of bigotry."

Unlike the majority of religious memoirs, this work contains but little on the growth of the religious opinions of the author or on his early soul struggles. Of the unorthodox opinions he held in later life, of the controversies in which he engaged, and of the unceasing efforts he put forth to propagate his views on Primitive Christianity, lengthy accounts are given. That he was sincere and disinterested to the core is amply proved in these pages. One finds, however, an egotistical spirit which becomes quite prominent at times.¶He took orders, but soon returned to the university to pursue his studies in mathematics and the Cartesian Philosophy which was in vogue at the time. Here he came into close contact with Sir Isaac Newton who " was of the most fearful, cautious, and suspicious Temper."[1] Later he was recalled as Newton's deputy and afterwards became his successor as Lucasian professor of mathematics.

1p. 294.

Soon his friends became frightened at his religious views, for he declared his belief in the Eusebian Doctrine, generally called the Arian Heresy. They came to remonstrate with him, and to show him the danger he was running, but he told them firmly that having studied the question to the bottom he would not be moved. All the Christian writers of the first two centuries had been read through twice by him during a period of five months, and he felt sure of his ground. As a result, he founded the Society for Promoting Primitive Christianity.

Another curious view which Whiston held was that no food should be taken on Wednesdays or Fridays before 3 P.M. as he felt sure that this had been the custom of the early church. Nor was he to be beguiled into taking 'liquid' chocolate by Dr. Woodward even though the latter produced a quarto by a Cardinal proving that to do so was not breaking the fast.[2]

Another point which reveals Whiston's peculiar ideas was his attitude to the reading of the Athanasian creed in the Church of England service. Like Wesley, he longed to remain a member of that communion but had strong scruples of conscience against that part of the service. As a result, he used to leave the church whenever the creed was read. This he continued to do until Trinity Sunday, 1747, when he finally left the Church of England altogether.

That Whiston was sincere and earnest is strikingly revealed

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2 p. 242 & cf. St. Simon's Memoirs, XVIII: 337.

in his attitude towards the laxity, inactivity and scramble for preferment which characterised the Church of England.for many years, and which really terminated as a result of the revival under Wesley. Time and again, this subject is brought up for scathing mention. Nor are the very highest spared in the general denunciation; on the contrary, they are the chief marks for his attacks, "being too well known to be little better than Tools of the Court, to merit better Bishopricks by voting as they are directed ; which they seldom fail to do." "In short," he concludes, "I cannot but esteem Bishops in the House of Lords, to be the very greatest Grievance of Christianity now in these Kingdoms."[3]

In addition to the theological and religious elements in these memoirs, we find a number of interesting revelations as to the somewhat loose morality, both at court and also in other walks of life. In this connection he quotes Lord Stanhope, an intimate friend of his own, as saying, "I am now satisfied, that a Man cannot set his Foot over the Threshold of a Court, but he must be as great a Rogue, as ever was hang'd at Tyburn."[4] Mention is also made of the scandal which arose over the Hell Fire Club, of which one of the Maids of Honour to the Princess of Wales was said to be a member.

The great English universities, throughout the eighteenth century and indeed on until the time of Mark Pattison, seem to

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3 p. 276. see too p. 156, 243 etc.

4 p. 304.

have been at a very low ebb, both from the standpoint of scholarship and also from that of discipline. This fact is most forcibly and distinctly dwelt on by many of the outstanding memoir writers of the time. Whiston is no exception, relating the cases of two persons "utterly ruined in my Time in our College, for want of due Encouragement to Sobriety and Virtue, and Defect of College Discipline."[5]

The most striking example of all, which reveals a very serious state of laxity on the part of the authorities, is the long account of the debauching of a young girl by the Earl of Essex.[6] The Town-clerk and Mayor of Bath were both appealed to, but refused to issue a warrant. Later Whiston called on the Earl himself who replied "that for the Lord Chief Justice, and Westminster-Hall, he did not much care, since he could appeal from thence to the House of Lords, which, he believed, would not hurt him; and that for the Prince and Princess, they were Persons of too good Sense, to be concern'd at what he had done."[7]

Throughout these pages we find in addition ~~we find~~ a number of curious and interesting anecdotes which are told in a style that is somewhat stilted and lacking in vivacity and spirit. One of the best of these stories is given in connection with Sir Richard Steele. Although the latter had written articles against the South-Sea Scheme, he spoke in parliament in its favour,

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5 p. 127.

6 cf. a somewhat similar account: Life of Mrs. Bellamy, Letter 12.

7 p. 326.

having discovered that unless he did so he would not regain his position as Censor of the Playhouse. "I accosted him thus. They say Sir Richard, you have been making a Speech in the House of Commons, for the South-Sea Directors. He replyed, They do say so. To which I answered. How does this agree with your former Writing against that Scheme? His rejoinder was this: Mr. Whiston, you can walk on Foot, and I cannot. Than which a truer or an acuter Answer could not have been made by any body."[8]

Many of these pages are taken up with summaries and tables of contents of Whiston's numerous writings. He was indeed a most voluminous author, especially on the early fathers of the church, although his best known work is his translation of the works of Josephus. Numerous essays on scientific subjects, some of real merit, also came from his pen.

On the whole, while these memoirs are interesting as revealing a singular personality and depicting the religious and moral tendencies of the age, they must not be given a high place amongst the memoirs of our period. To the general reader, they are on the whole uninteresting while the style reveals no marked qualities which might prove a redeeming feature.

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8 p. 304.

T H O M A S B O S T O N.

The "Memoirs of the Life, Times, and Writings of the Rev. Thomas Boston" carry us back to an earlier period in thought, if not in time; they are amongst the last memoirs produced by the despotism of the Scottish Kirk mentioned at some length in the introduction. The views instilled into the minds of the old Scotch Presbyterians have manifestly had a most marked effect upon Boston; he was excessively introspective and as his editor says, "The radical principle upon which the narrative in these memoirs is founded, is, 'That God hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.' This principle the author believed with his whole heart; it was often an anchor to his soul."[1] After meeting with a series of misfortunes he writes, "I know that nothing can fall out without the supreme management of my father; and from his hand I take it, as a deed of holy Providence."[2]

At an early age, Boston began to show his propensities for learning which he exhibited to such a degree in maturer life. He often used to weep until he got to school and also was so intent upon reading that he would take his Bible to bed with him at the age of seven, but not because he was religiously inclined. As he says, "I know nothing induced me to it, but the

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1 p. 448.

2 p. 338.

natural vanity of my mind; and curiosity, as about some scripture histories."[3]

Even in his early years 'providence' was guarding him. Once on going to visit a fortune-teller, "I was suddenly struck in my mind, stood musing a little between the doors, durst not go forward, but came stealing away again. Thus the unseen Counsellor preserved me from that snare."[4]

Although the young boy attended church services regularly, he was unconcerned about the state of his soul until he had reached the ripe age of eleven, when he heard Mr. Henry Erskine preach and was touched. "My lost state by nature, and my absolute need of Christ, being thus discovered to me, I was set to pray in earnest. ---- In these days I had a great glowing of affections in religion, even to zeal for suffering in the cause of it, which I am sure was not according to knowledge."[5] He relates some of his religious experiences about this time, how he was made ashamed that religion should suffer for his evil conduct, how Satan laid a snare for him by making him think that the number of the elect was already made up and that there was no room for him and so on. At other times he was severely conscience-stricken as when, on finding that he could not get payment on an account due to him, he took Dickson's Commentary on Matthew which he saw lying around. "So I restored it secretly, none knowing how it was taken away, nor how returned; and hereby

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3 p. 10. 4 p. 11. 5 p. 13

the scandal was prevented."[6]

Next Boston was sent to college at Edinburgh where he was again led on by 'providence.' We are given a few details about his life there, his friendship and his courses, the whole cost of his college education amounting to £128, 15s. 8d. Scots.

After spending some further time attending theological lectures, he became schoolmaster at Glencairn and then entered the ministry.

Some time was spent in preaching before he was finally called to Simprin. He did not wish to be settled there and his action in that regard may be taken as typical of much of his life and of much that may be found in these memoirs. After praying for light and again reading over a confession of sin which he had made, he drew up still another. "Which done, I thought on my sins and heart-monsters, till my soul was more humbled in me, then bowing my knees before the Lord, I read over the two confessions aforesaid; ---- arraigned and condemned myself, and looked to the Lord, in the promise, for mercy."[7] After pursuing a somewhat similar course for some time, he drew up long and minute lists of reasons why he should go to Simprin and why he should not, finding that the former more than counterbalanced the latter. "It hath cost me no small struggling," he records, "to put the knife to the throat of my inclinations in this affair and to sacrifice them to the good pleasure of God."[8] After

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6 p. 17. 7 p. 76. 8 p. 79.

some further preliminaries he decided to accept the call. "Thus did the sovereign Manager, by a train of providential dispensations, mark out my way to Simprin."[9] As has been said this example may be taken as typical of Boston's ordering of his whole course of life. On all important questions, and even on one's of a minor nature, he went through the same system of introspection, self-examination and prayer, only acting when he had received what he thought to be the direct guidance of God. Through all this we can see Boston's extreme earnestness and sincerity. He certainly possessed that absolute devotion to a Supreme Will of which Green talks, as is clearly revealed when he says in a passage somewhat lofty and pompous in tone, "On the morrow, being Saturday, at prayer my soul (even Christ the soul of my soul) made me as the chariots of Amminadab; he touched my heart with a live coal, and set it ina flame of love and desires towards him; so I wrestled for himself. Christ with anything would have satisfied me; nothing without Christ could do."[10]

But even Boston was not free from temptation, even on the side where he thought he was "best buckled." He was tempted to vanity, to stay too long in bed in the morning, and once after a special period of spiritual refreshing, "Satan fell to his old trade, and snarled like a dog at my heels, and it did me good. I was grieved to see myself fall so short of likeness to the purity of the divine image, which my soul loved."[11]

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9 p. 84. 10 p. 113. 11 p. 121.

Perhaps the chief interest of these memoirs, however, is the insight they give the reader into the peculiar mentality of their author, the perverted nature of his judgment, due to excessive introspection and peculiar views of Providence. The belief in the workings of Providence forms the real motif for the story. Several instances of this have been cited already and numerous others may be found by a casual turning over of a few pages. He saw the hand of Providence in being led to study French and in the fact that his first child had a double harelip, which he considered to be a punishment for his sins. The worst storm that had arisen in forty-two years he took to be a sign from God on account of the lack of interest on the part of the people in public affairs. On the other hand, when a violent storm broke out at a communion season, "Mr. Wilson suggested to me, that the bruised serpent was raging. ---- I saw it then, on his suggesting it,"[12] so that it was not always 'Providence' that was working.

Boston also hadastrong belief in the efficacy of prayer which he put to practical proof on many occasions. "This day being very warm, I was helped to pray to the Lord to keep the hearers from sleeping. I was heard, so that I could not but observe it."[13] Barns and garrets seem to have been favorite resorts for prayer and on several occasions he records the great strength and help he received in such places.

We find here and there other revelations of his character

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12 p. 347.

13 p. 166.

and views. Quite in harmony with his general character, we are told that worldly business was ensnaring to him and this he avoided as much as possible. He didn't like national established churches, he had ever been against the union of England and Scotland, and refused to take the Oath of Abjuration, even though by so doing he ran a great risk. Other instances of his independence of character may be found in his standing out alone against the rest of the General Assembly for the punishing of Prof. Simson who was guilty of heresy and also in his publishing notes to the Marrow of Divinity, a famous theological work which caused a great stir in the Scottish church. For his attitude in this affair he was censured by the Assembly but considered that as rather an honour.

A number of details, brief and scattered, are given which throw some light on the state of Scotland at the period during which he lived.

"Meanwhile at this time, matters had a formidable appearance, and a terrible cloud seemed to hang over the head of the nations, hastening to break. Papists and Jesuits were flocking hither from beyond seas; and things great and small were set a-going, to prepare people for receiving what was a-hatching."[14]

When the rebellion of 1715 broke out, Boston was asked to draw up a list of the men in his parish who were fit for service. This he placed in the hands of the people themselves. "When this

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14 p. 252.

work began, I foreboded my ease in this place to be at an end; they usually wreaking themselves on the ministers as the cause of all public evils. I was not out in my conjectures; for accordingly they gave themselves the loose, and that very night I heard of burning my house, &c., upon the account of that day's work."[15] What a state of lawlessness this reveals! On another occasion we are told of the drunkenness that resulted over joy at an approaching wedding and several cases of fornication are noted.

As for his writings, we are given quite elaborate accounts of his troubles about them. We are told of the genesis of The Fourfold State, that famous manual of devotion, and also of the long hours he spent praying and working over Hebrew accentuation. His work on Hebrew gave him great satisfaction which he expresses in no doubting fashion. "What a trifle my digging up gold in some mine I might have fallen upon in Peru or elsewhere, would have been, in comparison of this, which I found in my accentuated Hebrew Bible."[16]

When we come to deal with the style of this book, we find that it has considerable merit. Indeed R. L. Stevenson considered Boston as a master of style. That the style is studied one can easily see and this fact is further proved by Boston's own testimony. After telling how he had improved his Latin style by reading Cicero and noting down phrases that would help him, he proceeds, "I had formerly, upon occasion of appearing in print,

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15 p. 269.

16 p. 279.

done the same as to the English tongue; by which means my style, that I had been careless of before, was now somewhat refined."[17] At times, the sentences are brief, rapid and antithetical; at other times, they are long and elaborately worked up. On occasion, however, the style is involved and the words are placed out of their usual order. There are also to be found passages in which there is a tendency to rhetorical expression and pompousness.

Boston makes a plentiful use of very expressive and apt similes and metaphors, especially nautical in their nature. "I thought I should be shut," he writes, "but when I found the wind blow, I thought I would not draw down my sails hastily; for he made me say, 'It is good to be here.'"[18] "Yet was I as a drunken man, incapable to put himself out of the way of the cart wheels. I also had some flashes of a frame, but passing. On the Lord's day morning, worldly thoughts were as bird's lime to my feet."[19]

Another quality which Boston's style possesses is originality of epithet and phrasing. This is exceedingly marked and shows real ability and inventiveness. One of his favorite expressions is "passing over the belly of my inclination," while after spending a morning in secret prayer and self-examination, he writes, "My heart was touched with his hand put in by the hole of the lock."[20]

As for his vocabulary, it is fairly large and contains really very few words that are dialectal or peculiar.

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17 p. 352. 18 p. 114. 19 p. 132. 20 p. 285.

On the whole, beyond certain qualities of style and a few revelations of national conditions, these memoirs are of no very great value except in so far as they tend to reveal that peculiar mentality which existed amongst the Scotch religious leaders of that time.

W E S L E Y.

To understand the significance of Wesley, the deep and far-reaching revolution which he brought about, to understand much that is found in his Journal, one must have some idea of the England to which he came.

After the long and strict dominance of the Puritans during the middle of the seventeenth century, a reaction took place, and at the opening of the eighteenth century the temper of the English people was deeply materialistic and rationalistic; there was practically no religious enthusiasm - even the Dissenters had fallen upon evil times. Real spirituality was markedly absent. Green, who gives a very clear and concise picture of the times, declares, "Never had religion seemed at a lower ebb. The progress of free inquiry, the aversion to theological strife which had been left by the Civil War, the new intellectual and material channels opened to human energy, had produced a general indifference to the great questions of religious speculation which occupied an earlier age. ----- A shrewd, if prejudiced, observer brands the English clergy of the day as the most lifeless in Europe, 'the most remiss of their labors in private, and the least severe in their lives,'"[1] while Montesquieu writes, "Je passe en France pour avoir peu de religion; en Angleterre pour avoir trop."

Lecky, further emphasizing a point that has already been

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1 Green: A Short Hist. of the Eng. People, p. 706, ed. 1875.

dwelt upon in connection with Whiston, says that "the universities, which were the seed-plots of English divinity, had fallen into a condition of great moral and intellectual decrepitude,"[2] and this statement we find further substantiated in Gibbon, Adam Smith, and also in Wesley.

Such was the England into which Wesley was born - an England of formalism, rationalism, materialism; such was the England that Wesley revolutionized, leaving a deeper impress, some assert, on the whole future of the English people than any other man of his century, even more than Pitt, Wolfe, Clive, Wilberforce, Marlborough, Nelson, Wellington, all the great men of that great century. "No other man," says Birrell, "did such a life's work for England,"[3] while Lecky asserts that Wesley "has had a wider constructive influence in the sphere of practical religion than any other man who has appeared since the sixteenth century."[4]

It is the Journal of this spiritual giant that we have to consider, a work which in itself is a marvel. The original consists of twenty-one closely-written volumes, covering a period of fifty-five years, from October 14, 1735 to October 24, 1790, "the most amazing record of human exertion ever penned or endured."[5] Few must have been the opportunities for literary work offered to one who during his career travelled upwards of two

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2 Lecky: Eng. in the 18th. Cent. II: 581.

3 & 5 Augustine Birrell: Miscellanies pp. 35 & 12, ed. 1902.

4 History, II: 687.

hundred and fifty thousand miles and preached forty thousand sermons. Such a man must indeed have been endowed with absolutely wonderful strength and endurance and an all-powerful purpose and ideal in life. That is the very impression that a perusal of his Journal leaves in one's mind.

At the outset, it must be admitted that the greater portion of this work is uninteresting, concerned as it is with sermons, conversions, conversations on personal religion, and so forth - except in so far as it unconsciously gives one of the most vivid portraits of personality to be found in written page.

"I went over to Kingswood: sweet recess!
Where everything is now just as I wish. But
'Man was not born in shade to lie!'
Let us work now, we shall rest by and by."[6]

That at eighty-five years of age! And on at least one occasion at that age, he preached to a congregation of twenty-five thousand.

Truly, as one writer has aptly expressed it, this is "a work of literary power inspired by religion and permeated by a force that is almost superhuman."[7]

What was the secret of this power, what was the dynamic force of this life of such amazing activity and influence? The answer is to be found not in the physical or intellectual world primarily, but in the spiritual. The source from which Wesley derived the strength for these years of unceasing labour, lay

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6 IV: 486. 7 Seccombe: Age of Johnson, p. 123.

in the fact that he had become acquainted with the central truth of Christianity, the need of personal faith in and dependence on Christ. To find the most conclusive proof of this assertion, one has only to turn to the pages of his Journal, "No one ever looked at religion in a more scientific way, or tried it more absolutely by scientific methods, than did Wesley;"[8] and his account of his own religious experience is no exception to this rule.[9] That account is characterized by logical reasoning, by an accuracy of statement and by a desire to lay the whole case before the reader.

Up to the age of twenty-two, while observing the outward forms of religion, Wesley had on the whole been living in sin, though not such sin as was "scandalous in the eye of the world." At this time, his father urged him to take Orders and he began "to aim at and pray for inward holiness."

Then followed years of self-denial, the diligent use of all the 'means of grace,' and ineffectual striving to attain holiness through works. The little band of "Methodists" at Oxford became famous for the rigour of their lives and for their deeds of mercy; but in spite of all this, they did not find peace and satisfaction.

Wesley next went to America where the same agonizing effort was continued but with no greater success. "I went to America,

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8 Fitchett: Wesley, p. 154.

9 Journal I: 96-103.

to convert the Indians," he cries, "but oh! who shall convert me! ------ I have a fair summer religion; I can talk well; nay, and believe myself, while no danger is near: but let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled. --- O who will deliver me from the fear of death! What shall I do? Where shall I fly from it."[10]

In another powerful expression of his deepest thoughts, part of which is a paraphrase of the passionate self-commendation forced from St. Paul,[11] Wesley diagnoses his religious state in these words: "The faith I want is, A sure trust and confidence in God, that through the merits of Christ my sins are forgiven, and I reconciled to the favour of God."[12]

While in this spirit of unrest, he met Peter Bohler, a simple Moravian, who clearly convinced him of unbelief. Wesley could not accept Bohler's doctrine of instantaneous conversion but on searching the Scriptures and listening to the personal testimony of several witnesses, he was at last - but only after he had been thoroughly convinced by evidence - forced to agree that such was indeed the truth.

Matters were now coming to a crisis. Wednesday, May 24, 1738, dawned, and with it a series of coincidences. About 5 A.M., Wesley opened his Testament at the words, "There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, even that ye should be

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10 I: 74.

11 II Corinthians: 11, vs. 22-30.

12 I: 77.

partakers of the divine nature." Again, just as he was going out, his eye fell upon the words, " Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." In the afternoon, the anthem at St. Paul's re-echoed the note that was in Wesley's heart. All these were but feeble rays compared to the brilliant beam into which they focused on that night, a beam that burnt into his inmost soul, whose light and fire never went out; which still continues to blaze with reflected light in the lives of many.

But Wesley alone can tell the story, in his simple, direct fashion. "In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate-street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away 'my' sins, even 'mine,' and saved 'me' from the law of sin and death." ------

"After my return home, I was much buffeted with temptations; but cried out, and they fled away. They returned again and again. I as often lifted up my eyes, and he sent me help from his holy place. And herein I found the difference between this and my former state chiefly consisted. I was striving, yea, fighting with all my might under the law, as well as under grace; but then I was sometimes, if not often, conquered: now, I was always conqueror."[13]

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13 I. 102.

There we have the secret of that "force that is almost superhuman." From that day, Wesley's outlook on life changed, his perspective was altered, his power was strengthened. The old feeling of discontent and unrest passed away, the ineffectual striving ceased, and a new note was sounded out. Not that he was never tempted; far from it, but he was now conqueror through another's strength. On one occasion, ascribing his freedom from care to his own strength, "that strength was witheld, and I felt what it was to be troubled about many things ---- till I found it absolutely necessary to fly for my life, and that without delay."[14]

The spirit which breathes through the pages of the Journal is not that of religious self-complacency and self-consciousness but rather that of humility, well expressed in the following words. "Let me think and speak as a little child! Let my religion be plain, artless, simple! Meekness, temperance, patience, faith and love, be these my highest gifts; and let the highest words wherein I teach them, be those I learn from the book of God!"[15]

Many other examples of Wesley's interest in religious phenomena, which would furnish instructive data for the psychologist are to be found in the pages of his Journal. Especially at the opening of his remarkable work, his preaching was followed by marvellous manifestations of religious possession. On all sides, persons were struck down as though by some unseen hand

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14 I. 485.

15 I. 255.

and lay writhing and groaning until "their heaviness was turned into joy." Wesley is by no means dogmatic with regard to these cases. He sets down the details in full, adding such comments as, "I just relate what was spoken to me, without passing any judgment upon it," forms his own opinion on the matter and gives others perfect liberty to differ from him if they so desire.

One instance of such possession will suffice; the case of a drunkard - which might be amusing under other circumstances - who was converted, fell from grace on the fifth day, drove his companions out of the house, picked up his landlady and deposited her in a kennel outside, threw the door into the streets, "and then ran into the fields, tore his hair, and rolled up and down on the ground." A few days later, creeping in to a Love-feast, "he was seized with a dreadful agony, both of body and mind," but on prayer being offered on his behalf, he was relieved and burst out into shouts of joy.[16]

In clinging to a belief in witchcraft, Wesley ran counter to the main current of the thought of his day. This fact he bewailed, holding that the giving up of witchcraft was "in effect, giving up the Bible," and in direct opposition "to the suffrage of the wisest and best of men, in all ages and nations."[17] His views on this point he prefixes to " as remarkable a narrative as any that has fallen under my notice,"[18] having to do with the strange case of Elizabeth Hobson, to whom strange apparitions

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16 III:139 & 140.

17 III. 330.

18 III: 331-341.

appeared of persons who were on the point of death or who had already died. Minute details are given of these wonderful occurrences, Wesley adding little comments here and there. Through it all, he shows his fair-mindedness; he is open to correction when sufficient evidence is given; he bases his judgments only on what he considers to be irrefutable facts and evidence.

Wesley also believed firmly in the intervention of Providence to punish, to strengthen and to help. A severe shower of hail was a reproof for negligence in exhortation and instruction;[19] on several occasions, his voice was restored just at the time of meeting;[20] on opening the Bible at random, guidance was given and texts furnished.[21] Twice, he had most remarkable escapes from death on meeting with accidents while riding or driving.[22] Prompt answers were also received to prayer, storms were calmed and sinners convicted.[23] "In the evening we mightily wrestled with God for an enlargement of his work. As we were concluding, an eminent backslider came strongly into my mind; and I broke out abruptly, 'Lord, is Saul also among the prophets? Is James Watson here? If he be, show thy power!' Down dropped James Watson like a stone, and began crying aloud for mercy."[24]

As the 'Methodist' movement began to grow, as it did with great rapidity, much opposition was encountered from many quarters. To begin with, the mobs, often urged on by the clergy, the

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19 I. 85; 20 II. 57 etc. 21 I. 163, 175, 203.
22 II. 54 & IV. 19. 23 II. 166. 24 III. 482.

justices or the gentry, very frequently created a great uproar, pelted Wesley with stones, drove cattle into his meetings and in other ways did what they could either to injure him personally or to prevent him from carrying on his work.

One of the best accounts which Wesley gives of this aspect of his life is contained in the relation of his experiences at Falmouth, July 4, 1745.[25] This passage also illustrates well various qualities both of his character and of his literary style. While he was visiting a sick woman, a mob surrounded the house, broke in the door and only a wainscot-partition separated them from Wesley. He stood his ground, however, and when the inner door was forced from its hinges, he stepped forward. "Here I am. Which of you has anything to say to me? To which of you have I done any wrong? To you? Or you? Or you?" He went on in this way until he had reached the street, gained a hearing and thus won over the crowd. Such was the way in which Wesley met opposition. He did not turn his back on the rioters but faced them fearlessly, using all the consummate tact and skill which he possessed in handling men. And in this way he nearly always discomfited his opponents. We see here, too, the brevity, conciseness, almost abruptness, of his sentence structure; the vitality, vigour and pictorial power of his style.

But opposition other than that of physical force was encountered. All manner of accusations and slanders were made

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25 I. 508-511.

against him; he was a Papist, if not a Jesuit; was breaking away from the Church of England and so on. Through all this he showed his tolerance and broad-mindedness. Though obliged from the very necessity of the case to modify, in some minor details, Episcopalian government and practice, still, to the end of his life, Wesley continued as a member of that church and sought not to break away from it. This is shown in various letters and other entries in the Journal.[26]

But we must not be carried away with the idea, that these pages are filled merely with entries pertaining to spiritual matters. By no means. "Wesley's Journal is very well worth reading, and having;" says Ed. Fitzgerald, with whom the book was a favourite, "not only as an outline of his own singular character, but of the conditions of England, Ireland, and Scotland, in the last century."[27] And he might have gone much further. Indeed, one of the things that strikes the reader of Wesley's Journal - in marked contrast to that of Fox - is the universality of his interest; there is hardly an aspect of life upon which he does not dwell; science, art, music, literature, natural scenery, human foibles - almost an endless list might be drawn up of the subjects mentioned in these pages.

During his very extensive travels, extending to the southern North American colonies and also to Europe, especially

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26 I. 490, 540; IV. 445; II. 352.

27 Letters: vol. 2. p. 254.

Holland, Wesley had an unparalleled opportunity for observing social conditions and customs.

At the age of 32 he set out for Georgia and spent some time there, travelling about and making observations and inquiries as to the real state of the Province. We are given minute details as to the climate, soil, products and settlements of the colony, set down in a manner which reveals the logical, keen observer who is precise and knows well how to get to the bottom of the evidence. This is especially well revealed in his remarks about the Indians. "The following is extracted, partly from those (relations) wherein all, or the generality of them agree; partly from the relations of such as have been occasionally amongst them, and have no interest in making them better or worse than they are."[28] The evidence of such a man surely has to be respected. Then follows a general account of their government and social customs. "As they have no letters, so they have no religion, no laws, no civil government."

Next, the various tribes are treated separately; their habitat, strength and peculiar customs and habits all being dealt with, the whole forming what is probably one of the most valuable accounts of early colonial conditions to be found.

Shortly after his return from America, Wesley went to Holland and again we are given a number of interesting details as to the life and customs there.[29] The first thing that struck the

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28 I: 65.

29 I: 105 flling.

traveller was the fine paved road leading for miles out of Rotterdam and lined on both sides with walnut-trees. On arriving at Goudart, they were surprised at finding difficulty in gaining admittance to a poor inn, after having been refused entertainment at several others. At Reinberg, they were obliged to spend a Sunday evening "at a little house, where many good Lutherans were concluding the Lord's day (as is usual among them) with fiddling and dancing!"[30]

It would take too long to dwell on all the details given. Mention ought to be made however of his outburst against what he considered the inhuman usage which they met with in almost every German city, in being examined by magistrates before being allowed to go to an inn.

Another thing that struck Wesley was the dress and customs at church in Meissen. "After breakfast we went to Church. I was greatly surprised at all I saw there: at the costliness of apparel in many, and the gaudiness of it in more; at the huge fur caps worn by the women, of the same shape with a Turkish turban; which generallyhad one or more ribands hanging down a great length behind. The Minister's habit was adorned with gold and scarlet, and a vast cross both behind and before. Most of the congregation sat, (the men generally with their hats on, at the prayers as well as sermon.)"[31]

On turning to the accounts of social conditions in Ireland,

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30 I. 107.

31 I. 112.

we find that the situation in some parts of the country must have been appalling. At Ballygarane, Wesley found that many of the tenants had had to leave owing to the impossibility of gaining a livelihood. "I stand amazed!" he exclaims, "Have landlords no common-sense, (whether they have common humanity or no,) that they will suffer such tenants as these to be starved away from them."[32]

"One who looks on the common Irish cabins," he writes on another occasion, "might imagine Satan still reigned here: -

'----------Cum frigida parvas Praeberet spelunca domos; ignemque laremque Et pecus et dominos communi clauderet umbra.' Communi umbra indeed; for no light can come into the earth or straw-built cavern, on the master and his cattle, but at one hole, which is both window, chimney and door."[33]

Imagine again what Dickens would have said concerning the dirty, ragged children - fourteen or fifteen boys, and nineteen girls - at the Charter-School at Ballinrobe whose allowance for food was a penny farthing a day each and who slept, the boys in three beds, the girls in five![34]

Amongst the more curious notes jotted down by Wesley are those giving an account of a new village of a hundred houses in Scotland, built and occupied by beggars, who in the spring spread over the kingdom, returning in the autumn;[35] and also of six old men-of-war divided into from forty to sixty tenements apiece,

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32 III: 227. 33 II: 60. 34 IV. 317. 35 IV. 76.

each containing a family and kept sweet and tolerably clean.[36]

Wesley also manifests an interest, as does Evelyn in his Diary, in oddities and various phenomena. He mentions a wonderful speaking clock and statue;[37] a genius who, blind from the age of four, made his own clothes and built an organ and learned to play on it;[38] another man born without arms who took a teacup between his toes and his toast with the other foot, wrote fairly well and in general did with his feet what ordinary mortals do with their hands. He also notes his peculiar interest in seeing a nightly cereus in flower,[39] and some strange animals,[40] one a cross between a bear and a wild boar.

Wesley resembles Dickens too in his hatred of the machinery and injustice of the law. He does not mince his words but unhesitatingly breaks out into vehement and forcible irony and sarcasm. "I called on the Solicitor whom I had employed in the suit lately commenced against me in Chancery; and here I first saw that foul monster, a Chancery Bill! A scroll it was of forty-two pages, in large folio, to tell a story which needed not to have taken up forty lines! And stuffed with such stupid, senseless, improbable lies (many of them, too, quite foreign to the question) as, I believe, would have cost the compiler his life in any Heathen Court either of Greece or Rome. And this is equity in a Christian country! This is the English method of redressing other grievances!"[41]

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36 III.316. 37 III.92. 38 IV.74. 39 IV.192. 40 IV.510. 41 I.482.

But the example, par excellence, of his outspoken disapproval is to be found in connection with the case of a poor man accused of assisting in running some brandy. A Declaration was made out against him, full of lies; he was arrested and ill-used. "O England, England!" Wesley vehemently breaks out, "will this reproach never be rolled away from thee? Is there any thing like this to be found, either among Papists, Turks, or Heathens?"[42]

We also find many keen reflections and observations on life in its various aspects; the growth of religion,[43] the darkness of error,[44] the peculiar traits and characteristics of certain classes or groups of people,[45] the so-called advantages of country life (quite elaborately dwelt on)[46] and also on economic questions.[47] These all go to reveal Wesley as a man who took a most vital interest in practically every branch of life and also as a man who thought things out clearly and distinctly, coming to a fearless judgment.

One of the most characteristic points in this connection is the constant repetition of the reflection on the comparative transitoriness and worthlessness of human life and achievement. Time and again, after viewing some elaborate workmanship or visiting some important personage, the account is rounded off with such an observation. This is well brought out in Wesley's remarks on the King. "I was in the robe-chamber, adjoining to the House

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42 III. 66. 43 II, 480,489. 44 II, 34; 45 II.420, III.257, 281. 46 III. 273. 47 IV. 73, 461.

of Lords, when the King put on his robes. His brow was much furrowed with age, and quite clouded with care. And is this all the world can give even to a King? All the grandeur it can afford? A blanket of ermine round his shoulders, so heavy and cumbersome he can scarce move under it! A huge heap of borrowed hair, with a few plates of gold and glittering stones upon his head! Alas, what a bauble is human greatness! And even this will not endure."[48]

During his travels up and down the country, Wesley visited many of the celebrated ruins of the country such as the Abbey and Castle at Ashkayton,[49] Colchester Castle[50] and Inverness Abbey.[51] He seems to have taken a very great interest in these and has made most careful and elaborate jottings of his impressions. Of Gothic architecture, he held the views common in the 18th. century, describing the cathedral at Colen as "mere heaps upon heaps; a huge, mis-shapen thing, which has no more of symmetry than of neatness belonging to it."[52] Many more modern buildings are also described; the Irish Parliament buildings (noted for their culinary arrangements),[53] a fine modern museum,[54] an extraordinary house built by an eccentric scholar,[55] all are dealt with at some length.

One of the chief points which differentiates Wesley from other writers of religious memoirs of our period - indeed from

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48 II. 318. 49 III. 439. 50 II. 435. 51 III. 405
52 I. 107. 53 IV. 397. 54 IV. 177. 55 II. 413.

nearly all of his contemporaries - is the large amount of description of natural scenery which his Journal contains. Now it is to form a background or vignette for his congregation, now it is a prospect from some famous mountain. These pictures are on the whole not studied for literary effect but nevertheless have much merit.[56]

Though leading such a strenuous life, Wesley still found time - chiefly while riding on horseback - to do a large amount of varied reading and as Lecky puts it, "one of the charms of his journals is the large amount of shrewd literary criticism they contain."[57] In all some two hundred and sixty-four books are either mentioned or criticized at some length; nor are these books confined to one special class. By no means; the range of Wesley's reading covers a very wide field, from Homer to Hume, from Marcus Antonius to Voltaire. These criticisms are characterized by an independence and unconventionality quite in keeping with the general character of their author; if a work, no matter how famous does not please him, he says so in a most outspoken fashion. Machiavelli, Sterne, Lord Chesterfield all come in for harsh criticism, not so much for their style as for their views; while of Rousseau, he writes, "I read with much expectation, a celebrated book, Rousseau upon Education. But how was I disappointed! Sure a more consummate coxcomb never saw the sun! How amazingly full of himself! ------- But I object to his temper

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56 II. 12, 28; III. 95 etc.

57 History, II: 685.

more than to his judgment; he is a mere misanthrope, a cynic all over. So indeed is his brother infidel, Voltaire; and well nigh as great a coxcomb;"[58] and on another occasion, "Rousseau, a shallow, yet supercilious infidel, two degrees below Voltaire."[59]

One cannot deny that his judgments were biased by his strong religious nature and views and yet that did not prevent his appreciating those who differed greatly from himself both in life and opinions. Amongst the writings which seem to have pleased him may be mentioned the Odyssey and Iliad, Macpherson's Fingal, which he declares to be "little inferior to either Homer or Virgil; in some respects superior to both,"[60] and Byron's Poems.

Thus on the whole, as Birrell says, "if you want to get into the last century, to feel its pulses throb beneath your finger --- ride up and down the country with the greatest force of the eighteenth century in England."[61] On the whole this is true - but with one exception of the greatest importance. Think of the days in which Wesley lived, think of the excitement that must have throbbed in the heart of the English nation; and no one man, probably, lived nearer to that heart, had his finger more nearly on the nation's pulse than Wesley. And yet what does he tell us of this, - but little, a few extracts from letters of his converts on the battlefield, dealing chiefly with the spread of his cause amongst the ranks, a jotting now and then at great intervals of some rejoicing or preparations for war.[62]

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58 III.394. 59 IV.15. 60 IV.283. 61 Miscellanies, p.34.
62 I. 523-8, II. 506 etc.

When one comes to a consideration of Wesley's style, his own confession ought to be kept in mind. "As for me," he wrote, "I never think of my style at all; but just set down the words that come first. Only, when I transcribe anything for the press, then I think it my duty to see every phrase be clear, pure and proper. Conciseness (which is now, as it were, natural to me) brings quantum sufficit of strength. If, after all, I observe any stiff expression, I throw it out, neck and shoulders."[63] Wesley has put his finger on the exact qualities which his style exhibits, precision, conciseness, accuracy of language. The "note of hurrying speed, that breathless economy of description, is characteristic of the whole Journal."[64]

It is that very unstudied character of the style which gives it its chief charm. The little unconventional asides that are thrown in here and there, the racy descriptions of incidents and events, the dry pungent irony and sarcasm, these are the qualities which make the pages of Wesley's Journal live with vital interest and reality. And through it all throbs the sincere earnestness of a true and fervent soul.

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63 Quoted, Fitchett, p. 477.

64 ibid, p. 200.

A L E X A N D E R C A R L Y L E.

Revealing as it does a character of an altogether different stamp, the 'Autobiography of Dr. Alexander Carlyle' stands in marked contrast to the 'Journal of John Wesley.' Wesley considered it a "heavy afternoon" when he "was obliged to be in genteel company for two or three hours together,"[1] whereas Carlyle took the greatest delight in conviviality, genteel company and what to Wesley would have been most worldly pleasures, for a clergyman at least.

The title, autobiography, is somewhat misleading for these recollections of Carlyle's are true memoirs in the narrowest interpretation of that word. They were started on the author's seventy-ninth birthday and have primarily an objective interest. The purpose and nature of the book are well set forth in the first paragraph. "Having observed how carelessly, and consequently how falsely, history is written, I have long resolved to note down certain facts within my own knowledge, under the title of 'Anecdotes and Characters of the Times,' that may be subservient to a future historian, if not to embellish his page, yet to keep him within the bounds of truth and certainty."

These memoirs are not intended to be a revelation, first and foremost, of the inner self, like Grace Abounding, but of

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[1] Journal, III: 288.

the social and literary life of the time. How well this purpose is achieved is expressed in the following appreciation. "This book contains by far the most vivid picture of Scottish life and manners that has been given to the public since the days of Sir Walter Scott.[2] We doubt whether there is anywhere to be found so trustworthy a record of the domestic, social and intellectual life of a whole bygone generation, or an appreciation of the individual peculiarities of the persons by whom that generation was led, as shrewd and unprejudiced, as has been bequeathed to us by this active, high-spirited, claret-drinking, play-going, and yet withal worthy and pious Minister of the Kirk."[3]

One of the best instances of the accomplishment of the purpose of these memoirs is to be found in the long account of the Rebellion of '45. Carlyle was intimately connected with these stirring events and describes them in a most realistic fashion, throwing in little touches here and there which lend an added interest to the story. The panic in Edinburgh, the forming of a volunteer regiment among the students, the flight on hearing a rumour of the approach of the Highlanders, the terror of the troops, their utter rout at Preston Pans - of which battle Carlyle was an eye-witness - all stand out before us, clearly and vividly portrayed.

Wakened from his slumbers by the sound of the first cannon

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2 The Autobiography was not published until 1860.

3 Edin. Rev. Jany, 1861.

fired at Preston Pans, Carlyle ran to his father's house and then out into the garden to view the battle. "Even at that time, which could hardly be more than ten or fifteen minutes after firing the first cannon, the whole prospect was filled with runaways, and Highlanders pursuing them. --- The crowd of wounded and dying now approached with all their followers, but their groans and agonies were nothing compared with the howlings, and cries, and lamentations of the women, which suppressed manhood and created despondency."[4]

This episode fills some forty-five pages and forms one of the most interesting and historically valuable portions of the book.

Another valuable account is that which Carlyle gives of the Porteous Riots and of the events leading up to them. He also tells us of the subsequent lynching of Porteous and of his premonitory dream in that connection.[5]

The numerous references to the society and social life of the times which we find scattered throughout these pages form another important element in the memoirs. The impression that Carlyle leaves in our minds is that of a man who took the greatest enjoyment in social life and intercourse; indeed one can hardly avoid coming to the conclusion that he took much pride in setting down anecdotes which revealed the intimate terms on which he lived with people of high rank. So thoroughly are these

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4 p. 142.

5 pp. 33-41.

pages permeated by this spirit of conviviality and good-fellowship that mention can be made of but a few instances.

After spending some time at Edinburgh, Carlyle passed to Glasgow to attend the college there, becoming acquainted with all the best families of whom there were but few at that period. "The young ladies were entirely without accomplishments, (as) there was neither a teacher of French nor of music in the town, (while) the manner of living, too, at this time was but coarse and vulgar."[6]

The merchants took an early dinner and then repaired to their favorite coffee-house or tavern but always went home by nine o'clock until "an arch fellow from Dublin, a Mr. Cockaine, came to be master of the chief coffee-house, who seduced them gradually to stay supper by placing a few nice cold things at first on the table, as relishes to the wine, till he gradually led them on to bespeak fine hot suppers, and to remain till midnight."[7]

Carlyle was a great club man and became a member of two clubs while living in Glasgow. These Glasgow clubs were chiefly literary, although there was also one composed of merchants who met to discuss economic questions. In addition to these clubs, Carlyle gives us an insight into the nature of the gatherings of several which he joined in other cities, notably the one composed of Scottish doctors meeting at the British Coffee-house,

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6 p. 75.

7 p. 76.

London,[8] and the famous 'Poker' Club, founded in 1762.[9] "This club consisted of all the literati of Edinburgh and its neighbourhood. ------ The establishment was frugal and moderate, as that of all clubs for a public purpose ought to be. We met at our old landlord's at the Diversorium, now near the Cross, the dinner on the table soon after two o'clock, at one shilling a-head, the wine to be confined to sherry and claret, and the reckoning to be called at six o'clock."

On many other occasions[10] Carlyle takes the opportunity of mentioning the cheapness of living. Once when storm-bound from Thursday morning to Sunday morning, his bill amounted to only three shillings and six pence, which with incidentals finally reached five shillings; "such was the rate of travelling in those days."[11] It is interesting to find corroboration for these statements from Wesley who also vouches for the cleanliness, excellence and cheapness of the Scottish inns.[12]

We are also given an intimate picture of the family life of the Duke of Argyle, both in London,[13] and at his country house at Inverary.[14] The excellent dinners and suppers, the rubbers at six penny whist, the foibles of the Duke's character, are all the subject of anecdote and racy narrative.

One of the most peculiar revelations which brings before us

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8 p. 345. 9 pp. 419-423. 10 pp. 341, 413, 427, 434.
11 p. 98. 12 Journal, II: 194 & 252.
13 p. 352. 14 pp. 380-383.

the somewhat disorganized state of society at the time has to do with Lord Grange, the chief man in the parish of Carlyle's father. He was a man of complex character who, with his associates, "passed their time in alternate scenes of the exercises of religion and debauchery, spending the day in meetings for prayer and pious conversation, and their nights in lewdness and revelling."[15]

In his frequent visits to London, Grange had attached himself to a mistress. This fact coming to his wife's ears led her to sleep with weapons under her pillow and hourly to endanger his life, as he alleged. As a result, she was carried off from Edinburgh by main force, taken through the Highlands and "landed in St. Hilda, a desolate isle in the Western Ocean, sixty miles distant from the Long Island. Here she was left for the rest of her life, often with but scanty store of provisions and in the most wretched condition."

Carlyle has also left us recollections of his student days, of the lectures in theology, and of his college companions. One of the most interesting parts of this aspect of his memoirs is the description of his experiences in Leyden, where he went to study for a year. Rapid sketches of the scenery and country are given, but here, as elsewhere, his chief interest lay in the personalities with whom he came in contact. One little touch he adds, namely his meeting Violetti, the dancer, dressed as a boy

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[15] p. 15.

on his voyage home to England. She was a celebrated opera dancer and later became the wife of Garrick.

It was only natural that a man of Carlyle's temperament should have been broad-minded in matters of religion and of the church, This we find to have been the case. He was one of the leaders of the Moderate party and made a most strenuous fight against bigotry and the restrictions placed upon social life, especially that of the clergymen. "There were a few of us," he writes, "who, besides the levity of youth and the natural freedom of our manners, had an express design to throw contempt on that vile species of hypocrisy which magnified an indecorum into a crime, and gave an air of false sanctimony and Jesuitism to the greatest part of the clergy and was thereby, pernicious to rational religion. In this plan we succeeded for in the midst of our freedom having preserved respect and obtained a leading in the Church, we freed the clergy from many unreasonable and hypocritical restraints."[16]

Take for instance his attitude on card-playing which we find expressed in some remarks on Robertson and Blair, two of his ministerial friends. "As I had set the first example of playing cards at home with unlocked doors, and so relieved the clergy from ridicule on that side, they both learned to play at whist before they were sixty. Robertson did very well - Blair never shone."[17] While in another place, he says, "Two or three of their

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16 p. 243.

17 p. 293.

clergy could be endured for they played well at cards and were not pedantic."[18] How diametrically opposed was such an attitude to that which would have been taken by Wesley or Bunyan!

One of the best examples of Carlyle's independence is to be found in the attitude which he took in connection with the production of John Home's "Douglas." This tragedy, which had been maturing for five years, was completed in February, 1755, and Home, in company with six or seven ministers, set out to carry it to London. "Were I to relate all the circumstances, serious and ludicrous, which attended the outset of this journey," writes Carlyle, "I am persuaded they would not be exceeded by any novelist who has wrote since the days of the inimitable Don Quixote."[19] Suffice it for our purpose to say that the author gives us one of the most racy and entertaining accounts of these 'clergymen on a ramble' that one could wish to read; he tells of Home's neglect to fit himself with a proper bag to place his manuscript in; of their turning aside to borrow a valise at a brother minister's, who had 'no wife, no atra cura,' to resist their request; of the quarrel of two of their number in which one had pushed the other out of bed and so on, incident after incident described in a living and pungent manner.

The play was refused by Garrick and it was at last decided to have it produced in Edinburgh where it met with "unbounded success." Indeed it seems to have created a great stir at the

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18 p. 475.

19 p. 301.

time as may be seen from an extract from Wesley's Journal. "To-day, Douglas, the play which has made so much noise, was put into my hands. I was astonished to find, it is one of the finest tragedies I ever read. What pity that a few lines were not left out! And that it was ever acted at Edinburgh!"[20]

But to return to the point which this illustrates. "The High-flying set were unanimous against it, as they thought it a sin for a clergyman to write any play, let it be ever so moral in its tendency."[21] Dr. Carlyle took an active part in the controversy, writing several pamphlets in favour of Home, and attended the theatre on the third night. On his return home to his parish, he found a summons to attend the Presbytery on the 1st. of March to answer for his conduct. Carlyle put up a stout defence, and, while the majority of the Presbytery were against him, he managed to carry his case in the Synod by three votes. An appeal was taken to the Assembly, where he was completely vindicated by a vote of one hundred and seventeen to thirty-nine.

Carlyle then goes on to tell us of the attitude of the ministers to the theatre. On the occasion of Mrs. Siddons first appearance in Edinburgh, even the august General Assembly had to so arrange its agenda that no important business arose on the days when she was acting, so many of the ministers were there who went to see her act.

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20 Journal, II: 379.

21 p. 312.

Nevertheless we must not be led to think that Carlyle was not a diligent and earnest clergyman. Far from it; he occupied an important place in the church at large and was a highly esteemed pastor in his own parish.

But the feature which makes this autobiography most valuable and interesting is not the details of social life, not the history of the struggle for broad-mindedness in church matters, not the accounts of historical events which are given to us. All these have to be subordinated to the pen portraits of living personalities which abound in these pages. As has been hinted before, Carlyle's chief interest seems to be that of conveying to his readers a picture of the men and women with whom he came in contact. Living, as he did, on terms of intimacy with many of the leading men of his day, Carlyle had an excellent opportunity of studying their characters. Of this he took full advantage, with the result that one can hardly turn over even a few pages of his memoirs without coming upon a sketch of some important personage. It was not so much the physical appearance of his friends that interested Carlyle as their little foibles, their intellectual powers and other traits in their characters.

Some of these portraits reveal a marked quality of rapid characterization. This is done especially in the case of "inferior characters" who are described in a few words. "Smith was a sly northern, seemingly very temperate, but a great counsellor of his neighbour and countryman Primrose. Watson was a dark inquisitor of some parts. Walker was a rank enthusiast with nothing

but heat without light. John Bonar at Cockpen, though of the High party, was a man of sense - an excellent preacher; he was temperate in his opposition. Robin Patton, though gentlemanly, was feeble in church courts."[22]

We have a dashing and rapid description of the conduct of a raw young Highland soldier;[23] a lively account of Sandie Woods, who became one of the leading surgeons in Edinburgh, "perfectly illiterate in everything that did not belong to his own profession, in which even he was by no means a great student," but who "supplied his want of learning with good sense, and a mind as decisive as his eye was quick;"[24] and a most humorous description of Lord Cullen's feats at mimicry.[25]

Another excellent piece of writing is that in which Carlyle contrasts Principal Tullidelph,[26] of St. Andrews - the outstanding clerical orator of the time - with Pitt, of whose oratory and character he gives his impressions somewhat later.[27]

On another occasion, he tells us of a visit he and five others paid to Garrick, where he renewed his old acquaintance with Violetti who had now retired from the stage.

Of Garrick he says, "Though vanity was his prominent feature, and a troublesome and watchful jealousy the constant visible guard of his reputation to a ridiculous degree, yet his desire to oblige, his want of arrogance, and the delicacy of his mimicry,

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22 pp. 336-7. 23 p. 146. 24 pp. 217-18. 25 pp. 269-70.
26 pp. 253-4. 27 p. 336.

made him very agreeable. He had no affected reserve, but, on the least hint, would start up at any time and give the company one of his best speeches."[28]

The leaders in ecclesiastical matters also came in for mention and while there is humor in some of these descriptions, there is a certain harshness and severity in others. Take for example Fairbairn - "brisk and foul-mouthed, who stuck at nothing, and was endowed with a rude popular eloquence; but he was a mere hussar, who had no steady views to direct him,"[29] and Webster, the leader of the High-flying party, who was a spendthrift and a hypocrite. "His aptness to pray was as easy and natural to him as to drink a convivial glass,"[30] writes Carlyle.

The most important character sketches to be found in this volume are those of men like Hume, Adam Smith, Smollett and John Home, with whom he was most intimate.

Into the latter's character he seems to have had a keen insight and he lays bare his strength and his weakness, his sprightliness and vivacity, his partiality and unpracticality, finishing off his portrait with a fine joke at Home's expense.

Of Smollett, Carlyle gives a new and somewhat more kindly view than many of his early critics. "Smollett was a man of very agreeable conversation and of much genuine humor; and though not a profound scholar, possessed a philosophical mind, and was capable of making the soundest observations on human life, and of

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28 p. 342. 29 p. 432. 30 p. 241.

discerning the excellence or seeing the ridicule of every character he met with. Fielding only excelled him in giving a dramatic story to his novels, but, in my opinion, was inferior to him in the true comic vein."[31]

In Adam Smith, Carlyle saw a character that was eccentric and odd, though of great learning and ingenuity. He is especially harsh - and wrongly so - in dealing with the writings of this great man, a point which is very well emphasized by Buckle. "Of his want of speculative power, a decisive instance appears in his remarks on Adam Smith. He gravely says 'Smith's fine writing is chiefly displayed in his book on Moral Sentiment, which is the pleasantest and most eloquent book on the subject. His Wealth of Nations, from which he was judged to be an inventive genius of the first order, is tedious and full of repetition. His separate essays in the second volume have the air of being occasional pamphlets, without much force or determination. On political subjects his opinions were not very sound.' It is rather too much when a village preacher writes in this strain of the greatest man his country has ever produced."[32]

Perhaps the most striking, important and original pen portrait in the whole volume is that of David Hume, the great Scotch sceptic or atheist as many called him.[33] He is presented

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31 p. 265.

32 Hist. of Civil. in Eng. II. p.365, note (ed. 1877, New York)

33 pp. 272-279.

to us as a man "of a social and benevolent temper, and truly the best-natured man in the world." "Though he had much learning and a fine taste, and was professedly a sceptic, though by no means an atheist, he had the greatest simplicity of mind and manners with the utmost facility and benevolence of temper of any man I ever knew. His conversation was truly irresistible, for while it was enlightened, it was naive almost to puerility." Hume was most charitable and generous, and even while his circumstances were narrow, though he kept the strictest economy, he used to entertain his friends liberally. As his worldly condition improved, he increased his hospitality greatly; "he gave both elegant dinners and suppers, and the best claret, and, which was best of all, he furnished the entertainment with the most instructive and pleasing conversation."

Perhaps the chief characteristic about Carlyle's attitude to Hume, this noted atheist, is his broad-mindedness and generosity. "I was one of those," he writes, "who never believed that David Hume's sceptical principles had laid fast hold on his mind, but thought that his books proceeded rather from affectation of superiority and pride of understanding and love of vainglory;" and he backs up his belief by a statement of Hume's. That such an attitude should have been adopted by one of the beneficed clergy of Scotland speaks well for his breadth of soul, and stands in marked contrast to the attitude of Wesley who breaks out into the following diatribe. "David Hume --- the most insolent despiser of truth and virtue that ever appeared in the

world."[34]

Dr. Carlyle was a keen observer of human nature and had a keen eye for the foibles of his fellow-men. This is most clearly shown by his remarks on the people who frequented Harrogate, many of whom were half-pay officers and clergymen.[35] With regard to the latter, he passes a somewhat harsh judgment. "They are, in general - I mean the lower order - divided into bucks and prigs. ------- And now and then you meet with a rara avis who is accomplished and agreeable, a man of the world without licentiousness, of learning without pedantry, and pious without sanctimony; but this is a rara avis."

This was the first time, too, that Carlyle had seen John Bull at any of his watering-places and he makes some most interesting observations on this, telling of the freedom which they felt, their abandonment of reserve, their kindly and social disposition, when away from the shackles imposed at home by servants and shyness.

As one writer says of the Autobiography, "Though full of gossip, it is singularly free from what can be fairly denominated scandal. It exhibits on every page the gay and jovial temper of its author."[36]

These recollections are written in true memoir style; there is no great attempt at ordered arrangement; at times they are rambling and fragmentary and jump from one subject to another

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34 Journal, III.p.470. 35 pp.441-2. 36 Edin. Rev. Jany, 1861.

at will. The style is generally in keeping with the subject matter and is free from any taint of the mannerisms of a clergyman which so often mar other similar works; it is the style of a well-educated, literarily-inclined man of the world. Carlyle has manifestly put much thought on some of his sentences which are well-turned and often arranged in antitheses, especially when two characters are being contrasted.

On the whole we must place this work high, not as a self-revelation nor as a valuable theological document, but as a really vital, lively and entertaining history of the social and literary life of the times.

J O H N N E W T O N.

"To-day I gave a second reading to that lively book, Mr. Newton's 'Account of his own Experience.' There is something very extraordinary therein, but one may account for it without a jot of predestination. I doubt not but his (as well as Col. Gardiner's conversion) was an answer to his mother's prayers."[1] Such is the way in which Wesley writes of the memoirs of John Newton, a man who received a pious upbringing, became a profligate slave-dealer and finally ended life a saintly minister of the gospel.

This "Authentic Narrative" consists of a series of fourteen letters, written between January 12, 1763 and February 2, 1764, to a ministerial friend who had asked him for "a still more distinct detail" of his early life than he had already given.

As was generally the case with writers of religious memoirs, Newton thought that he had been peculiarly dealt with by God and that the relation of his experiences might "confirm the faith of some or other of his ('our adorable Redeemer's') people."

Born on the 24th. of July, 1725, Newton was the constant care of his saintly mother, who intended to bring him up for the ministry, but death deprived the child of his companion and guide before he was seven years of age. His father soon remarried and took the young boy with him on several voyages. During this period, the youth's religious life was a series of ups and downs; a

[1] Journal, III. 382.

'providential' escape would cause him pangs of conscience but he would soon weary of a godly life and return to his blasphemy and wickedness. One specially fervent reformation he records. "I spent the greatest part of every day in reading the scriptures, meditation and prayer; I fasted often; I even abstained from all animal food for three months; I would hardly answer a question for fear of speaking an idle word."[2] While in this state of mind, Newton fell upon the writings of Lord Shaftesbury which "operated like a slow poison, and prepared the way for all that followed."[3]

On being sent on business into Kent, he visited distant relations where he met the girl, then under fourteen, who was later to become his wife. "I was impressed with an affection for her, which never abated or lost its influence a single moment in my heart from that hour."[4] This, in later years, was the one thing that kept him from going to utter ruin.

As time went on the young man "was making large strides towards a total apostacy from God," when he received a sudden check through a wonderful dream which is related in a simple, direct and telling way, without any effort being made to heighten the colouring of the picture.[5] This dream soon passed from his mind but probably left subconscious impressions which later played an important part in his conversion.

Shortly after, Newton was impressed, but later made a midshipman through his father's influence, on the Harwich, where he fell

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2 Letter 2. 3 Letter 2. 4&5 Letter 3.

in with a free-thinker who soon gained his depraved heart.

After an attempted desertion, being publicly stripped, whipped and degraded from his office, his "breast was filled with the most excruciating passions, eager desire, bitter rage, and black despair;"[6] his love was the only restraint upon his turbulent nature.

'Providentially,' however, an exchange was made with a trader bound for Sierra Leone and Africa. On board this ship he gave full rein to his passions, studied "to tempt and seduce others upon every occasion," and finally got his discharge and entered the service of an African slave-dealer.[7] In this capacity Newton met with the harshest of treatment, suffering from sickness, lack of food and clothing, and also from exposure. "I have been exposed for twenty, thirty, perhaps near forty hours together, in incessant rains, accompanied with strong gales of wind, without the least shelter, when my master was on shore."[8] His haughty heart was brought down, not by repentance but by necessity. Amid all his sufferings, strange to relate, he mastered the first six books of Euclid, drawing the figures with a stick upon the sand.

His mean estate and shame at this time are portrayed most vividly, contrasted with his later condition of blessedness, to bring out even more emphatically the good providence of God to him.

After some time a more humane master was found who gave

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6 Letter 3. 7 Letter 4. 8 Letter 5.

Newton a share in his dealings. The youth was now sinking fast into a state of assimilation to the habits of the country when, by a providential coincidence, he fell upon the very ship which his father had dispatched to look for his long-lost son. After some demur, Newton went on board and sailed away, but it was not until long years after that he reflected on the guidance of the Lord, and marvelled at his own blindness and stupidity.

On the ensuing tedious voyage, his whole life "was a course of most horrid impiety and profaneness,"[9] so much so that the captain attributed the series of misfortunes that befel the ship to the curse which he brought with him. One most vivid account does the profligate give of a hair-breadth escape from drowning as the result of a drinking bout which he had organized. Other deliverances also failed to arouse him; his conscience was at last deadened, as he thought.

Finally trading being finished, the long seven thousand mile voyage to England was begun. One day Newton, while reading Stanhope's Thomas à Kempis, felt a prick of conscience, shut the book and decided that he would abide by the choice of an evil life that he had made.

But not so easily was he to get off. He was awakened that night to find a furious storm raging; all seemed lost; the sailors had to man the pumps, and for the first time in years, he breathed a desire for mercy.

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[9] Letter 7.

Then dawned the morning of March the twenty-first, 1748, the day on which "the Lord sent from on high, and delivered me out of the deep waters. I continued at the pump from three in the morning till near noon, and then I could do no more."[10]

After an hour's rest, he was called to the helm till midnight. Thoughts of his past life came rushing in to his fevered mind, he began to recall Scripture passages, to think of that Jesus whom he had so often derided. "My prayer was like the cry of the ravens, which yet the Lord does not disdain to hear."[11]

After further reflection, "upon the gospel scheme I saw, at least, a peradventure of hope, but on every other side I was surrounded with black unfathomable despair,"[12] and later, "I was, at last, found out by the powerful hand of God, and condemned in my own breast."

Let us pass rapidly over the sufferings from lack of provisions, the disappointed hopes which had been raised by a mirage and the final 'providential' deliverance when their very last victuals were boiling in the pot.

Then follows a recapitulation of his mental state during the last of the voyage. "Before we arrived in Ireland, I had a satisfactory evidence in my own mind of the truth of the gospel -- I was quite freed from the habit of swearing, which seemed to have been deeply rooted in me, as a second nature. Thus, to all appearance, I was a new man."[13] At Londonderry, the penitent

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10 Letter 8.

11&12 Letter 8.

13 Letter 9.

attended service twice a day and first partook of the communion rites.

After visiting his friend in Kent, Newton soon set sail again for Africa and his religious life declined rapidly. At the Plantanes, the scene of his former captivity, he was seized with fever, and once more brought to himself. "Weak and almost delirious, I arose from my bed, and crept to a retired part of the island; and here I found a renewed liberty to pray. --- The burden was removed from my conscience, and not only my peace, but my health was restored. --- And from that time, I trust, I have been delivered from the power and dominion of sin."[14]

During the remainder of the voyage, Newton spent much time at mastering Horace's Odes; was exposed to many dangers, and had many providential escapes.

On arriving in England, Kent was soon visited and there his long hopes were fulfilled; he was married on the first of February, 1750.

There is no need to dwell at length on subsequent events. After marriage, Newton made three voyages to Africa in the slave-trade, met with varied vicissitudes and difficulties, but never once had any scruples as to the lawfulness of his enterprises.

At St. Christopher's, a godly ship's captain happened to meet with him who conversed much on religion, taught him to use social prayer and further increased his knowledge.

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[14] Letter, 10.

On his return to England, an appoplectic fit put an end to further voyages and he secured the post of tide-surveyor.

While in London, Newton came under the influence of Whitefield and other Methodists who greatly helped him in his religious life. He devoted much time to the study of Greek, Latin and Hebrew and at last applied for ordination at the hands of the Archbishop of York, but was refused. (Later, however, he was ordained and spent the last years of his life as a faithful clergyman.)

Such is the most interesting Narrative of the degeneration and subsequent regeneration of a soul, told in a humble, frank and most sincere way. Newton does not seek to make capital out of the 'providences' he had received; his desire is by a humble relation of experience to aid others to a higher life.

The style of these letters is exceedingly clear and direct. The ample and varied vocabulary is admirably suited to the simple yet vivid narration of events of great interest. The sentences too are, on occasion, so constructed as to add to the cumulative force. On the whole, however, there is no striving after effect; little imagery is used; seldom, if ever, does the feeling rise to a passionate height. Rather the effect is that of a simple story told in a simple way, and yet forcible for all that; a lively and interesting book, well worth the second reading given it by Wesley.

T H O M A S S C O T T.[1]

The last memoirs that we have to consider in our period are those of the Rev. Thos. Scott, Rector of Aston Sandford. These are contained in a work entitled The Force of Truth, an Authentic Narrative, are entirely of a subjective character and are interspersed with pious reflections on his own evil ways and the goodness of God towards him, a poor sinner.

Once again, we find the author holding the opinion that he had been peculiarly dealt with by the Lord and desiring to narrate his experiences for the spiritual strengthening of others. "I consider myself," he writes, "as a singular instance of a very unlikely person, in an uncommon manner, being led on from one thing to another, to embrace a system of doctrine which he once heartily despised. ------ I hoped that a circumstantial relation of it might be an encouragement and comfort to those who know and love the Lord ---- and that it also might be instrumental, by the convincing Spirit, to awaken others to a serious review of their religious sentiments."[2]

One writer has gone so far as to say that, "a more impressive piece of spiritual autobiography has rarely been written. With attractive candour it details the process by which a mind of singular earnestness, though of somewhat restricted compass, made its way from a bald rationalistic unitarianism to the

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[1] 1747-1821, there being others of the same name about that time.

[2] p. 98.

highest type of Calvinistic fervour."[3] Candour it has of a truth, but as to attractiveness, that is a point upon which opinions may differ. Just consider these two extracts, taken at random. "For ever blessed be the God of all long-suffering and mercy, who had patience with such a rebel and blasphemer; such an irreverent trifler with his majesty; and such a presumptuous intruder into his sacred ministry! I never think of this daring wickedness without being filled with amazement that I am out of hell."[4] "I had not, however, as yet attained to a knowledge of the fulness of that fountain, whence all these polluted streams flow forth so plentifully into our lives and conversation."[5] When these and other passages throughout the book are contrasted with the utterances of a Bunyan or even of a Newton, they seem to smack too much of the tract, written in somewhat studied, theological style, attractive to some perhaps, but not to all.

Nevertheless these memoirs are of interest as exhibiting a most peculiar soul-struggle and growth, and also as revealing the state of some of the English clergy - a state in which subscription to the articles had become a mere form, when preferment was the main ambition of many.

Up to the age of sixteen, Scott had never been under serious conviction as to his religious state. About this time, he was supposed to partake of the Holy Communion and was led to give

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[3] Dict. Nat. Biog. vol. 51, p. 73.

[4] p. 18.

[5] p. 54.

some attention to religion but soon relapsed into his former indifference. This same process was repeated intermittently for the next nine years. He felt that reformation was beyond his power and put it off till a more convenient season, though often suffering grievous pangs of conscience.

Meeting with Socinian writings, his conscience was soothed, he became proud, and accepted Armenian views. While in this state, living in known sin, Scott was ordained, signed articles which he did not believe and became a clergyman, his motives being desire for ease, leisure for reading, and advancement.

Some time after, a man and his wife, parishioners of his, lay at the point of death. The woman died but still he did not visit them. Newton, who was his neighbour, did and this affected Scott, aroused him from his self-complacency and led him to visit the dying man.

At last he determined to amend his ways but matters so fell out that he became more proud and sought advancement instead.

One day his eye fell on Article 8, concerning the Athanasian Creed; this struck home to his heart; he felt that he could not subscribe to the articles and so gave up his ideas of preferment, much to the disgust of his friends. Then followed a long period of earnest study and search after truth; he read the writings of Clarke, Law, and Hooker and, in spite of himself, found his views gradually changing. His preaching, too, underwent a change and he found people coming to him in anxiety over their souls. This led to his seeking more earnestly than ever

for the truth lest he should mislead them.

Scott now took up with Newton again, with whom he had previously carried on a long correspondence and step by step found his views tending towards Methodism. After some time he was forced to renounce his Armenian views as to the Trinity and to accept the orthodox beliefs. Finally, after a long and careful inquiry into the doctrine of election, he was led, about Christmas, 1777, to accept this one-time hated belief.

Thus was he led 'providentially' in a most strange and wonderful fashion to accept views diametrically opposed to those in which he had believed.

All this is recounted in a sincere and earnest fashion, with an evident desire to show forth the goodness of God to himself and to assist others. There is very little of self-complacency or spiritual pride; rather the tone is that of a man who has been humbled by the leadings of the spirit of God.

The style on the whole is direct and clear; indeed Cowper is said to have revised the book "as to style and externals, but not otherwise." One cannot help feeling, however, that as a literary production the work is somewhat marred by the occasionally studied and obtrusive theological style and also by the reflections which are interspersed here and there throughout the book.

C O N C L U S I O N.

After the close of the eighteenth century, we find that Methodism continued to progress rapidly with a natural and steady growth. As a result of this movement there was also an awakening on the part of the Anglican clergy who for many years had been in a more or less dormant condition religiously.

A new social consciousness was aroused about this period and great advances were made in the direction of philanthropy, as may be seen in the anti-slavery propaganda and other reforms that were carried through to a successful issue. Indeed not only throughout England but also throughout Western Europe new ideas of liberty, justice and brotherhood were being proclaimed far and wide, with wonderful results.

All these influences tended to turn the minds of the English religious leaders towards objective ends, and thus lessened the strongly subjective and introspective frame of mind which had dominated so many of them.

Nonconformity, too, soon began to come into its own and by degrees the religious restrictions under which it laboured and which tended to bind its members more closely together around one central belief were removed.

All these factors tended to lessen the causes which produced the mentality revealed in the majority of the religious memoirs

of the preceding two centuries. Practically the only memoirs of this nature that were of the least importance during the first half of the nineteenth century were those of the great Scottish leader, Thomas Chalmers.

It was not until about the middle of the nineteenth century that a new religious movement arose, much more intellectual in its nature than the former ones, which again turned men's minds inward and resulted in the production of a number of famous religious memoirs. The outstanding subjective memoirs were those of Francis and John Henry Newman, while Mark Pattison has also left us a volume of most interesting reminiscences of a more objective nature dealing with that troubled time.

Since that period, any number of clergymen have left memoirs and recollections, some of value, others of little worth, but still in the history of the religious memoir the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries stand out pre-eminent. Only there is it that we find burning, throbbing tales of persecution and suffering, both mental and physical; there it is chiefly that the coverings are drawn aside so that the discerning eye may see, in the hearts and minds of men, the germination of the seeds which budded forth into the greatest religious movements that have ever swayed the British race, movements that have left their mark indelibly upon the lives and characters of the Anglo-Saxon peoples.