

THE QUAKERS

FROM THEIR ORIGIN TILL THE PRESENT TIME :

AN INTERNATIONAL HISTORY.

BY

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P R E F A C E .

SOME years ago I wished to read a history of the Quakers, and could find none to read. There was, indeed, "Sewel's History," but it was a huge folio, and, after all, brought me down no farther than 1720, when the Friends were just beginning to shake themselves free from sectarianism, and to put on their harness for the world-wide work which Heaven had assigned them. "Gough's History" conducted me a few years further, but there it left me in the dark. And so, after having read them both, I knew the Quakers only as a religious sect, which had struggled into existence amid hootings, imprisonments, and martyrdoms; but not as a benevolent Society which had blessed the world. What remained of their story could be gathered only from biographies, journals, pamphlets, and tracts. So it entered into my mind that I might write a short history of them; for I felt certain if such a history were only decently written, it would be widely read. For who does not wish to know something of those

men and women who have led the van in almost every philanthropic enterprise during the last hundred years, who sit in silence when they meet for worship, whose *thee* and *thou* give piquancy to conversation, and whose very attire (now too seldom seen) lends a passing picturesqueness to our streets?

It is said that Dr. Southey contemplated writing a History of the Quakers, but was dissuaded from it. What a pity it was so. Such a master of biography and narrative would have given to the world a work worthy of the subject—a sister-book to his admirable life of Wesley. And the Quakers would have shewn well by the side of the Methodists.

My brief history is little more than an outline, and is written more for the outside world than for the Friends themselves, though I hope that even they may find it not altogether unworthy of perusal. I have endeavoured to do justice to their sincerity, their devotedness, their unwearied zeal in doing good, though I have not always been able to repress a smile at their oddities. I had been a partial writer indeed had I withheld admiration of their brave struggles for liberty of conscience, negro emancipation, prison reform, cheap education, and universal peace and brotherhood. I had been blind to all that is noble in man had I failed to hail as heroes their eminent worthies, the long list of whom, beginning with Fox and Penn, is not yet closed with Grellet and Sturge. And I had been

a poor student of history had I not recognised in their history a religious development, most interesting, but not unique, which reads us a great lesson in charity. Not altogether orthodox when measured by creeds, they have yet exhibited Christianity in its finest aspect, as a religion of liberty, love, and good-will; and in regard both to faith and good works, can challenge comparison with any Church or sect in the world.

J. C.

MANSE OF CRIEFF,
December 1867.





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THE QUAKERS:

AN INTERNATIONAL HISTORY.

Chapter I.

NEVER since the Reformation there had been a considerable body of men who were dissatisfied with the form into which the Church had been moulded by the royal hands of Henry and Elizabeth. They thought that many popish practices were allowed to remain which ought to be purged out; that institutions were kept up which ought to be cast down; that the very Reformation required to be reformed. From their aiming at a purer faith and worship they were called Puritans, but it was in derision. They had amongst them many pious and learned men, which gave them some hold on the people, but they were kept down with a strong hand by the government. Of those among them who were clergymen, many were deprived of their livings, others were cast into jail, and a few were hung by the neck on a gallows, and so cured for ever of their troublesome scruples. Religious toleration was not yet known in England, either within or without the Church. The puritans, however, still continued to

exist, and even to increase. The foolish and arbitrary attempts of Laud to lead the Church back toward Rome, helped to add to their numbers and give ground for their complaints. When the civil wars began they recruited the army, carried their motions in the Parliament, and under their pressure the proud hierarchy went to the wall. And now, when there was no longer a dominant priesthood backed by pains and penalties, strange manifestations of religious life began to appear. Sects multiplied day by day, and setters forth of new doctrines were traversing the country and importuning the people to listen to their extravagancies. The recent liberty, the religious ferment, the unsettlement of men's minds consequent upon revolution, were all favourable to the development and diffusion of disordered fancies, and accordingly sects of every conceivable kind filled the land. Some of these were destined to die with the ferment out of which they sprang; others, having within them some seeds of goodness and truth, were destined to live and influence the future fortunes of the country. Of these latter were the Quakers.

GEORGE FOX is regarded by the Quakers as the founder of their sect with the same unanimity with which Abraham is honoured by the Jews as the father of their nation. He was born at Drayton in Leicestershire, in the year 1624. "His father's name," to quote his own quaint language, "was Christopher Fox. He was by profession a weaver, an honest man, and there was a seed of God in him. The neighbours called him righteous Christer. His mother was an upright woman; her maiden name was Mary Lago, of the family of the Lago's, and of the stock of the martyrs."* George was a grave, quiet little fellow, like some of those sedate children we sometimes see, who will rather sit in a

* Fox's Journal, p. 1.

corner and mope than join in the romps of their mates, and who are said to carry an old head on young shoulders. By reason of this gravity, his relatives said, as relatives on such occasions always do say, that he must be made a priest. But his parents apprenticed him to a cobbler. As it so happened, this son of St. Crispin not only clouted shoes, but dealt in cattle and wool: and George was frequently required to transgress the sutor's proverb, and go beyond his stall into the fields, and watch over the flocks. In this occupation he is said to have taken special delight, and to have acquired in it considerable skill; and some authors have been at the pains to remark, that in this we see a just emblem of his future ministry and service.* Already he began to evince his native firmness of purpose, and to pick up some words from the puritanic vocabulary, for it used to be remarked of him, "If George says 'verily' there is no altering of him." This boy naturally developed into the man whom no dread of pillory, or prison, or stripes, could make swerve from his yea yea and nay nay by an hair's breadth.

When he grew up to manhood he began to be haunted by melancholy. He left his relatives, shunned all society, moved about from place to place, seeking rest and finding none. Sometimes he would retire into his room to brood on his state, sometimes he would take solitary walks to wait upon the Lord, sometimes he would rise from his bed and wander about all night in great sorrow, and with a mind full of darkness, conflict, and despair. A poor hair-brained youth, but with very sad thoughts, and truly anxious about his soul! The country was at this time full of serious thinking people, who were commonly called "professors," and some of these seeing this lad religiously

* Sewel's History of the Quakers, p. 7.

disposed and in much tribulation, had pity upon him, and sought his acquaintance ; but George saw only hypocrisy under all their professions ; yea, “ he looked upon the great professors of the city of London, and saw all was dark, and under the chain of darkness.”* How could they comfort and instruct him ! After a time he returned to his relatives in Leicestershire, and some of them advised him to marry—a sensible advice given by sensible people ; but George would not hear of it : others advised him to join the army, imagining, no doubt, that the change and excitement of a military life—the stir of the camp and the rattle of the drum—would drive away his melancholy, but George was grieved that they should suggest such a thing to him. He now sought the advice of the ministers of religion, and had frequent interviews with the clergyman of his native parish ; but he fancied that the subjects of their conversation during the week were made the topics of pulpit discourse on the Sunday, and this he did not like. He felt himself preached *at*, which is never a very agreeable thing to bear. He therefore resorted to an old minister in Warwickshire, and opened up to him his temptations and despair. The old minister advised him to take tobacco, and sing psalms—just such an advice as Martin Luther once gave to one in similar circumstances. “ Alas,” says George, “ tobacco was a thing I did not love, and psalms I was not in a state to sing.” But what was worst of all, the old man told all the inward troubles and griefs of the poor youth to his servants, and he now saw himself made a subject of giggling to the milkmaids. To another clergyman he went, who, seeing the sad plight he was in, recommended him to take physic and let some blood. Still comfortless, he went to another—to a doctor of divinity—to consult with him as to how troubles

* Fox's Journal, p. 3.

were wrought in the heart of man ; but as they walked together in the garden, poor George, lost in his own black thoughts, happened to step on one of the flower-beds, and the doctor being a zealous florist, forthwith lost his temper, broke off the conversation, and dismissed the youth more troubled than ever. Seven miles he walked to speak with another minister who had a great reputation for soul-experiences ; but he found him like an empty, hollow cask.* Miserable comforters were they all : and it now became apparent to the distracted youth that it was not in such quarters he could find help.

Such a morbid state of mind as is here revealed to us is pretty certain to increase, and lead to hallucinations, if not to madness. Fox had begun to entertain hard thoughts of the clergy, or priests, as he called them. They had been able to give him no comfort, no peace, no light : some of them had laughed at him, others had thought more of their flower-beds than of his peace of mind. When in this mood the idea occurred to him that an education at Oxford or Cambridge was not enough to make a man a minister of God. It came with the suddenness and strength of a conviction. He marvelled he had not seen it before ; he marvelled that all others did not see it. It was a divine revelation—God had opened it to him. And he was delighted with the discovery, for it struck at the ministry of those who had so miserably disappointed him. This discovery was quickly followed by another—that God, the creator of the world, did not dwell in temples made with hands. It was customary to call the churches “dreadful places,” “holy ground,” “temples of God :” it was customary for the Bishops to consecrate them with processions and prayers, and genuflections and psalms, and for the

* Fox's Journal, p. 4.

people to believe that the Deity henceforward in some more especial manner resided there; but it was now revealed to this lad, one day as he walked alone in the fields, that churches were but stone and mortar—steeple-houses, as he afterwards contemptuously called them—and that God dwelt in the hearts of his people.* Here was the foundation partly laid of his future faith. Henceforward he went no more to the church, but retired with his Bible to the orchards or the fields. Henceforward he cared not a pin for the priest; and when his parish minister expressed a fear that he was following after new lights, he smiled within himself, for he knew what the Lord had revealed concerning him and his brethren, and, moreover, that he himself had been anointed with an unction from on high which was far better than any university training or any imposition of episcopal hands. The youth, by reason of his inward revelations, had already reached a spiritual elevation from which he could look down upon all the doctors and learning of the church.

But notwithstanding the great openings—to use his own phrase—which Fox had, he was often beset with temptations and plunged into the lowest depths of “the ocean of darkness and death.” Deep called unto deep, and all the billows of the Lord passed over him. He fasted much, walked about in desert places, like a troubled ghost, or sought, like the owl, shelter in a hollow tree, where he would muse and mope for whole days together. The night brought no rest from his tormenting thoughts. He forsook his parents and best friends, refused to keep company with any one, lest the tenderness of his heart should be hurt by worldly converse, and wandered about from place to place—a spectacle of spiritual desertion and despair. The poor

* Fox's Journal, p. 5.

youth was engaged in a terrible conflict with his own frenzied imaginations! Sometimes, however, he seemed to get the victory—trampled the tempter under his feet—and then he violently swung from one extreme to the other. In such cases he was brought into such a heavenly joy that he thought he was in Abraham's bosom. Gradually this state of mind became the prevailing one: the inward struggle ceased; and he felt like one who had been lifted above an atmosphere of storm and thunder, into a region of perfect serenity and unclouded sunshine. While these things were happening, the year 1648 arrived, and George Fox, now twenty-four years of age, and disciplined to hardness by the soul-exercises he had gone through, was ready to begin his work.

While these struggles were going on in the heart of Fox, a similar, but greater and more eventful struggle was going on in the heart of England. But we must go back some years to find its origin. George Fox was scarcely a year old—a baby on his mother's knee—when Charles I. ascended the throne, and Charles, with his high notions of prerogative and his love for splendour in religion, soon came into collision with his reforming and somewhat puritanical parliament. The king needed money, and his faithful commons uniformly met his demands on their purse by presenting him with a list of grievances which they wished to have redressed. The king, in disgust, dissolved parliament after parliament, and in his dire need of money resorted to unconstitutional means to obtain it. This naturally increased the popular irritation. In 1628 the parliament wrung from the reluctant monarch his assent to the Petition of Right, but this did not make an end of strife. Charles was bent on maintaining, if not extending, his royal prerogative: the parliament was bent on maintaining, if not extending, the liberties of the subject;

and ever when the royal necessities required money the tug of war was renewed. In this mood the parliament made speeches about popular rights and kingly tyranny and the spirit of the age, and as this could not be borne it was dissolved, and old precedents were hunted out, and old usages resorted to, and questionable means employed, to replenish the exhausted exchequer. For eleven years England was without a parliament. But the arbitrary exactions of the king were far from being patiently submitted to. John Hampden refused to pay his ship-money, regarding it as an illegal imposition in time of peace; and though the judges gave their decision in favour of the crown, this only increased the popular indignation, for it was felt that the very courts of law had become corrupt, and Hampden was everywhere regarded as a patriot, who had risked the displeasure of royalty and the ruin of his estate in the cause of the people.

These political discontents were greatly aggravated by certain ecclesiastical innovations which were now in progress. The king being of a serious and somewhat monkish turn of mind thought God could be worshiped only amid much sacerdotal ceremonial, and he was resolved that all his subjects should think the same. In carrying out this idea he found a very sympathetic and zealous assistant in Laud, who was rewarded for his good service by being raised from the See of London to that of Canterbury. The communion table was removed from the centre of the church to the chancel, and surrounded by a railing, and now it was no longer a communion table but an altar; the clergy were compelled to be very observant of postures and vestments; the people were instructed to kneel at confession, to stand up at the creed, to bow at the name of Jesus, and on entering and leaving the church to do reverence towards the east. Their devotions being done, they were encouraged

to spend the rest of the Sunday with morris dances, revels, church-ales, and bid-ales. To carry out these changes the ecclesiastical courts were vested with new powers, and the episcopal jurisdiction was stretched to the utmost. But the puritans did not like the king's way of worship; they declared it unscriptural, superstitious, popish; and became more puritanical than ever. Moreover, many who were not puritans before became puritans now; and some of these, who were clergymen, refused to put on the vestments and perform the genuflections, and for this they were turned out of their parishes and left to starve. Thus political and ecclesiastical causes combined to swell the tide of general discontent.

The inevitable crisis was hastened by events which were now going forward in Scotland. Charles had inherited from his father a strong desire to have uniformity of church worship and government at both ends of the island. North of the Tweed bishops had already been placed over presbyters, who grudged them their pre-eminence, and little now remained to be done but to introduce the English liturgy, or one like unto it. The attempt was made in July 1637, but it resulted in a serious riot in the Church of St. Giles in Edinburgh, and the riot rapidly ripened into something like a revolt of the whole kingdom. Amid immense religious excitement the Covenant was signed by all classes of the people; and under the pressure of affairs the king was obliged to call a General Assembly for the ordering of ecclesiastical affairs. The Assembly met, and, in defiance of the royal Commissioner, deposed and excommunicated the bishops, condemned the liturgy, overthrew the whole episcopal government, and restored presbytery in its purest form. Matters were now gone to extremities, both parties took arms, and in 1640 the Scotch covenanters entered England and took possession of New-

castle, spreading a panic through the whole kingdom. In this emergency the king was compelled to call a parliament.

This Parliament—ever afterwards so famous as the Long Parliament—brought together all the indignation at arbitrary power and all the thirst for freedom which had been slowly accumulating in the country. It was no sooner met than it impeached the Earl of Strafford, the ablest adviser of the king, and sent him to the block. Measure after measure was passed to restrain the power of the crown and enlarge the liberties of the subject. The Church, by preaching from all its pulpits the royal doctrines of divine right and passive obedience had identified itself with tyranny, and become equally with the court odious to the people. Petitions came pouring into the parliament, some for its reform, others for its destruction. A monster petition came up from London, praying that it should be extirpated root and branch. Baffled on every hand, mobbed in his own capital, shorn of some of the prerogatives on which he most prided himself, yet loath to lose his supremacy, and become, as he dreaded, a mere puppet king, Charles now formed the mad design of seizing five of the leading commoners in the midst of the parliament. The design miscarried—the birds had flown—but exasperation, on both sides, was now risen to such a pitch that civil war was inevitable.

On the 22nd of August 1642 the king set up the royal standard at Nottingham : and the parliament was not slack in mustering forces and preparing for the struggle. Both sides were alike anxious to secure the assistance of the Scots ; and both made their suit to the General Assembly of the kirk in which the real power of the government was then vested. In Scotland at that time religion was stronger than loyalty : and accordingly there was a universal inclination to take part with the parliament rather than

the king, for the parliament had favoured the puritans, and most of the puritans were presbyterians. In truth the Scots were now as anxious to have unity of faith and worship throughout the whole island as the king had been a few years before. But it was presbytery and not prelacy which they wished to see everywhere established. And they had a broad foundation on which to build this lofty ambition. The English parliament had already overthrown episcopacy, and summoned an Assembly of Divines to meet at Westminster to frame a confession of faith, a directory for worship, and a form of church government. Everything was to be modelled anew, and the Scotch never doubted but that everything would be modelled after the presbyterian fashion, which alone was divine. They were therefore quite ready to form an alliance with the parliament, but it must be based on the idea of uniformity in religion, and expressed in the way of a covenant. The result was the Solemn League and Covenant into which the two nations entered with fastings and prayer, and then an army of twenty thousand Scottish warriors crossed the border to take part in the bloody struggle of Marston Moor.

During these political and ecclesiastical contentions a strong religious excitement swept like a wave over the land. Every person felt it. Men, careless before, now began to seek the Lord with prayers and tears. Hardened criminals were seized with sudden remorse and became edifying examples of the power of converting grace. Lieutenant-colonels and drill-sergeants began to perceive they had a gift for preaching, and exercised it as opportunity offered; and often when the day's march was done and the tents were pitched would a great crowd of fearless warriors gather to hear one of Cromwell's Ironsides speak, in impassioned tones, of the conquest of Canaan and the

casting out of the Amalekites. By much reading of their Bibles, men came to speak and think like the Hebrew prophets. By much brooding on sin and salvation some enthusiasts, carried farther than their neighbours by the universal excitement, began to mistake their own crazy thoughts for heavenly visions and divine intimations, and published their revelations to the world. It is absurd to suppose, as many have supposed, that these men were mere vulgar hypocrites. They may have been fanatical, but they were, for the most part, not only perfectly sincere but terribly in earnest. To them the Unseen was an ever-present reality—they walked with God. They had such an unwavering faith in Divine truth as is seldom met in this more doubting age, and, as it was in the days of old, the world beheld with wonder how “by faith they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.”

Such periods of extraordinary excitement are by no means of rare occurrence in the history of religion. They have not been confined to Europe, they are well known in India and the East, where the devotees are sometimes raised to such a pitch of pious enthusiasm as is happily unknown in the more sober West. It was under such an impulse that Mahometanism started into existence, and swept like a simoom over so large a portion of the world. In such a time Peter the Hermit preached the Crusades, and all Christendom was seized with an uncontrollable frenzy to visit the scenes which had been consecrated by the footsteps of the Saviour. In such a time Martin Luther proclaimed the doctrine of justification by faith, and made more converts to protestantism in a day than have been made by three centuries of toil and trouble since. In after-time when Wesley and Whitefield, by their

impassioned preaching, had roused to a high state of devotion the crowds who gathered around them, the contagion spread fast and far, and wherever they went they found a people prepared to respond to their every word by convulsive sobs and groans and swoons, till the excitement reached its culminating point in the revivals at Cambuslang. We have seen the same thing repeated in our day. In the cities of America the movement first began. In New York thousands of merchants left their counting-houses at mid-day to resort to meetings for prayer; and apprentices, who had never spoken in public before, felt an irresistible desire to address their fellow-sinners regarding the salvation of their souls. The planters of the South felt the influence, and revival preachers harangued deeply-moved congregations in Charleston and New Orleans, while their slaves, with African sympathy and warmth, sung in the cotton fields their hymns about the Heavenly Canaan, or gathered in those motley religious meetings of which Mrs. Stowe has given us such a living picture in "Dred." The excitement crossed the ocean and appeared first in Ireland, just as the wave of the Atlantic first breaks upon its shore. It came like an epidemic, and like an epidemic it spread. From Ireland it came to Scotland, and, strange to say, just as is the case with contagious diseases brought into the country, it appeared first in the seaport towns. It spread over the whole land, it extended to England, it made its presence felt in all religious sects and among all classes of society. The breath of the Lord was blowing on the dry bones. Never had there been such a craving for prayer meetings. Never had such multitudes met to hear the message of mercy, as assembled now in churches, in halls, in fields, at the corners of the streets; and when a speaker came forward and declared how he had once been the chief of sinners, a companion of prize-fighters and

thieves, how even the crime of murder might be laid to his charge, but that he had been plucked as a brand from the burning, and stood before them as a monument of saving grace, the excitement of the meeting rose to its highest pitch, and not only the nervous and the weak, but strong men and women were stricken as by a hidden hand, and sunk to the ground as dead. The return to consciousness was generally accompanied by piteous cries for pardon, and these again gave way to exulting shouts when pardon had been found. For more than two years this state of things continued, but then the tide of feeling which had so mysteriously overflowed its banks gradually subsided, and flowed again in its usual channels.

Scenes like these, which our own eyes have witnessed, will help us to realise the fervour of the puritanic and covenanting age. But that fervour generated not only devotional extravagancies, but many new forms of faith. Up to this time the hierarchy had sternly repressed all non-conformity; but the hierarchy was now no more. The Westminster Assembly was then sitting, framing its creed and other formularies, which were to bind the religious thinking of future generations as in fetters of iron, and the presbyterians, of which it was mainly composed, were as intolerant as either prelatists or papists of other opinions than their own; but the Westminster Assembly, though it had the will, had not the power to prevent the aberrations of religious thought which now began. The Independents were powerful both in the parliament and the army, and to them we owe that measure of ecclesiastical freedom which we now enjoy. The pressure was removed, and the human mind at once shewed its native elasticity by thinking vigorously, if not always wisely, in regard to the deep things of God. Sects sprung up in every corner. The unity of the English Church was for ever gone. It was

like the breaking up of the Northern Seas at the return of summer, when the ice rends asunder amid thundering noises, and floats away in detached masses toward the south. The presbyterians beheld all this with dismay, and endeavoured to put the penal laws which were still on the statute book in force against the sectaries, and even managed to frame new ones ; but it was useless. Brownists, Millenarians, Antinomians, Anabaptists, Libertines, Familists, Enthusiasts, Seekers, Perfectists, Antiscripturists, Ranters, Böhmenists, and Socinians, abounded everywhere. The unclean spirit which had been cast out, had taken to himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and returned, and the last state of the country was worse than the first.

It was in such an atmosphere that Fox grew up. He breathed it, and inhaled the contagion it contained. In other circumstances, in all probability he would never have left his cobbler's stall, and would have been known to his neighbours only as a serious-thinking, somewhat dreamy and perfectly honest man. But it was impossible for a man of his mental mould to escape the spirit that was abroad. At first it made him only miserable ; but ultimately it has made him immortal. We shall see that many of the thoughts which he regarded as divine inspirations, were not even intuitions of his own, but were borrowed from his compeers. The heavenly messages he had already received—that churches notwithstanding their consecration were but stone and lime, and that something more than a university training was necessary to make a man a minister of the Most High—were nothing but the staple talk of the sectaries against the priesthood and the church. The thought was far from being original, much less divine.

While Fox was wandering about half-crazed with his distracting thoughts the fortune of war was going against

the king. In the terrible charges of Marston Moor and Naseby the cavalier chivalry had gone down before the fierce enthusiasm of the puritans ; and the unhappy monarch, defeated in battle and driven from all his strongholds, resorted to the desperate expedient of taking refuge in the Scotch army. The Scotch army, after some hesitation, delivered him to commissioners from the English Parliament : and he was now, after several changes, a prisoner in the Isle of Wight, awaiting the bloody doom which had already overtaken his servants Strafford and Laud. The overthrow of the monarchy had led to violent disputes between the parliament and the army, as both aimed at the supreme power ; but the sword, as is usual, prevailed, and in 1648 the government of the kingdom was in the hands of a military junto of which Oliver Cromwell was the soul.





Chapter II.

1648.

HOX had hitherto kept his revelations to himself, or communicated them only in private to persons whom he chanced to meet, but now he felt himself moved to go out into the world and proclaim them everywhere. One of his first public appearances was at Leicester, and the account which he gives of it in his Journal is so illustrative both of the man and the time that I shall simply transcribe it. "Then," says he, "I heard of a great meeting to be at Leicester for a dispute wherein presbyterians, independents, baptists, and common-prayer men were said to be all concerned. The meeting was in a steeple-house: to which I was moved by the Lord God to go, and be amongst them. I heard their discourse and their reasonings, some being in pews and the priest in the pulpit, abundance of people being gathered together. At last one woman asked a question out of Peter, what that new birth was, viz., a being born again of incorruptible seed by the word of God, that liveth and abideth for ever? The priest said to her, 'I permit not a woman to speak in the church;' though he had before given liberty to any to speak. Whereupon I was wrapped up as in a rapture, in the Lord's power; and I stepped up, and asked the priest—'Dost thou call this place (the steeple-house) a church? or dost thou call this mixed multitude a church?' For the

woman asking a question he ought to have answered it, having given liberty for any to speak. But instead of answering me, he asked, 'What a church was?' I told him, 'The church was the pillar and ground of truth, made up of living stones, living members, a spiritual household, which Christ was the head of; but he was not the head of a mixed multitude, or of an old house made up of lime, stone, and wood.' This set them all on a fire. The priest came down from his pulpit, and others out of their pews, and the dispute there was marred." The apparition of Fox, in short, created a hubbub, and the meeting broke up; but Fox followed the clergyman to the inn and renewed the dispute, but, of course, neither was convinced.*

The young enthusiast, growing confident, now courted opportunities of proclaiming his views. Entering the churches he challenged disputation with the clergy, or gathering the people about him in the street he spoke to them of the true way of life. Moreover, new revelations were vouchsafed to him according to his need: just as when Mahomet required a vision, a vision always came. It was at this time the Lord opened to him, that Christ was the true light—the light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world. He tells us that though these truths were communicated to him by immediate revelation he afterwards discovered them in his Bible, and that thus there was a perfect concord between the oracle within and the oracle without. Antonia Bourignon, another mystic, tells us, in like manner, that she knew a great part of the Old Testament before she read it. No doubt the learned Pundit would plead that the same circumstance explains the marvellous likeness between the Koran and the Bible. This inward illumination was given to every creature;

* Fox's Journal, pp. 14-15.

and by it the highest knowledge of divine truth was attained. They that believed in it and attended to it came out of condemnation into the light of life. This principle was the corner-stone of the religious system now developing itself in the mind of Fox: the germ of the mysticism matured by his followers. But rules for every-day-life were divinely intimated to the young man as well as these high truths. "Moreover," says he, "when the Lord sent me into the world he forbade me to put off my hat to any high or low, and I was required to *thee* and *thou* all men and women, without any respect to rich or poor, great or small. And as I travelled up and down I was not to bid people *good morrow* or *good evening*, neither might I bow or scrape with my leg to any one."*

Such was the abundance of Fox's revelations, that not only religious but physical truths were communicated to him. As he informs us in his journal, "He knew not only a renewing of the heart, and a restoration of the mind, but *the virtues of the creatures were also opened to him*, so that he began to deliberate whether he should practise physic for the good of mankind. * * The three great professions in the world, physic, divinity, and law, were opened to him." This declaration sounds strangely in the midst of the controversy at present raging as to whether the inspiration of the Bible is confined to religious truths, or whether it extends to physical, historical, and even arithmetical ones.

Under this teaching his zeal daily increased. He conceived that he had a mission to reform the manners of the age, and he set himself to do it. He wrote to judges exhorting them to do justly. He visited public houses, and warned those who kept them not to give their guests too much drink. He testified against wakes, feasts, may-

* Journal, p. 22.

games, sports, plays, and shows, for these things trained up people to vanity and looseness. He went to markets and fairs and lifted up his voice against all cheating and cozening. He was moved also to cry against music, and mountebanks playing tricks on the stage, for these things were inconsistent with the seriousness of life. But it was the temple of God that chiefly needed purification, for it had been made as of old a place of merchandise—yea a den of thieves. Every time he heard the church bell toll, it struck at his very life, for it seemed to him like a market-bell calling the people together that the priest might set forth his wares for sale. “Oh! the vast sums of money,” says he, “that are got by the trade they make of selling the Scriptures, and by their preaching, from the highest bishop to the lowest priest.”*

Now, Fox having in his youth worked in leather, knew its virtues, and therefore he had made for himself a pair of leather breeches, by reason that they would last for ever, and stand all the tear and wear of his wandering life, and he clothed himself with these, and when he appeared in any village or town, the boys would gather about him and cry, here comes the man with the leather breeches! and, according to his own testimony, when the priests heard the shout they grew pale and hasted out of the way.† His buttons some thought were of silver and therefore savouring of luxury, but he testifies they were but ochimy.‡ His coat was of sober grey.§ Thus bedight a strange figure must he have been as he passed along the street, with the crowd following him, or suddenly appeared in some church

* Journal, p. 24.

† Journal, p. 55.

‡ Journal, p. 129. I find Clarkson, in his *Life of Penn.* calls this substance alchimy. I am not learned enough in metals to know exactly what it was, but suppose it was a kind of pewter, as it was mistaken for silver.

§ Journal, p. 142.

to confound the clergyman by standing up on his seat and defying him to prove the truth of what he taught. A tall bulky man he was, with a somewhat commanding presence, and a pleasant expression of countenance.*

1649.] As he wandered in this fashion about the country he came to Nottingham, and espying the great steeple-house, the Lord said unto him (as he tells us), "Thou must go cry against yonder great idol, and against the worshipers therein." So he went, and "all the people looked like fallow ground, and the priest like a great lump of earth stood in the pulpit above." He gave out as his text the words, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts." He told the people that by the Scriptures here referred to they were to try all doctrines. "Now," says Fox, "the Lord's power was so mighty upon me, and so strong in me that I could not hold, but was made to cry out, 'Oh no it is not the Scriptures, but the Holy Spirit, which gave the Scriptures by which opinions are to be tried. The Jews had the Scriptures, yet resisted the Holy Ghost and rejected Christ, the Morning Star.'"† As he thus spake, the officers came and hurried him off "to a nasty stinking prison, the smell whereof," he says, "got into his nose and throat, and very much annoyed him." But here was a heavy blow aimed at what our modern subjective theologians call Bibliolatry.

While a prisoner at Nottingham he was sent for to the sheriff's house, whose wife met him at the door with the salutation, "This day is salvation come to this house;" and the sheriff himself was so affected by his conversation that

* Penn's Introduction to Fox's Journal, p. 30; and Sewel's History, p. 636.

† Fox's Journal, p. 24.

he made restitution to a woman whom he had wronged, and hurried out of the house to the market-place, in his slippers, to preach repentance to the people. A strange spectacle, truly, a sheriff standing slip-shod in the market preaching repentance! So soon as Fox was set at liberty, he resumed his old work, and now he was enabled even to perform miracles: he restored a demented woman to her senses, and a hopelessly sick man to instant health.* In some places which he visited he was evil entreated by the people, who beat him with sticks, set him in the stocks, and stoned him out of their town as they would a mad dog; but he bore everything with unruffled meekness. And now disciples began to gather around him. There was something attractive in his doctrine of the inward light, by which men were rendered, in some measure, independent both of Bible and teacher. And there was also something attractive in another doctrine which he now taught, that when a man is regenerated he is perfectly free from sin. His declamations against the priesthood, and the church and tithes, were simply an echo of popular feelings, and therefore could not but take the popular ear. Then he was evidently earnest, very patient under insult and suffering, and had a native eloquence which told upon the heart. His power in prayer was everywhere spoken of. So he gained upon a people who were craving for religious excitement and change. But within a year his labours were again interrupted. When in Derby he learned there was to be a great religious meeting in the church, at which many officers of the army, priests, and preachers, were to be present, and especially a devout colonel, who was to address the people. Whereupon he was moved to go, and went; and after listening for a while to the other

* Fox's Journal, pp. 26 and 28.

orators, he rose to address the meeting, but he had no sooner began than he was laid hold of by a constable and carried before the magistrates. When there, and in a kind of religious rapture proclaiming his principles, he called upon the justices to quake at the Word of the Lord, and one of them caught up the word, and in derision stigmatized him and his followers as *Quakers*, a name which has stuck to them to this day.* The populace, however, were helped to its adoption by the fact that many of them when preaching and praying shook from excitement like the Delphic priestess when delivering her oracles. They defended the practice of quaking, but rejected the appellation scornfully derived from it, and preferred calling each other by the simple name of Friends. As Fox instead of concealing his principles gloried in them, and as some of these appeared very horrible to the orthodoxy of that time, he was convicted of blasphemy, and sentenced to imprisonment in the house of correction for six months.

1650.] And now the man in the leather breeches is once more in prison, but he is not idle. Though almost entirely uneducated, scarcely able to write legibly, incapable of spelling, and grandly ignorant of grammar, he set himself to pen letters to all who were in authority: to the justices, to the clergy, to the mayor, and even to the bellman, for he had such a hatred of church-bells as a bull has of a red rag. As his six months wore past, the officials of the government were everywhere recruiting soldiers: for Charles II. had marched with a Scotch army into England, and Oliver Cromwell was at his heels, and the fight of Worcester was near at hand. In these circumstances, the magistrates of Derby offered their prisoner a captain's commission, for they were anxious to stop his mouth, and direct

* Fox's Journal, p. 35.

his zeal into another channel. But Fox told them that fighting came of men's lusts, as saith the Apostle, and that they were bound to love their enemies. Baulked in their project to get rid of so troublesome a fellow, they ordered him to be put into the common jail. "So I was put," says Fox, "into a lousy, stinking place, without any bed, among thirty felons, where I was kept almost half-a-year."* Again he applied himself to letter-writing. And there was sense in some of his letters. There was a young woman in the jail with him condemned to death for a theft; he wrote to the judges remonstrating against this great iniquity. He was himself compelled to live with the worst criminals, and felt how difficult it was to keep himself pure amid impurity. He wrote to the judges regarding such protracted promiscuous imprisonment, shewing how prisoners learned wickedness of one another. Posterity has in both cases accepted his opinion as politic and humane; and a noble-minded woman, a member of his sect, has carried the light of love into the darkest prison-houses of Europe.

1651.] Time slipped past, the magistrates grew uneasy at detaining a man so long in prison merely for his religious opinions, and they ordered his discharge. He was no sooner at liberty than he recommenced preaching. In the course of his journeyings coming into the neighbourhood of Lichfield—where Samuel Johnston afterwards learned his first literature at his father's book-stall—he was moved to testify against it. Proceeding over hedge and ditch till he reached within a mile of the town, he came into a field where some shepherds were watching their sheep. "There," says he, "was I commanded by the Lord to pull off my shoes. I stood still, for it was winter, and the word of the

* Journal, p. 42. Besse's Sufferings of the Quakers, Vol. 1., p. 136.

Lord was like a fire in me. So I put off my shoes, and left them with the shepherds, and the poor shepherds trembled and were astonished. Then I walked on about a mile, and as soon as I was got within the city, the word of the Lord came to me again, saying—Cry, ‘Woe to the bloody city of Lichfield!’ So I went up and down the streets crying with a loud voice, **WOE TO THE BLOODY CITY OF LICHFIELD!** It being market day, I went into the market-place, and to and fro in the several parts of it, and made stands, crying as before, **WOE TO THE BLOODY CITY OF LICHFIELD!** And no one laid hands on me. As I went thus crying there seemed to me to be a channel of blood running down the streets, and the market-place appeared like a pool of blood.”* Having thus obeyed the heavenly impulse, he returned to the shepherds, and being moved by human as well as divine considerations, recovered his shoes, and having washed his feet, put them on, and went his way, meditating much on what he had done. A clear madman! the reader will say, as many said then. Yes, reader, there was no doubt a streak of insanity in his brain, but insanity is nearly allied to many noble qualities both of head and heart.

Mad or not mad, with unwearied zeal he continued his work, travelling everywhere, and proclaiming wherever he went, the inward light, and the sinlessness of the converted man. His followers multiplied rapidly, for it was an age which itched for novelty. Though the country was full of high pretenders to religion and sects innumerable, Fox was pleased with none of them—hypocrites and dissemblers were they all, blind leaders of the blind. His hand was against every man. And whenever he met a Ranter, a Notionist, or a Fifth-Monarchy-Man, he at once

* Journal, p. 49.

fastened on him and shewed him the hollowness of his pretensions and the falseness of his faith. Still he entered the churches, and never hesitated to break in upon the services. Once on going into a church he found the minister discoursing from the text, "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Fox could not bide this, and as soon as the clergyman was done, he cried, "Come down thou deceiver; dost thou bid people come freely and take of the water of life freely, and yet thou takest three hundred pounds a-year of them for preaching the Scriptures to them? Mayest thou not blush for shame? Did the prophet Isaiah and Christ do so, who spake the words, and gave them forth freely? Did not Christ say to his ministers, whom he sent to preach, 'Freely ye have received, freely give.'"*

The plain-speaking Quaker soon found that he had set the whole country against him. As his hand was against every man, every man's hand was against him. The parish ministers and the sectaries were equally incensed. Some regarded him as a sheer madman; others as a horrible blasphemer; others as a fit subject for being ducked in a horse-pond, or set in a pillory. Accordingly, he was frequently mobbed, cruelly beaten, and stoned. On more occasions than one he was so shockingly abused that he was left for dead. Yet he never resented this maltreatment, but on some occasions when smitten on one cheek he meekly turned the other to the smiter. Driven from one town he generally proceeded quietly to another and resumed his work. The very oddity of his dress and language excited suspicion, and sometimes women who came

* Journal, p. 51.

to the door at his knock, when they beheld the strange figure and heard themselves *thee'd* and *thou'd*, slammed the door to in alarm. It was no rare thing for him to seek a bed in the corner of a stack-yard, or under a bush in the open field, or to want food for days together.

In the course of his wanderings at this time he came to Carlisle, and, after sundry adventures, he preached in the cathedral, and his preaching led to a riot, and he was again laid hold of and thrust into jail, among moss-troopers, thieves, and murderers. "A filthy, nasty place it was," says he, "where men and women were put together in a very uncivil manner, and never a house of office to it, and the prisoners so lousy that one woman was almost eaten to death with lice."* There he lay for a time, and began as usual to write admonitory epistles to all and sundry. A report got abroad that he was likely to be hanged for his blasphemies, and great ladies then being like great ladies now, visited him in his prison as one that was appointed to die. The rumour, however, reached "Praise-God-Bare-Bones' Parliament," which was then in power, that a young man at Carlisle was to be put to death for his religion, and a missive was despatched to the magistrates, which had the effect of setting him at liberty.† His death could never have been seriously contemplated.

1653.] In 1653 Oliver Cromwell clomb to the supreme power, and was proclaimed Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland. He had always declared himself a friend of religious toleration, and the Quakers naturally looked to him for protection. But it was difficult to save them from the consequences of their conduct without subverting half the legislation of the country. They persisted in entering churches, and in-

* Journal, p. 102.

† Journal, p. 104.

interrupting the service. They wrote the most defamatory letters to the most respectable people. They refused to pay tithes. They declined to take any oath, even that of allegiance. They would not take their hat off even when standing before a bench of magistrates, and this was naturally construed into a contempt of Court. They could hardly appear in any town without exciting the populace to rage or mischief, and a breach of the peace was the result. The law has now been gradually modified to meet these peculiarities in the Quaker character and creed, but it was scarcely to be expected that the Protector, with all his love of toleration, should, all at once, preserve a new and despised sect from the consequences of their illegal conduct. But, besides this, the presbyterians were numerous and powerful, and Oliver was naturally anxious to conciliate them, and the presbyterians cried out against the blasphemers, and pointed to the enactments in the statute book against blasphemy. The result was, that many were cast into prison, fined, or set in the pillory to be pelted by the mob.

1654.] In 1654 there was a rumour of a plot formed against the Protector, in which it was thought the Quakers had a hand, and in consequence of this Fox was seized at one of his meetings, and carried a prisoner to London. Captain Dury, who had charge of him, reported his arrival to Cromwell, who asked him to subscribe a paper to the effect that he would never use a carnal weapon against him or his government. Fox, who abjured the sword even in self-defence, readily did so. Next morning he was taken to Whitehall that the Protector might see him and judge of him for himself. When he arrived Cromwell was still undressed, but it did not matter, he was at once admitted to his presence, which he entered with the priestly words, "Peace be on this house," and with his hat firmly

fixed on his head. An interesting peep behind the scenes—the meeting of these two immortals! The great Protector in his shirt receiving the humble Quaker—a man half-crazed, but destined by the earnestness of his convictions to found a sect which has lasted for centuries, and done some good work in the world! The conversation was about religion, and the Quaker exhorted the Protector to live in the fear of God, and order all things for his glory. The Protector remarked that the Quakers quarrelled with the ministers of religion. The Quaker replied that the prophets and apostles preached not for hire, whereas the priests of that day divined for money, and bartered the free gospel for filthy lucre. He declared that the Spirit was necessary to illuminate the mind, and that without it the Scriptures were useless. As he proceeded, Oliver frequently interjected, “It is good”—“It is truth.” When the poor Quaker was ready to leave, the absolute master of three kingdoms took him warmly by the hand, and with tears in his eyes, said, “Come again to my house, for if thou and I were but an hour of a day together, we should be nearer one another.” As he was retiring, a servant followed him, and invited him to remain and dine with the Protector’s attendants, but, though pleased with his reception, he, in a rather surly way, told the servant to say to his master that he would not eat of his bread nor drink of his drink.* Was it pride? or an outburst of independence—a foolish protest that he would not sell his birthright for a mess of pottage, though served in a silver plate in the hall of a Court?

Fox had hitherto confined those singular epistles, in which he seemed to travesty the apostles and prophets, to private persons and local authorities; but now, taking a

* Fox’s Journal, p. 127.

higher aim, he directed one to the Pope and all the Kings and Rulers of Europe, warning them that the day of the Lord was at hand. Another he addressed "To such as follow the world's fashions;" which is so curious as to be worth quoting:—"What a world is this! How doth the devil garnish himself! How obedient are people to do his will and mind! They are altogether carried away with fooleries and vanities, both men and women. They have lost the hidden man of the heart, the meek and quiet spirit; which with the Lord is of great price. They have lost the adorning of Sarah, they are putting on gold and gay apparel, women plaiting the hair, men and women powdering it, making their backs look like bags of meal. * * They must be in the fashion of the world else they are not in esteem; nay, they shall not be respected if they have not gold or silver upon their backs, or if the hair be not powdered. But if one have store of ribands hanging about his waste, at his knees, and in his hat, of divers colours, red, white, black, or yellow, and his hair powdered, then he is a brave man, then he is accepted, then he is no Quaker. He hath ribands on his back, belly, and knees, and his hair powdered. This is the array of the world. But is not this from the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, or the pride of life? Likewise the women having their gold, their patches on their faces, noses, cheeks, foreheads, their rings on their fingers, their cuffs double under and above, like a butcher with his white sleeves, their ribands tied about their hands, and three or four gold laces about their clothes: this is no Quaker, say they. * * And farther; if one get a pair of breeches like a coat, and hang them about with points, and up almost to the middle, a pair of double cuffs upon his hands, and a feather in his cap, here is a gentleman: bow before him, put off your hats, get a company of fiddlers, a set of music, and women to dance.

This is a brave fellow! Are these your fine Christians?" &c.*

1655.] Fox was now master of a horse, on which he performed his journeys. In his wandering life he necessarily met with strange adventures. On one occasion there was a hue and cry that two men who had been seen on the road clad in grey clothes and riding on grey horses were highwaymen, and that they had broken into a house. They were pursued, overtaken, and carried before a justice of the peace. "Take off your hats," cried the justice, when the supposed highwaymen were brought into his presence. "I kept on my hat in the presence of the Protector," said Fox, who, with a brother Quaker, was the suspected house-breaker, "and he was not offended, and why should you who are but his servant?" The magistrate was convinced there had been a mistake and set them at liberty. On another occasion, being in a tavern, he began to speak to the men who were enjoying their pot of ale, of the light which lighteneth every man who cometh into the world. The landlord being a facetious fellow, and seeing that this kind of discourse was likely to spoil his custom, snatched up a candle, and said, "Come, here is a light to light you to your bed," and so marched him off to his chamber.†

Toward the end of the same year, Fox and two Quaker friends were apprehended as vagabonds and for having refused the abjuration oath, and after lying nine weeks in Launceston jail were brought before the Chief-Justice of England at the assizes. When they were brought into court Fox courteously said, "Peace be among you." "What be these you have brought here into court?" said the Chief-Justice, who was a Welshman, looking at the three strange figures, who stood before him with their hats on their

* Journal. pp. 133-4.

† Journal, p. 161.

heads. "Prisoners, my Lord," said the jailor briefly. "Why do you not put off your hats?" continued the judge, turning to the three. They said nothing. "Put off your hats," said the judge. Still they were silent. "The court commands you to put off your hats," roared the Chief-Justice, now in a rage. George was now moved to speak, and he said: "When did ever any magistrate, king, or judge, from Moses to Daniel, command any to put off their hats when they came before them in their courts? And if the law of England doth command any such thing, show me the law." Unable to quote a statute to the point, and quite losing his temper, the Chief-Justice ordered the prisoners to be removed; but they were no sooner removed than it occurred to him he might puzzle them more than they had puzzled him. So having them again brought into Court, he said, "Come, where had they hats from Moses to Daniel? answer me that." "Thou mayest read in the 3d of Daniel," said Fox, who knew his Bible well, "that the three children were cast into the fiery furnace by Nebuchadnezzar's command, with their coats, their hose, and their hats on."* The chief-Justice was foiled again. Had the thing been a mere trial of wit, it must have been confessed that the Quaker had the best of it. It did not, however, end so, for George and his two friends were fined twenty merks a-piece; and as they either could not or would not pay it, they were carried back to jail to be kept there till they did so.

1656.] Up to this time they had been compelled according to the cruel usage of the time to pay the jailor seven shillings each a-week for their maintenance, and seven shillings for their horses; but now they sent their horses

* Fox's Journal, p. 166. Macaulay, in his History of England, does not state this incident quite fairly. He says that Fox quoted the case of the Hebrew children as a reason for keeping on his hat. It will be seen this was not the case.

into the country, and resolved not to pay the jailor a farthing more, having made up their minds that it might be long before they were released. The jailor, incensed at being deprived of his customary profits, thrust them into an abominable dungeon, where murderers were usually put after they were condemned. When we read Fox's description of it we find it difficult to believe that such places of confinement once existed in England. The floor was soft mire, and in some places the water was so deep as to come over the shoes. There was no retreat for the sake of decency, and as the room had not been cleaned out for years, the stench was intolerable. The Quakers made an effort to purify the noisome atmosphere by burning some straw; but the smoke unfortunately ascended into a room above, where the jailor slept, and he revenged himself for the annoyance by pouring down through a hole upon their heads a shower of abominations, which made matters more insufferable than ever. The ruffian no doubt thought it was an excellent joke. In truth, the place was so bad, and known to be so, that it had been remarked that few who were put in there ever came out again in health. What a contrast this to the well-ventilated, well-warmed, comfortably furnished cells in which our worst criminals now enjoy such luxurious solitude! In this horrid hole the Quakers passed the first night, without even a bundle of straw to lie down upon, and every step they took in the slimy mud increased the sickening smell. Next day the jailor allowed them to remove the filth from the floor of their den, but not before he had first vented his spleen by reviling them as hatchet-faced dogs.* Friends now came and handed them food through the gratings of their dungeon. Gradually the rigour of their imprisonment was

* Fox's Journal, pp. 172-3.

relaxed. They were allowed to take exercise in the castle-green; sometimes even to visit the town. Not only proselytes, but many others, led by curiosity, came to see them, and they eagerly seized upon such opportunities to proclaim their peculiar faith. Thus months passed away, and still there was no prospect of their release.

When things were in this state, a devoted Quaker presented himself to the Protector, and offered to go to jail in Fox's stead, if Fox were set at liberty. The Protector told him that it could not be—that the law would not allow it; but, struck with this generous act of devotion, he turned to the courtiers who surrounded him, and asked, which of them would do so much for him. Shortly afterwards General Desborough was sent down to Launceston to enquire into the matter, and, as a result of his enquiries, the three Friends were soon afterwards ordered to be discharged. But even still there were obstacles to their obtaining their freedom, for the governor of the jail demanded his fees, and they refused to pay for having been unjustly imprisoned, and it was only after the governor saw that he would make nothing of such inflexible men that he set them at liberty.*

Again George Fox was at large with his leathern breeches on his loins, his hat on his head, and his tongue trained to address every person in the second-person singular according to the strictest rules of grammar and truth. Meetings of Friends were now established in every part of the country, and these he visited and refreshed by his apostolic eloquence. Gainsayers were convinced, scoffers were put to silence, disputants were confounded by the Arch-Quaker—at least so he himself tells us, but it is difficult to believe that the arguments which he has handed down to us as having worked such logical wonders could have any weight with

* Besse's *Sufferings of the Quakers*, Vol. I., pp. 113-14. Fox's *Journal*, p. 203.

the weakest of mankind. It is to be feared that his vanity frequently suggested to him that he had put an adversary to shame, when the adversary had merely turned aside to laugh at his oddity and folly. Still the indubitable truth remains that in a few years he made thousands of converts. There must have been something about the man, of which not a trace is to be found in his writings. He was not long out of jail till he was in London: and riding through Hyde Park he observed a crowd collecting, and looking toward it saw the Lord Protector's coach approaching. He at once rode up to it. One of the life-guards was about to drive him off, when Cromwell recognised him, and ordered that he should be allowed to come near. So he rode by the side of the chariot, and, like a Hebrew prophet dealing with a Hebrew king, remonstrated with the Protector for permitting the Friends to be persecuted and cruelly entreated. When they reached the gate of St. James' Park the Quaker reined up his horse in order to part, but before he did so the Protector bid him come and see him at his house.

It so happened that a young Quakeress was maid to Oliver's wife—for Quakerism had already found its way even into Cæsar's household. "I have good news to tell you," said Cromwell to her in the course of the evening. "What is that?" quoth she. "George Fox is come to town," replied the Protector. "That is good news indeed," returned she, "but I can hardly believe it." Upon which the man, at times so stern, kindly told the girl how he had met him and ridden with him from Hyde Park to St. James' Gate. Next morning the Quakeress paid a visit to Fox and related to him her conversation with the Protector. On hearing this, Fox resolved to repair to Whitehall; and he took with him Edward Pyot, who had been one of his companions in tribulation in Launceston jail. When ad-

mitted to the Protector's presence they found Dr. Owen, the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, with him. They spoke of the cruel sufferings to which the Friends had been exposed. They directed the sagacious Head of the Commonwealth to the light of Christ, which shone within him. "It is but the light of nature, which you thus mistake for the light of Christ," said Cromwell. "Nay," said Fox, "it is spiritual and divine, and proceeds from Christ the spiritual and divine man." As Fox spoke thus he stood by a table, and Cromwell coming over to it sat down upon the edge of it, remarking, in a good natured way, to the tall Quaker, (made taller by his immovable hat,) that he would be as high as him. Still the conversation proceeded about the existence of the inward divine light; but Cromwell, with Dr. Owen at his side, refused to be convinced of its existence, and was even inclined to jest about it. So they parted, but Fox was afterwards comforted in some degree by hearing, probably through the Quakeress waiting-woman, that when Cromwell was with his wife he said as if in self-reproach—"I never parted so from them before."*

* Fox's Journal, p. 208.





Chapter XXX.

1656.

IT was now eight years since Fox had begun to preach that every man born into the world had within him the Divine Word, which was a light to illuminate his native darkness and show him the path of life; and so greedily had this mystic truth been received that Quaker-meetings were already established in every part of the country, and Quakers more numerous in England than they are at the present day.* Quakerism was rapidly absorbing many of the small fanatical sects which had been generated under the high temperature of the times.† Fox's divining rod swallowed up the rods of the less mighty magicians. Ranters came before him and danced and whistled and sang, like savages under the influence of rum, but George spoke to them a few grave words about the inward light, and they listened and were converted.‡ Deists

* From the numbers which signed petitions to parliament in 1659, it has been calculated that there must then have been 30,000 Quakers in England. At present the English Quakers number only 14,000. But in America there are probably 150,000 members of the Society of Friends.

† Baxter's Life. Neal's History of the Puritans, Vol. II. p. 252.

‡ Fox's Journal, p. 121.

came and talked of the light of nature, but George rebuked their profanity, and they were dumb. There must have been a power in this man which is nowhere to be found in his writings; for these, though they have the form of the Hebrew Scriptures, are altogether destitute of their inspiration. But how much that is noble in man is so volatile that it cannot be preserved: so incommunicable that it cannot be bequeathed to posterity! We have Demosthenes' orations, but we have not Demosthenes himself! We have the sermons of Whitfield, but we search them in vain for the impassioned looks and resistless eloquence of the great preacher. We have the epistles of Fox, but we want his earnest tones and contagious enthusiasm.

According to Fox a University education was not necessary to make a man a minister of the Word. A knowledge of languages was rather hurtful than otherwise, for were not men all of one speech till a confusion of tongues was sent as a judgment upon the impious builders of Babel? The inward light was all that was required: and the promptings of the Holy Spirit were better than all earthly lore. The Quakers, therefore, had soon plenty of preachers, for when a man believes himself inspired, he feels himself impelled to communicate his inspirations to the world. So early as 1652, there were twenty-five Quaker preachers traversing the country, trembling themselves while they spoke, and calling upon all others to tremble at the Word of the Lord. By 1654 this number had increased to upwards of sixty. Women, too, began, like resuscitated sybils, to utter their oracles in public amid convulsive contortions, to the great scandal of unilluminated people. It is true women were forbidden by St. Paul to speak in the church, but the prohibition, it was argued, could extend only to the silly women of Corinth, and could never be meant to apply to those who were divinely inspired; for had not Anna,

the prophetess, and others beside her, spoken even in the temple at Jerusalem.*

Among the most famous of the early Quaker preachers was Edward Burrough. Educated as an episcopalian, he had become a presbyterian when the tide set in in that way ; but, still disappointed of peace, he went over from the presbyterians to the Quakers. For this he was turned out of doors by his father, for Quakerism was enough to bring disgrace upon any family. Being possessed of considerable fluency he soon became distinguished as a preacher of the new sect. And a forward man was he. It was usual in those days for the London tradesmen, when their day's work was done, to meet in the fields of a summer evening to try their skill in wrestling. Burrough once on a time came upon a crowd where such athletic exercises were going on. A stout fellow had already thrown three antagonists, and now waited to see if any other would challenge his skill, when Burrough stepped into the ring. Everybody gazed, for he had not the appearance of a mighty man, and the champion himself was not a little disconcerted ; but Burrough soon shewed what was the nature of the encounter he sought, for instead of casting his coat and coming to grips with his antagonist, he opened his mouth and thundered against spiritual wickednesses in high places. He was as ready with his pen as his tongue, and almost rivalled Fox in the abundance of his epistolary writings. He assailed the Protector with letters about his pride, his forgetfulness of his vows, and the judgments which would come upon him and his house if he did not repent. He favoured in a similar way his wife and favourite daughter, the Lady Claypole ; for the Quakers had often been very successful in gaining a hold upon the

* Sewel's History of the Quakers, p. 694.

female heart. Thus forward in the cause of the Friends, he had his share of the horse-whippings and imprisonments to which they were exposed.

Another of the old worthies of the sect was Francis Howgill. He had been a preacher among the independents, but under a divine illumination he abandoned them and joined the Quakers. Among other feats he managed to get access to the Lord Protector, (for this was every Quaker's ambition,) and unburdened his mind to him. But Cromwell had ventured to question whether what the Quaker had said was the Word of the Lord, and several days had passed, and still he had not repented of his doubts, and therefore Howgill was moved to write him—"Therefore hear the word of the Lord: Thus saith the Lord, I chose thee out of all the nations, when thou wast little in thine own eyes, and threw down the mountains and powers of the earth before thee, which established wickedness by a law, and broke the yokes and bonds of the oppressors, and made them stoop before thee that thou passedst over them, and trod upon their necks; but thus saith the Lord, now thy heart is not upright before me, but thou takest counsel and not at me; and thou art establishing peace, and not by me; and thou art setting up laws, and not by me; and my name is not feared, nor am I sought after. Therefore this is the Word of the Lord to thee whether thou wilt hear or forbear: if thou take not away all those laws which are made concerning religion, whereby the people, which are dear in mine eyes, are oppressed, thou shalt not be established; but as thou hast trodden mine enemies by my power, so shalt thou be trodden down by my power, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord."* The letter-writer who had thus presumed to speak in the name of the Almighty hung

* Sewel's History of the Quakers p. 83.

about St. James' Park for a time expecting an answer, but no answer came. If there had been any, it should have been a rod. In truth, one cannot help admiring the forbearance of this master of ten legions with these intruders; for though he was himself strongly infected with the puritanic cant, he could not relish such a use of it. "But he that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city."

Another of the apostles of primitive Quakerism was Miles Halhead. A very zealous and somewhat vituperative man was Miles, and therefore he had more than his share of the prophet's reward. On one occasion he passed on the road a lady—the wife of a justice of the peace—without lifting his hat to her; and she being indignant at this want of civility, and naturally something of a termagant, ordered the man-servant who followed her to turn back and cane the rude fellow; which was accordingly done. But in Miles she had met her match; for he broke out, "O thou Jezebel! thou proud Jezebel! canst thou not suffer the servant of the Lord to pass by thee quietly." This was too much to be borne, and the first instinct of the lady was to smite the ill-tongued Quaker; but, recovering her womanhood, she stayed her hand, and spat in his face. "O thou proud Jezebel!" he broke out again, "thou hardenest thy heart and brazenest thy face against the Lord and his servant. The Lord will set in order before thee the things which thou has done this day;" and with the last word he marched off. A sharp tongue like this could not fail to sting people into antagonism. Both at Skipton and at Doncaster he was so beaten and bruised that he was left for dead, but on both occasions, if we may believe the Quaker authorities, his wounds were miraculously healed in a few hours. Assured by these two proofs, and by a vision which he enjoyed, that if he stoutly did his duty the Lord would heal him

again,* he went to his work with renewed vigour, and was stoned and pitched over walls without being hurt, or, if hurt, immediately healed, like the heroes of Valhalla, who are every day hewn in pieces in mortal combat, and every night able to eat of the boar *sœhrimnir* and quaff mead from their huge drinking-horns as if nothing had happened to impair their appetite. He visited first Ireland and afterwards Scotland, and was pelted and laughed at in both; but he did not thus compass sea and land without making proselytes. We know that in peculiar conditions of the soil and atmosphere unknown vegetations will rush up and rapidly spread over a whole district. So it was with the new religion.

The women who went forth as preachers of the inward light and the sinless life met with usage quite as rough as the men. The age was shocked at females leaving the privacy of their families and coming into crowded meetings to pour out their wild rhapsodies, where, if some were edified, there were more who mocked. The pious were grieved at the transgression of the apostolic prohibition of women speaking in the church. The profane had their indecent jests. The rude populace thought that women who could so far forget the timidity and delicacy of their sex could best be cured of their phantasy by cold bathing, and therefore it was their delight to drag them to the nearest pump. One Quakeress, more zealous than her sisters, appeared stark naked in the chapel at Whitehall, when the Lord Protector was present, as a sign to the people.† Surely it was only a sign that she was mad.

But of all the disciples of Fox, male and female, none was more famous than James Naylor, and no one brought upon

* Sewel's History of the Quakers, pp. 70-72.

† Neal's History of the Puritans, Vol. II., p. 482.

the sect a deeper reproach. He had unfortunately kindled the admiration of some crazy women, who persuaded him he was nothing less than divine; and his judgment, already disordered by fanaticism, was unable to resist the intoxication of female flattery. One admirer wrote him, "Thou shalt no longer be called James Naylor, but Jesus." Others addressed him as *The Everlasting Son of Righteousness—The Prince of Peace—The only begotten Son of God—The fairest among ten thousand*. It was famed abroad that he had raised a woman from the dead. When lying in Exeter jail, into which he had been cast, some female devotees got admittance to his presence; they knelt before him; they kissed his feet; and malicious tongues whispered that their too ardent devotion had melted into love. Released at Exeter, it was arranged that he should enter Bristol in triumph, as Christ had entered Jerusalem. A man walked before him bare-headed. A woman led his horse by the reins. Three others ran before and spread their scarfs and handkerchiefs in the way; and a company followed singing, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of hosts: Hosannah in the highest: Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of Israel." So they entered the city; but they were quickly laid hold of and marched to the jail. From Bristol he was sent to London, where he was charged before the parliament with blasphemy, for assuming the names and attributes of Christ, and a parliamentary committee was appointed to examine witnesses in the cause. That divine honours were rendered in his presence he confessed, but he pleaded that they were paid not to him but to Christ who dwelt in him.* For ten days was the great council of the nation employed in deliberations as to whether Naylor was an impostor, a maniac, or a man divinely inspired.† At last

* Neal's History of the Puritans, Vol. II., p. 483.

† Thurloe's State Papers. Russel's History of Modern Europe, Vol. IV., p. 230.

they found him guilty of blasphemy; and, if slow in coming to judgment, when they did come to it, they forgot mercy. The unhappy man was sentenced to be placed in the pillory at Westminster for two hours, thereafter to be whipped at a cart's tail, from Westminster to the Old Exchange: two days afterwards he was to be put in the pillory again, with a placard above his head stating his crime, and then to have his tongue bored through with a hot iron, and his forehead branded with the letter B; and, as if this were not enough, he was to be sent the following week to Bristol, carried through the city on horseback with his face to the tail, whipped again, and finally to be brought back to London, confined in bridewell, and kept at hard labour during the Parliament's pleasure. A most barbarous sentence! When he had undergone one-half of it there was an effort made—and many who were not Quakers joined in it—to have the remainder cancelled; but the parliament, through zeal for religion, was unrelenting, and the whole of the terrible punishment was endured. An unflinching Friend stood by him at the pillory, gently held his head while his tongue was being bored, and licked his wounds to assuage the pain. The spectators through pity uncovered their heads when he was in his agony.* The Quakers in general were far from approving these insane and blasphemous pretensions, but they commiserated him in his cruel sufferings; and as he repented in prison and acknowledged his errors, they received him, on his liberation, back into their body.

Never was there a sect which exhibited more of the missionary spirit than the first Quakers. Every one of them was an apostle; and it is marvellous with what devotion they gave themselves up to their work, notwith-

* Sewel's History, pp. 138-143.

standing the cruel mockings and usage they everywhere received. In 1654 three Quakers perambulated Ireland, preaching in the towns and villages. In the same year two Quakers and two Quakeresses appeared in Scotland, and roused the wrath of its stern covenanting population by their contempt for the orthodoxy of the Kirk. Three years afterwards, George Fox himself crossed the Tweed; but he found there a somewhat unkindly soil for his seed. He managed to touch the heart of a few of the English soldiers who were garrisoned in the country, but testifies that the Scots were a dark, carnal people, and that they scarcely even listened to what he said.* Notwithstanding his cold reception in the Lowlands he resolved to penetrate into the Highlands. But there matters were worse; for, as he tells us, the highlanders were so devilish that they attacked him and his friends with pitchforks.† In spite of these discouragements he made some converts, and confirmed those who had been made by his forerunners. But as he had been ordered by the Council to leave the country, and warrants were out for his apprehension, he turned his horse's head to the south, and was soon again over the border.

But Quakerism was not to be confined within the narrow limits of this Island: it crossed the sea and appeared on the Continent. Holland was the first country in which it was preached, and there a number of proselytes were made. Carrying out the principle that honour was to be shewn unto none, the Dutch Quakers had some books published in which there was not a single capital letter to be found; for, to begin a man's name with a capital, they argued, was as bad as to render him hat-honour. The Burgomasters, thinking that such people must be mad, clapped a number

* Fox's Journal, p. 264.

† Journal p. 259.

of them into bedlam ; and the English emissaries who had turned their heads were put on board ship and sent back whence they came. But with the pertinacity which was so characteristic of the sect they soon returned, and began to preach at Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and other Dutch towns, with as much fervour as ever, and with considerable success. But if converts were made, riots also were excited, and the crowd would follow the strangers with the cry—Quake ! Quake ! Quake ! They were again obliged to leave the country, but one of them, named Ames, passed into Germany, travelled through Bohemia, and even penetrated Poland, scattering broadcast wherever he went Quaker seed.

1657.] About the same time another Quaker, named Robinson, felt a divine impulse to proceed to Jerusalem, that he might in the very city where our Saviour died proclaim Him to be the true light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world. He accordingly set sail for Leghorn, and after remaining there some weeks, secured a passage in a French vessel bound for Acre. From Acre he sailed along the shores of Palestine till he reached Jaffa, the ancient Joppa. He was now within fifty miles of Jerusalem, and leaving the coast he proceeded inland ; but the news of his coming had preceded him, and when he reached Rama, almost within sight of the sacred city which he had wandered so far to behold, he was prevented from proceeding farther. In a few days an Irish friar—one of the fraternity who had charge of the Holy Places—came to him and asked if he would promise, when he came to Jerusalem, to comport himself as other pilgrims did—pay the usual fees, wear the pilgrim's habit, and say nothing offensive to either Turks or Catholics. It is evident the friars of Jerusalem had heard what manner of people the Quakers were, and were resolved to be on their guard,

but surely the wandering Englishman might have been allowed to preach and testify in the streets of the city—for who would have understood him? The Quaker would not be bound by any such rules—for had he not come to Syria to proclaim the truth, and how could he consent to be gagged? and, therefore, he was quietly conveyed back to Jaffa, and there put on board a vessel bound for Acre; and the friars thought they were rid of him for ever. But they did not know the temper of the sect to which he belonged. Robinson was not long at Acre till he found another ship sailing south, and taking his passage in it, he was once more in Joppa.

Setting out alone and on foot toward the place which he felt he must see before he died, he was encountered on the way by some thievish Arabs, who presented a gun at his breast and demanded his purse; but, either because they were convinced of his poverty, or miraculously restrained by his meekness, from their plundering propensities, they allowed him to pass. At Rama he was recognised, detained again, and by a trick, which nearly cost him his life, led into a Mosque, and left there. The Imams who found him in the sacred place, imagined he wished to become a Musulman, and earnestly begged him to give them a sign. But no sign would the Quaker give, his yea was yea and his nay was nay; and then they intimated to him that he must for his sacrilege be burned alive in a fire of camel's dung. The poor fellow was happily preserved from this aromatic apotheosis, and sent to Gaza; and there the Pacha took an interest in so singular a pilgrim, and had him conveyed under a guard to Jerusalem. He was now at last in the city of his solemnities, and lodged in the convent; and again the friars tried to persuade him to visit the Holy Sepulchre and other sacred places as the pilgrims did, offering if he did so to remit the usual fees. The

Quaker stoutly told them that he could not visit these places to worship them, and indeed that he did not greatly care to visit them at all; upon which the friars opened the eyes of astonishment. They took him before a Turkish magistrate—probably the collector of the pilgrim tribute—who demanded what had brought him to Jerusalem. “It is by the command” said he, “of the Lord God of Heaven and Earth that I am come hither to manifest his tender love in visiting you, and to intimate that he will yet gather you to himself in the day of his gathering.” Having thus relieved his mind, he felt that his mission was done, and being at liberty to return home, he reached England in safety, to tell the strange story of his adventures in the East.*

The colony of New England, on the north-eastern shores of America, though recently founded, was greatly prospering. It was formed almost entirely of puritans who had fled from the rigour of the laws against non-conformity. The misgovernment of Charles, and the mummeries of his servant Laud, had sent thousands of Englishmen across the sea, that they might find in another country the freedom which was denied them in their own. They preferred the wilderness in America, with liberty to worship their God in their own way, to the cultivated fields of Old England, with religious intolerance. Exiles, for conscience sake, they should have known to respect in others that liberty of thought for which they had struggled so bravely and suffered so much themselves. But after sixteen hundred years Christians had not yet learned the first maxim of their religion, which requires them to do to others as they would that they should do to them.

About 1656 several Quakers made their appearance in

* Sewel's History, pp. 173-5.

the colony, some having apparently been drawn thither by trade, and others that they might find a shelter from the persecutions to which they were exposed in England. They were at once recognised by their forms of speech and immovable hats, and thrown into prison; for the puritans of New England thought that the Quakers, the fame of whom had come across the sea, were horrid blasphemers. Two women who were of the company were suspected to be witches—probably from the enthusiasm which lit up their eyes, or the eloquence which distilled from their tongues—and were stripped and searched for witch-marks, but happily none were to be found. If there had they would have been burned. It was thought best to clear the colony of these intruders by sending them back to England, which was accordingly done; and ship-masters were at the same time forbidden to bring any more into the country. But within a year others appeared, and they also were thrown into prison, and subjected to the lash. Among these was a young married woman, named Mary Clark, who having heard that the puritans of New England had commenced a persecution, left her husband and children in London, and crossed the Atlantic that she might warn them of their sin. She delivered her message with the heroic self-sacrifice which characterised her sect, but the only reward she received was twenty lashes on the bare back administered by the hangman, and imprisonment for three months.*

1658.] Notwithstanding these severities Quakers still came into the colony, for never did a forlorn hope march to death with greater intrepidity than did the members of this sect. They would not fight, but they could endure. Those who came, moreover, made a few converts among

* Besse's Sufferings of the Quakers, Vol. II., p. 181. Sewel's History.

the colonists, and this led to greater severities. The whippings were made more terrible, and in the case of notorious offenders the right ear was cropped off. Still the evil did not abate, and, accordingly, in a General Court held at Boston on the 20th October 1658, it was made law that all Quakers should be banished from the Colony, and that if they returned they should be put to death.* This law soon found victims, for there were plenty among the Quakers who were quite ready to seal their testimony with their blood.

Boston was already a bustling, prosperous town, constantly receiving new accessions to its population, and giving signs of that commercial greatness to which it has since attained. To this town came two Englishmen, both of them Quakers. The one was William Robinson, a merchant from London, and the other Marmaduke Stephenson, a farmer from Yorkshire. When Marmaduke was following his plough in pleasant York, he heard a still small voice distinctly saying to him, "I have ordained thee to be a prophet to the nations;" upon which he felt it to be his duty to leave his wife and children to the care of the God who had spoken to him, and sail for America. Besides these two men there came also to Boston, from Rhode Island, a Quakeress, named Mary Dyar. She was a middle-aged married woman, of a very comely countenance, and irreproachable character. The whole three were soon seized, tried, and sentenced to be banished, under pain of death, in terms of the statute recently made. Mary Dyar left the province, and for the time was safe. But the two men could not bring themselves to leave a country where they believed the Lord had work for them to do. They quitted Boston however, and visited their friends in the

* Sewel's History, p. 199.

neighbouring towns. But the eye of the law was upon them; they were immediately apprehended, and brought back to jail. In a month afterwards Mary Dyar re-appeared in the town, for she felt an impulse to return which she could not resist. She was soon recognised, apprehended, and thrown into prison. In the jail of this puritan city there were now lying three persons, who, by the sanguinary law which had been made, had forfeited their lives for their religion. They were soon brought to trial, and John Endicot, the Governor, sat as the presiding judge—a man who is pilloried in every Quaker book as a bloody persecutor, and at whose name the mildest Friend almost spits, as do the Jews at the mention of Haman. As the Quakers could plead nothing in their justification but that they had been moved to do as they did by the Lord, they were one after another sentenced to be hanged. When Endicot said to the woman, “Mary Dyar, you shall go to the place from whence you came, and from thence to the place of execution, and be hanged there till you are dead,” she meekly replied, “The will of the Lord be done.” On her way back to the prison she broke out again and again in expressions of praise.

The day for the execution came, and the three Quakers were led forth to die. Mary Dyar walked in the middle, and Robinson and Stevenson on either side. Their enthusiasm had overcome all fear of death: and with the radiant countenances of people going to a triumph they went to the scaffold. “No eye can see, no ear can hear, no tongue can utter, no heart can understand,” said Mary Dyar, “the sweet influence of the Lord’s spirit which I now feel;” and while she said so her comely face appeared as if it were the face of an angel. “This is your hour and the power of darkness,” said Robinson, with more of the defiant feelings of a man, to the officers who accompanied

them. When the procession reached the gallows, first Robinson and then Stephenson were turned off, both protesting with their last breath that they suffered for Christ and for conscience sake. The woman, rising above the timidity of her sex, and undaunted by the ghastly spectacle of her two companions swinging dead before her, now mounted the ladder as if anxious to follow them quickly through a short pang into everlasting glory. Her feet were already bound, her eyes bandaged, and the fatal noose about her neck, when a cry was heard in the crowd—"Stop! stop! she is reprieved." But Mary Dyar stood still, unconscious of the stir, as if her heart were already in heaven. When unbound, and invited to descend from the scaffold, she only said, "I am here quite ready to suffer as my brethren have unless you repeal your wicked law." It was her son who had obtained her reprieve; but such a woman, though she had stood at the foot of the gallows, could scarcely be said to have tasted of the bitterness of death.

The authorities resolved to get rid of this inflexible Quakeress as quickly as possible, and accordingly had her safely conveyed beyond their jurisdiction on the way to Rhode Island, where her home was. For some months she remained quietly with her friends, but in the spring of the following year the old impulse revived—she must revisit Boston, the bloody city, and testify against it. She reached it only to be apprehended and again brought to trial. Her old judge pronounced again the old sentence; upon which she said, as if tauntingly, "that is no more than you said before." "Ay," said Endicot, "but this time it will be executed." "I came before," said the heroic matron, "to testify against your wicked laws, the same is my errand now, and when I am gone other witnesses will be raised up." A second time was Mary Dyar led forth to execution,

guarded by soldiers, and with drums beating to prevent her voice being heard by the pitying crowd. When come to the scaffold, she was told that she might still save her life. "Nay, I cannot," she said, "for in obedience to the will of the Lord I came, and in his will I abide faithful to the death." "Your blood is on your own head," said one of the officers of the law, "for you knew the law and broke it by coming into the colony." "Nay," said she, "I came to keep you from blood-guiltiness by asking you to repeal your cruel law against the innocent servants of the Lord, and now my blood will be required at your hands." After a little she said, "I have been in paradise for some days," and while she spake she was cast off, and died as true and as noble a martyr as ever suffered.*

Strange! that men who had themselves fled from persecution should so soon have excelled in cruelty their old oppressors. No Quaker was ever put to death for his religion in England.

While Quakers were thus suffering, but yet increasing, in the colony, the very same thing was happening in the mother country. There is, in truth, nothing more wonderful in the whole history of religion than the rapid increase of Quakerism. It was but ten or twelve years since Fox began to preach—a man of mean aspect and rude speech—and now his followers could be counted by tens of thousands. They were to be found alike in the old world and the new; alike in Britain and in Holland; and even in India the voice of a Quaker had been heard like the voice of one crying in the wilderness. It is doubtful if within the same period primitive Christianity spread so fast and so far. And when we search for the cause of this rapid diffu-

* Besse's *Sufferings of the Quakers*, Vol. II., pp. 198-206. Sewel's *History*, pp. 226-235.

sion of the new faith it is difficult to discover it. But this we can easily see, that whenever its principles were embraced and its spirit imbibed it became a real power, converting vulgar men and women into heroes and martyrs.

The Quakers everywhere suffered with inflexible firmness, but they were not a people to suffer in silence. They proclaimed their wrongs upon the housetop. They took every opportunity to cry out against the hypocrisy of those who made long prayers and yet persecuted the people of God. They were all deceivers, wolves in sheep's clothing, having a show of godliness but ignorant of its power. In one of his parliaments Cromwell made a speech, in which he boasted that he knew not of one man who was unjustly imprisoned in all England. A proud boast, if it were true; but he had no sooner sat down than a Quaker who had got admission to the house, and who remembered the hundreds of his brethren who were lying in jail, rose up and began to deliver to him a message from the Lord; but the cry got up, A Quaker! A Quaker! and the unparliamentary orator was put down.* On another occasion, a woman came into the parliament with a pitcher in her hand, which she broke in pieces, and cried that so would they be broken in pieces. About the same time a Friend got admission to the Protector, and having failed to convince him of his hypocrisy and injustice, he took the cap

* Fisher, the Quaker here referred to, afterwards published the speech he intended to deliver, a copy of which still exists in the Advocates' Library. It is entitled—"The scorned Quaker's true and honest account both why and what he should have spoke (as to the sum and substance thereof) by commission from God, but that he had not permission from men, in the painted chamber on the 17th day of the 7th month 1656, before the Protector and the Parliament then and there met together, with many more of no mean account, who were not of them, yet were there crowded in among them." In a long introduction Fisher gives an account of his attempt to speak and of his having been put down. His speech begins—"The burden of the Word of the Lord God of Heaven and Earth as it came unto me," &c.

from off his head, and tearing it in twain, said, "So shall the government be rent from thee and thy house."*

1658.] These prophecies—for so they were regarded by the Quakers—were soon to be realised. The vigorous intellect and firm will which had so long kept in awe the unruly spirits which the civil war had evoked, and made England "a praise and protection" in the earth, succumbed before the Monarch before whom the mightiest must bow. On the 3d of September 1658 Oliver Cromwell was no more. History has placed him among the Great Immortals—the true kings of men. The Quakers did not estimate him so highly. They allowed that he did some good work in the beginning of his career, but his head had grown dizzy from the height to which he had climbed—his pride had spoiled him. And what was worse, notwithstanding his puritanism and his prayers, he was a persecutor of the saints.

According to the custom of the time, after his body was quietly interred, an image of him was made, and laid in state in Somerset House, and wax candles burned by it, and trumpeters blew their flourishes over it, and people came and gazed at it. This George Fox could not abide—it was an abomination—and he wrote a letter specially to say so. Then this image was borne with all imaginable funereal pomp from Somerset House to Westminster; and as the sad procession was filing slowly along, there came a Quaker riding to Charing Cross—it was Edward Burrough—and he saw the immense crowds in the streets, and the people in the windows and balconies, and even on the housetops, and the troopers guarding the avenues, and he asked what all this might mean; and he was told it was the image of the Protector being carried to West-

* Sewel's History, p. 185.

minster, where the kings of England lay. And his first impulse was to break through the guards, and to sound the judgments of God against the idolaters. But this he could not do, and so he contented himself with saying, "Alas for him who was once a great instrument in the hand of the Lord to break down many idolatrous images! Have they now made a costly image of him? And are those who were once his soldiers now guarding it, and watching over it, and his children and officers following it, and multitudes of the inhabitants of London wondering and gazing after it! What a change in so short a time!"*

Richard Cromwell wanted almost every quality which had made his father great, and the reins of power soon fell from his grasp. The parliament and the army again struggled for the supremacy, and the country was torn into factions, and everywhere there was heard the clash of opposing opinions. In such a state of matters the Quakers—who from their numbers were now a power in the state—were certain to make their voice heard. They accordingly uttered prophecies and penned letters. Some of them even joined in Booth's insurrection, but this gave occasion to their leader to publish a paper in which he denounced all wars and fightings. "All Friends everywhere," said he, in language more forcible than eloquent, "keep out of plots and bustling, and the arm of flesh; for all these are among Adam's sins in the fall, where they are destroying men's lives like dogs, beasts, and swine, groaning, rending, and biting one another, destroying one another, and wrestling with flesh and blood."†

But it would appear that though Fox would not wrestle with flesh and blood he had to confront at this time a

* Sewel's History, pp. 192-3.

† Fox's Journal, p. 287.

more terrible foe. He tells us that by reason of the great grief which came upon him on account of the troubles of the country, "his countenance being altered and his body become poor and thin, there came a company of unclean spirits to him and told him—'The plagues of God were upon him.'" But George told them they were impostors, and sent them away. Soon after this, as he informs us, he improved in bodily condition, and the unclean spirits came to him again and upbraided him with being fat, and even envied his plumpness. Then he clearly saw that with no condition of body would they be pleased;* and resolved henceforward to despise their interferences.

Meanwhile, General Monk had marched from Scotland to London with the army which owned him as its master; the fate of the country was in his hands; and seeing that the people in general, weary of contention and tired of presbytery, were longing for the restoration of the monarchy and the church, he resolved to invite Charles II. into the kingdom. Charles came, and was received with a kind of drunken loyalty: and then woe to every species of dissent!

* Journal, p. 266.





Chapter XV.

QUEN the accession of Charles II. the hierarchy was restored, but for a time the nonconformists were treated with clemency. About seven hundred Quakers who were lying in prison—most of them, it may be supposed, for refusing to pay tithes—were set at liberty.* A Quaker was even admitted into the royal presence, and questioned by the king, in his easy good-natured way, regarding his religion and sect. But this favourable aspect of affairs was interrupted by the insurrection of the Fifth-Monarchy-Men in January 1661. These enthusiasts were expecting the establishment of a fifth universal monarchy under King Jesus, who was speedily to appear upon earth and begin his personal reign. As the restoration of the Stuart dynasty interfered with this arrangement, they marched out of their meeting-house, with arms in their hands, resolved to subvert the government or die in the attempt. They were speedily dispersed by the train bands of the city, and their leader, Thomas Venner, a wine cooper, was hanged, in company with one of his chief adherents, at the door of the house where he had so often harangued regarding the advent of the heavenly king, and the reign of the saints upon earth for a thousand years. But though

* Sewel's History, p. 259.

the insurrection was thus easily and swiftly put down, a suspicion arose that the Quakers were concerned in it, and many of them were laid hold of and cast into prison. George Fox was himself apprehended and carried before the judges for examination, but there was not a shadow of evidence against him. The indulgence which had hitherto been extended to them was also withdrawn, and their meetings were prohibited. This severity occasioned their addressing the king :

“ Oh King Charles !

“ Our desire is that thou mayest live for ever in the fear of God and thy council. We beseech thee and thy council to read these following lines, in tender bowels, and compassion for our souls, and for your good.

“ And this consider, we are about four hundred imprisoned in and about this city, of men and women from their families; besides in the country jails above ten hundred. We desire that our meetings may not be broken up, but that all may come to a fair trial that our innocency may be cleared up.

“ London, 16th day, eleventh month 166^o₁.”*

At the same time Fox published a declaration, in which he strongly repudiated the arm of flesh; and the Fifth-Monarchy-Men themselves, when brought to die, freely acquitted the Quakers of any participation in their crime. Those who had been apprehended on suspicion were accordingly set at liberty.

But though, for a time, they were not much molested by the government, their meetings were very frequently disturbed by the rabble. Since the Restoration there had been a violent reaction against the austerity and fanaticism

* Neal's History of the Puritans, Vol. II., p. 593. Sewel does not give this Address, but another.

of the covenanting period; and to drink, whore, and swear, became the badge of loyalty. The king set the example, and the people followed it: the ancient may-poles and morris-dances were revived, and Fox sternly told the monarch that he would soon convert England into a Sodom and Gomorrah.* These wild roysterers thought there was no better sport than to break into a quaker-meeting, or to catch an unhappy Quaker and duck him in a pond. And it must be confessed that the indecent exhibitions in which some of the sect indulged richly deserved this rough usage. They were fond of appearing as a sign to the people, and nudity was their favourite mode of demonstration, as it was certainly the most striking that could well have been devised. Fox tells us that when he was in Skipton in 1660, "A Friend went naked through the town declaring the truth, and was much beaten,"† and every one will say that he well deserved it. Another Friend, who seems to have been moved by the spirit of an Indian Fakeer, was in the habit for three several years of paying visits to courts, markets, rectories, and manor-houses, without a rag on his body, and declaring to all that so should they be stripped naked. "Great sufferings did that poor man undergo," says Fox, pathetically, "sore whippings with horse-whips and coach-whips on his bare body, grievous stoning and imprisonment."‡ By such exploits he acquired

* Fox's Journal, p. 310.

† Fox's Journal, p. 310.

‡ Journal, p. 323. This Quaker, who was named William Simpson, obtained a high reputation in his sect by these nude exhibitions. After his death a short biography of him was published, to which Elizabeth Hooton, who was famous as the first female Quaker preacher, added "a few lines" in praise of nakedness. She states that her dear friend William Simpson, not only stripped himself naked, but blackened his face, and made his appearance in that guise to the edification of many. To the biography there is attached a short paper by Simpson himself, entitled "Going naked a sign," which begins thus: "Oh Church of England . . . thy nakedness and shame is coming upon thee as an armed man." See "A Short Relation Concerning the Life and Death of that Man of God, William Simpson." A

the reputation of a saint. Another Friend, not quite so shameless, about the time of the Restoration, walked into Carlisle Cathedral among the presbyterians and independents who were assembled there, with a white sheet about him and a halter round his neck, to signify to them that the surplice was about to be introduced again, and that some of them were likely to be hanged. They were good natured enough not to use the halter he had brought. These were among the early extravagances of the sect, but happily they soon disappeared.

We have already seen Quakers wandering to the ends of the earth in obedience to what they conceived to be divine admonitions. About this time several set out for Rome to convert the Pope. One of them, on his way through Italy, managed to get an audience of the Doge at Venice, and put into his hand some Quaker books. On reaching Rome they disseminated their pamphlets among the friars, who probably could not read them, spoke to cardinals, who probably did not understand them—testified against idolatry in an unknown tongue; and for their pains were cast into the prison of the Inquisition, where one of them died. About the same time, Hester Biddel managed to penetrate into the saloons of Versailles, and commanded the Grand Monarch, who was then, as usual, at war, in the name of the Great God to sheath his destroying sword.* But this religious knight-errantry was surpassed by a young woman who travelled to Turkey to make a Quaker of the Grand Sultan. Mary Fisher was the first Quakeress who visited America, and we have already seen her suspected to be a

copy of this curious pamphlet is in the Advocates' Library. I have seen another pamphlet, entitled, "Nakedness a Sign or Figure," published in 1665, in which Isaiah is quoted to shew the deep significance of "making the buttocks bare." It is evident the Quakers were on the verge of falling into the indecent extravagances of the Munster Anabaptists.

* Gerard Croese's History of the Quakers, p. 268.

witch; but as she happily had no spots upon her person which were insensible to pain when pricked with a pin, she was saved from the stake, and sent back to England. She now directed her steps towards the Orient. When she arrived at Smyrna, the English Consul thought it an act of kindness to his countrywoman to stop her from proceeding further, and sent her back to Venice, from which she had come. But she was not thus to be baulked of her purpose, and managed to make her way, by another route, to Adrianople, in the neighbourhood of which Mahomet IV. was then encamped with his army. All alone she entered the Turkish camp, and got a message delivered to the Vizier that she had something from the Great God to declare to the Sultan. Surprised at the arrival of an ambassador so strange, the Sultan agreed to receive her on the following day; which he did, surrounded by his great officers. "Is it true," said his Majesty through an interpreter, "that you have a message to me from the Lord God?" "Yea," said the Quakeress. "Then speak on without fear," replied the Sultan; and the young woman, after a little natural hesitation, poured out what she conceived to be her commission from on high. The Turks sat and listened, with their usual gravity, and when she was done, Mahomet remarked that they could not but respect one who had come so far with a message from the Lord; and offered her a guard to conduct her to Constantinople, whither she now wished to proceed, as it was scarcely safe for one like her to travel alone. She declined the guard, adroitly eluded expressing any opinion of the Prophet, reached Constantinople in safety, and from thence returned to England; having shewn that a Quaker could be more quixotic than Cervantes could conceive.*

* Sewel's History, pp. 257-8.

While the Turks were treating this female Friend with such grave courtesy, the independents of New England were still signalling their zeal for religion by hanging her brethren. The executions which had taken place, instead of inspiring terror, had impressed many with the belief that they were bound to go to Boston and lift up their voice against the bloody law by which their brethren had suffered. For bearing such a testimony William Ledra was condemned and executed. While his trial was proceeding, another Quaker, who had already been banished, appeared in the court, and declared how, in the face of death, he had been constrained to come there to warn them to shed no more innocent blood. He also was condemned, but before the day of his execution came, the governor relented, and released him and seventy-seven of the Friends who were lying in prison, but not till he had whipped two of them at a cart's tail through the city. Meanwhile the news of these severities reached England, and Charles at once granted a mandamus to put a stop to them. The royal message received additional significance by being entrusted to a Quaker, who had been banished from New England on account of his faith. When he landed and was introduced into the governor's house, Endicot ordered his hat to be removed; but he no sooner espied the parchment and the broad signet of England attached to it, than he hastily uncovered his own head, and ordered the Quaker's hat to be restored. When the mandamus was read the governor and his officials were in confusion, the prisons were emptied of their inmates in a twinkling, and a deputation was despatched to England to make explanations.*

After this no more Quakers were put to death in New

* Sewel's History, pp. 281-2.

England, but many of them were still imprisoned, fined, and whipped ; for the government which encouraged these things at home could not forbid them abroad. But, if we may believe Quaker writers, the just judgments of God overtook every one of their persecutors. Some were seized with loathsome diseases, some died violent deaths, some went mad ; and the very soil around Boston, the bloody city, for twenty miles, was smitten with barrenness and yielded no more its harvests of wheat.*

Of the Quakers who had proceeded to Rome to convert the Pope there was one named Perrot who carried his principles to greater lengths than the majority of his sect approved. He would not remove his hat from his head even when prayer was made to God, declaring that this was but an empty form. He allowed his beard to grow, probably on the principle of Tertullian, that the practice of shaving is a lie against our own face, and an impious attempt to improve the works of the Creator. He also began to innovate in regard to his signature, a thing about which the primitive Quakers were rather nice. Some of them, while they appended their ordinary appellation, subjoined a note in which they intimated that they had now a new name given to them.† Perrot simply subscribed himself "John," that his signature might look like that of the beloved disciple ; and in one of his letters he caricatured, in endeavouring to imitate, the apostolic style, by beginning thus—"I, John, the prisoner, being in the sense of the spirit of life with you all." The Quakers in general, however, did not approve of such a development of their principles, and therefore they do not hesi-

* Sewel's History, pp. 343-4.

† Thus Marmaduke Stephenson, in a letter written in Boston prison shortly before his execution, after subscribing his name, adds—"But have a new name given me, which the world knows not of, written in the Book of Life."

tate to tell that this fantastic zealot afterwards became a renegade.

So early as 1658 two Quaker women had "drawings in their mind" to proceed to Alexandria, that they might in the city where Neo-Platonism had been so eloquently taught by Hypatia twelve hundred years before promulgate their Neo-Christianity, and, if need were, die for their mystic faith, as she had. They had husbands and children, but the divine "drawings" overcame all conjugal and parental instincts. The ship in which they sailed touched at Malta, which was then held by the Knights of St. John. The Quakeresses landed, and were kindly entertained by the English consul, who, at the same time, warned them of the danger they ran if they offended the religious prejudices of the people. The governor also visited them, and told them he had a sister in the nunnery who greatly desired to see them. They went, but refused to bow before the high altar of the convent chapel, and for this no one will blame them. On another occasion they went into a church—or mass-house as they called it—while service was going on, and one of them knelt down with her back to the altar, as a testimony against it, and prayed aloud. A priest, probably struck by her fervour, came up to her, and offered to slip something into her hand, but she thought it must be the mark of the beast, and refused it with loathing. Yet another time they entered a church while high mass was being celebrated; they saw the lighted tapers, the embroidered draperies, the carved crucifixes, the bowings and the kneelings; and horrified at the idolatrous spectacle, they stood in the midst of the people weeping and trembling violently, and even afterwards when they came into the street they reeled and staggered as if they had been drunken, at which the poor Maltese marvelled greatly. It was probably felt that such

exhibitions could no longer be permitted, for the two Quakeresses were now removed from the consul's house and lodged in the prison of the Inquisition. While there they were sometimes treated with kindness, and sometimes with severity: threats, promises, and arguments, were in turn employed to induce them to become catholics, but they continued stedfast, and after four years' incarceration they were set at liberty, and sent back to England.

When they had been about three years in the prison of the Inquisition, a Friend, named Baker, who had been travelling in the East, came to Malta, in order, if possible, to procure their release. The inquisitors at once offered to set them at liberty if they would find bail never to return to Malta again. But this they refused even to endeavour to procure, as they knew not what the Lord might require them to do. Baker now offered to be imprisoned for them, or even to die for them; but such vicarious suffering did not seem good to the Roman inquisitors. Foiled in his endeavours to procure their release, this devoted Friend could do nothing more than take his station near their prison, where he and the captives could catch a glimpse of each other, and exchange a few words, and by this their souls were exceedingly refreshed. But at length he must leave Malta, and on his return home he was wind-bound for some weeks at Gibraltar. When its towering rock first loomed upon his view, he remembered he had seen such a crag in the visions of the night, and therefore inferred that the Lord had work for him there. He accordingly went ashore on a Maunday Thursday, and repaired to the mass-house. He found the priest in his surplice kneeling before the high altar, adoring the host. A divine indignation instantly took hold of him. He therefore turned his back upon the priest and his dead god, and his face toward the people who were down upon

their knees ; and taking off his coat he rent it from top to bottom and cast it from him, and then lifting his hat from his head, where it had hitherto remained, he threw it to the ground, and stamped upon it, and thrice he cried out—“ The life of Christ and his saints is risen from the dead !” The priest and the people no doubt concluded that a furious madman had found his way into the church, and instead of laying hold of him, they felt relieved when he made his escape and returned to the ship.*

But we must now return to England, where the Quakers were enjoying a temporary rest. But the marriage-law of the country threatened to wound them on the most tender point. From the first they had repudiated the marriage ceremonies of the church, and married and were given in marriage in their own fashion, without priest, altar, or ring. The validity of these Quaker marriages was now called in question, and the children begotten in them threatened with bastardy. A suit was actually begun by the kinsman of a Quaker, who had died, to prove that his child was illegitimate. “ The Quakers go together like brute beasts,” said the plaintiff’s counsel. But the Judge held that marriage was constituted by mutual consent, and remarked that there was a true marriage in Paradise when Adam took Eve and Eve took Adam. This is not the marriage law of England now, but it was the law of all Christendom before the Council of Trent, and is the law of Scotland at the present day. Enough, the Quakers were saved from the curse which threatened to blight their hearths.

There were already in the statute-book many laws, which though not made with reference to the Quakers, had a very direct bearing upon them ; but, as if these were not enough, an Act was passed in 1662, entitled, “ An Act to

* Sewel’s History, p. 321.

prevent mischiefs and dangers that may arise by certain persons called Quakers, and others refusing to take lawful oaths." This Act provided that if any one refused to take an oath before a magistrate, or persuaded others to refuse, he should for the first offence be subject to a fine not exceeding £5; for the second to a fine not exceeding £10; and if convicted a third time that he should be liable to transportation to any of his Majesty's plantations. The same penalties were imposed upon all who should assemble, to the number of more than five, under the pretence of joining in religious worship. This severe piece of legislation was partly the result of the antipathy to non-conformity which was now seated in cathedral stalls and enthroned in the palace of Whitehall. But it was also partly due to the dread of the Quakers and of their principles which was felt by many. They were now a numerous sect. They could be counted by tens of thousands. They were assuming a regular organization, and were, moreover, made as one man under the pressure of a white-heat sympathy. Then, their principles seemed inconsistent with civil government. They would not take the oath of allegiance: they interfered with the administration of justice by refusing to swear. Every time they came into court their hat-on-head seemed to defy and insult the magistrate on the bench. And if they refused to pay tithes because of their conscience, might they not refuse to pay their taxes on the same plea? If principles like these became general, it was evident the government must be subverted. It was true they professed to be men of peace—believers in the courtly doctrine of passive obedience; they were to conquer by suffering. But their professions were not believed; it was not deemed possible that men made of flesh and blood when smitten on the one cheek would always turn the other; and the inflexible firmness with which they had endured imprisonment, scourging, and

even death, rather than renounce their principles, had shewn how dangerous such a sect might be if it were fairly roused into resistance. It must be put down before it acquired greater consistency and strength.

Under the operation of the old legislation and the new the prisons were soon filled with Quakers. According to a statement published at the time there were in 1662 no fewer than four thousand two hundred Quakers in the different jails of England. Of these about five hundred were in the jails of London and its suburbs.* In many cases the prisons were so crowded that men and women were huddled together without regard to decency, and some died from the effects of their confinement. The Quaker-Meetings were now systematically broken up—especially their large meeting at the Bull and Mouth in London—and those who ventured to attend them hauled to prison. Driven from their meeting-houses, the persecuted Quakers assembled in the street and resumed their services. When the Friend who addressed the crowd was laid hold of by the constable another quietly stepped forward and took his place, and if no man was found bold enough to do so, a woman was sure to glide from the throng and fill the gap.

The Quakers did not suffer alone. The Savoy Conference had failed to heal the wounds of the Church, and in 1662 the Act of Uniformity was passed by which two thousand clergymen were ejected from their livings. It was on the Sunday preceding St. Bartholomew's day the cruel deed was consummated, and the memories which it brought were in harmony with the sufferings entailed by

* Sewel's History, p. 346. See also Life of Ellwood. Ellwood—the friend of Milton, and who suggested the composition of "Paradise Regained"—was about this time in Newgate, with many other Quakers, and gives some curious sketches of what he saw there.

this needless attempt to make all men think alike. Outward uniformity was restored to the Church by many of its greatest ornaments being thrown out of it; but if there was peace within its walls, there was soon heard the noise of battle from without, for those who might have been its defenders became its most bitter assailants.

However extravagant the Quakers were in some of their opinions, there had recently arisen a sect which was much more so. A tailor, named Muggleton, and a cobbler, named Reeves, resolved to outstrip all the religious pretenders who had gone before them, and gave out that they were the two witnesses mentioned in the Book of Revelation. Muggleton farther declared that he was the appointed judge of all mankind, that he kept the keys of heaven and hell, and that in the administration of his high office he had already consigned many souls to eternal death. The Quakers were quite as ready to do battle with blasphemous sectaries as with orthodox churchmen, and in 1663 we find one of them engaged in a hot controversy with Muggleton regarding his powers and pretensions. The numerous sect which this false prophet managed to found has happily long since died out, but his odd name, more than anything else, has helped to keep alive the remembrance of it.

Among those cast into prison this year was George Fox; but this was no new thing to him. It was Lancaster jail into which he was cast. While lying there, as he himself tells us, he was favoured with divine visions, in one of which was signified the defeat of the Turks, and in another the coming of the plague which a year afterwards devastated London.* When he was brought to trial, he very cleverly picked out so many errors in the indictment that the court were obliged to quash it; but, unwilling to allow

* Journal, p. 375.

the Arch-Quaker to escape, the judges cruelly tendered to him the oath of allegiance, and, on his refusal to take it, sent him back to prison, where he had already lain for nearly a year. It was a vile damp hole into which he was thrust, and there he lay the whole winter, often with his limbs completely benumbed from the damp and cold.* But George Fox could bear all this, and more if needful. Notwithstanding the weak health to which he was reduced by this merciless treatment, he employed his time, as usual, in writing epistolary warnings to all the principalities and powers of the earth. After a time he was removed from Lancaster to Scarborough Castle. He records that when travelling thither one of his attendants would frequently give the horse upon which he rode a secret lash, to enjoy the difficulty with which he kept his seat when the animal sprang forward under the whip, and then would gravely say, "How do you feel, Mr. Fox?" "The Lord cut him off soon after," says Fox, in his usual sternly exulting way; for he believed that Heaven was always ready to take up his quarrels and avenge his injuries, and in a hundred instances he records with evident satisfaction the divine judgments which befel his persecutors.† In Scarborough he was no better lodged than at Lancaster, and had he not been a man of very vigorous constitution he must have succumbed to the rigours of his confinement. It was not till 1666 that he was released, having, on this occasion, been detained a prisoner for three years.

While Fox was languishing in his dungeon, hundreds of his followers were sharing his fate, and others were being put on board vessels to be transported to Jamaica—so had the Act against conventicles ordained. But a higher power than parliament had ordained that few of these should ever set sail.

* Journal, p. 374.

† Journal, p. 377.

1665.] In the summer of 1665 the plague broke out in London. It was preceded by a drought of unusual severity, the fields were completely burned up, and the cattle died in hundreds. A leaden coloured cloud, it was said, slowly gathered over the doomed city, and underneath it the stagnant atmosphere had the stillness of death. When the pestilence appeared, and its virulence became known, a panic seized upon the whole population. The wealthier classes fled, but the poor could only remain and die. The mortality increased till it reached about eight thousand a week. Every night the dead-cart went its round, and its driver rung his bell, and shouted his doleful cry, "Bring out your dead." Business was at a stand: grass began to grow upon streets which had hitherto been busy thoroughfares; and on the doors of many houses was seen the red cross with the words, "Lord have mercy upon us," the ominous sign that the plague was within. It broke out in the ships which lay in the river, and in one of these in which fifty-five quakers were embarked, it gave the tranquil liberty of death to many of the captives. It raged for about eight months, and at the end of that terrible time it was calculated that about one hundred thousand persons had been swept away.*

1666.] The plague was scarcely abated when the great

* The Quakers regarded the plague as the vengeance of God upon their persecutors. In "Besse's Sufferings of the Quakers," (Vol. I. p. 465), we find the following extraordinary Address to the king and parliament, by a fanatic named Bishop, quoted as a prediction of it:—

"To the King and both Houses of Parliament—

Thus saith the Lord!

"Meddle not with my people, because of their conscience to me, and banish them not out of the nation because of their conscience, for if ye do, I will send my plagues upon you, and you shall know that I am the Lord.

Written in obedience to the Lord by his servant,

GEORGE BISHOP.

"Bristol, the 15th of the 9th Month 1664."

fire broke out. Beginning near the Monument, in the very centre of the city, it raged for nearly four days with devastating fury; and in that short period upwards of thirteen thousand houses were reduced to ashes. The famous old Cathedral of St. Paul's perished in the conflagration, with many other noble edifices. But it was believed that the fire burned out the last traces of the pestilence, which it probably did most effectually by destroying the filthy courts and lanes which were its favourite haunts, and at any rate it made room for a new and nobler city to rise on the ruins of the old. Two days before the conflagration burst out a Quaker appeared in the streets with his clothes unbuttoned, as if he had just hurried from a house that was on fire, and proclaimed that the judgments of God were about to come upon the city. When the fire began, believing himself a prophet, and anxious now to stay the disaster he had foretold, he went to Cheapside and spread out his hands in presence of the devouring flame and commanded it to subside, and so resolutely did he stand that he would have been caught in the whirlwind of fire had not a wiser Friend dragged him back and saved him from his folly.*

The Society of Friends had hitherto drawn its converts almost entirely from the lower orders of the people. Fox himself was but a cobbler, with little education, and the majority of his followers were of the same humble rank in life. Some of the trading class had joined the Society, and gave it the help of their wealth, but scholars mocked at the rhapsodies of the uncultivated Quaker preachers, and men of fashion would have deemed themselves disgraced by being seen at their meetings. The very name of Quaker was a byword and a reproach. But about this time two

* Sewel's History. p. 462. Fox's Journal, p. 336.

men joined the sect who gave it the lustre of birth, breeding, and scholarship, and at once raised it from the contempt with which it had hitherto been regarded. These two men were ROBERT BARCLAY and WILLIAM PENN.

Robert Barclay was born at Edinburgh in the year 1648. He was the son of Colonel Barclay of Mathers, the representative of an ancient family, and by his mother he was related to the noble and once potent house of Huntly. While he was yet a boy his father sent him to France to be educated under the eye of his uncle, who was Principal of the Scots College at Paris. Here his natural abilities rapidly developed themselves, he became a proficient in the learning of the times, and not only wrote but spoke both the French and Latin languages with great facility. But he acquired his accomplishments at the expense of his faith. He became a convert to the Church of Rome. So soon as his father learned this he had him instantly brought home. But while the son was become a believer in transubstantiation, the father had embraced the principles of the Quakers, and now these two antagonistic systems met under the same roof. Happily the impressions which the young man had received from the popish influences amid which he had lived were not very deep; the father, with all the zeal of a proselyte, plied him with Quaker arguments, filial reverence gave weight to his words, and the lad renounced the pope and became a follower of Fox. He was now nineteen years of age, and was possessed of accomplishments and sense beyond his years. It was not long before he publicly stood forth as the defender of his faith, and shewed that Quakerism had at length enlisted in its cause one who could bring accurate scholarship and vigorous logic to its help.

The other illustrious convert to Quakerism was William Penn, eldest son of Admiral Sir William Penn. Admiral Penn was one of the great sea captains who helped to lay

the foundations of the naval supremacy of England. Under the Commonwealth he took part in the famous three days' fight, in which the maritime strength of the Dutch was shattered, and their gallant admiral, Van Tromp, slain. He afterwards commanded the expedition which, though it failed to conquer Cuba, made Jamaica a British possession. After the Restoration he led the English fleet, under the Duke of York, in the terrible encounter with the Dutch, under Admiral Opham; and for his conduct on this occasion he received the lasting friendship of the king and his brother. The son of this distinguished seaman was educated as became his rank and prospects. At the age of fifteen he was entered a gentleman commoner at Christ Church, Oxford. He was not long there till the change in the government of the country made itself felt in the university. The learned Dr Owen was displaced to make room for Dr Reynolds, and the liturgical worship of the church was resumed. These changes naturally gave rise to violent disputes among the students. While matters were in this state a Quaker, named Thomas Loe, happened to preach in the town, and his preaching made such a deep impression on young Penn that he withdrew from the regular worship in his college, and began, with some other serious-minded youths, to hold private meetings for devotion. When this became known to the heads of the college, the young enthusiasts were fined for nonconformity. Not long after this an order came down from court that the surplice should be worn by the students, according to ancient custom; but so far was Penn from complying with this order, that he and some friends fell upon those students who had conformed, and tore their surplices over their heads. It was the fighting father blazing out in the serious-minded son. For this outrage he and his associates were expelled the university.

The admiral was greatly distressed at the disgrace which had befallen his son, and his distress was aggravated by discovering that the youth had contracted an aversion to fashionable life. To cure him of this he resolved to send him on his travels. Young Penn, accordingly, set out for France. At Paris he was presented to Louis XIV., mingled in the gay society of that ever gay capital, and showed his spirit by accepting a duel, which was forced upon him on the street, and disarmed his antagonist. From Paris he proceeded to Saumur, and studied theology there. After an absence of two years he returned with all the manners of a man who had seen the world, and mingled in the best society, with his French rapier at his side and his hair falling on his shoulders in graceful curls. He now became a student at Lincoln's Inn, for his father was anxious that he should acquire a knowledge of the laws of his country, and so be fitted for some public employment. When the plague broke out he left London to escape its contagion, and either the alarm which the destroying pestilence produced, or disgust at the universal licentiousness, awoke his old religious tendencies. When his father returned from sea, fresh from his great victory, his quick eye could not but detect the change in his son, and he had him despatched to Ireland, where he was well received at the Viceregal Court of the Duke of Ormond. The admiral had large estates in Ireland, and these he committed to the care of his son, in the hope that business might wean his thoughts from religion. And the young man appears to have done his work well, and to have made himself a favourite wherever he went. But it so happened that Loe was at this time in Ireland; Penn heard him preach at Cork, and all his boyish love for the mystic theology of the Quakers revived. He began to attend their meetings, and when at one of these the police broke in upon them and carried

him and some others to prison. The young courtier was very unlike his companions in misfortune, for he wore a huge periwig, and was otherwise dressed like other young men of fashion. The mayor, before whom he was carried, at once perceived he was no vulgar Quaker, and so soon as he learned who he was, offered him his liberty if he would give his bond for his good behaviour. Penn declined to do this, for he maintained he had violated no law, but wrote to the Earl of Ossory, then president of the Council of Munster, who immediately ordered his discharge. This friendly duty discharged, another remained to be done. The earl informed the admiral of the dishonour his son was bringing upon his house. He received the tidings with deep grief, and immediately ordered the youth home. Already the jest in the fashionable world was, that Penn was a Quaker, or some other melancholy thing.* The father remonstrated, threatened, begged him to renounce his silly vagaries, but in vain. The son remained respectful, but obstinate. Distressed beyond measure that all the hopes he had centred in his son should be disappointed, and the reproach of Quakerism attached to his name, yet unwilling to break for ever with a child whom he loved, he finally told him he would trouble him no more about his religion if he would only consent to remove his hat in the presence of the king, the Duke of York, and himself. After a little hesitation the youth told his father he could not consent to do so. Unable to stand this, the admiral beat him in his hot wrath, and then turned him out of doors.†

Cast out by his father, young Penn attached himself more closely than ever to the Quakers, and soon became one of their preachers. He began also to distinguish himself as a controversial writer, but his pen soon brought him

* Pepys' Diary, Vol. II., p. 172.

† Penn's Travels in Holland and Germany, Vol. I., p. 92.

into trouble. In one of his early works, entitled "The Sandy Foundation Shaken," he attacked the orthodox doctrines, that there are three distinct persons in the one godhead, that God cannot pardon sinners without a full satisfaction, and that sinners are justified by an imputed righteousness, for in all these points the Quakers differ from the Church.* In truth, it must be told that, tried by creeds they are very heterodox, but somehow, in spite of their heterodoxy, they have managed to practice all the virtues of Christianity. The pamphlet gave great offence, and Penn was apprehended and committed to the Tower. While lying there he was visited by Bishop Stillingfleet, who endeavoured to reason him out of the notions he had formed, and pointed to the splendid prospects which he destroyed. "The Tower," said he in reply, "is to me the worst argument in the world." In his chamber in the old fortress he composed his most celebrated work, "No Cross, no Crown," adding another to the many famous works which have emanated from a dungeon. After an imprisonment of seven months he was released, by an order direct from the king, who was moved to this clemency by the Duke of York, who had pity on the son of his friend.

The feelings of the old admiral toward his Quaker son now began to relent; and at last, on the earnest interces-

* In regard to the Trinity, the Quakers say that the word *person* nowhere occurs in the Bible; and that in a subject so mysterious we should not presume to be wise above what is written. In a summary of doctrine contained in Sewel's History, the Quaker doctrine is stated thus: "The Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit are one, in divine being inseparable, one, true, living, and eternal God, blessed for ever." In Howitt's sketch of the Quakers in the last edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica," the Quaker faith is given thus—"We agree with other professors of the Christian name in the belief in one eternal God, the creator and preserver of the universe, and in Jesus Christ his Son, the Messiah and Mediator of the New Covenant." In regard to the atonement, the Quakers hold that Christ died for all, but they repudiate the idea of a *full satisfaction* and of an imputed righteousness.

sion of his wife, he agreed to receive him back into his house. When on his death-bed, painfully aware that the strong religious convictions of his son would expose him to persecution, he sent a friend to the Duke of York to beg of him, as his last request, that he would protect him as far as he consistently could. The duke gave his promise, and he more than kept it.

Besides Barclay and Penn, the Quakers about this time received another proselyte, who was in some respects abler than both. This was George Keith. Like Barclay, he was a Scotchman, and was bred a presbyterian. When at college he had for a fellow student Gilbert Burnet, the future historian and Bishop of Salisbury, who always speaks of him with respect. He had sufficient learning, a sharp-edged intellect, and a ready wit. In many respects formed to be a polemic, he threw himself with natural ardour into the controversies of the time, and rendered eminent service to the Quaker cause. He frequently fought by the side of his friend Barclay, and was universally acknowledged to be one of the foremost champions of the sect. But in after time he became a renegade, disowned the doctrines which he had once maintained, vilified the body to which he had belonged, took orders in the Church of England, and assumed the surplice; and so he is always spoken of by the Quakers with disrespect, or with the pity which belongs to one who was once an angel of light, but who afterwards became, like Lucifer, a fallen star.

In the ranks of the Friends at this time were also to be found Isaac Pennington and Thomas Ellwood, both men of good family and liberal education. Pennington had wedded the widow of Sir William Springett, a distinguished captain among the many great captains of the parliamentary army, and had made her daughter, Gulielma Maria, his own. In the quiet village of Chalfont St. Giles, situated amid the

pleasant downs of Buckinghamshire, they made their abode, and there Thomas Ellwood, the friend of Milton, often visited them; and there, too, during the plague, came the great poet himself, and worked at his "Paradise Lost," and got his first idea from Ellwood of his "Paradise Regained," and listened to the music of the young Guli Springett, for the girl, though reared among Quakers, had not been compelled to stifle the warblings of nature within her. The good but simple Ellwood had known the interesting orphan almost from her childhood, and as she ripened into womanly beauty, he half confesses in his memoirs that he loved her, and perhaps his desire to be beside her had something to do with his conversion to Quakerism, but he never told his love; and now William Penn came down to Chalfont to visit the Penningtons, and, looking upon the maiden, he loved her too, and after a time made her his wife. Thus these three Quakers were linked together in relationship and love.*

Though learning and rank were now helping to rescue the Quakers from contempt, they had still amongst them men who contrived occasionally to make them ridiculous. A zealous Friend, who rejoiced in the name of Solomon Eccles, about this time stripped himself half naked, placed a pan of burning coals upon his head, and during the fair in London appeared among the showmen and mountebanks to testify against their sinful diversions. Some carters and coachmen in the crowd had sense enough to apply their whips smartly to his bare back, and he was glad to escape. But his insanity was not cured by the whipping he had received, for some time afterwards he appeared in a chapel in Ireland stripped to the waist, and with his pan of coals and brimstone again blazing on his head. "Wo to you idola-

* Dixon's Life of Penn, chap. iv.

ters," cried he to the people on their knees. "God hath sent me this day to warn you, and to shew you what will be your portion unless you repent,"—for that was the meaning of the brimstone and the coals.* On another occasion this Solomon went into a church in Aldermanbury, and seating himself on the pulpit-cushion, in the face of the congregation, began to sew, but I do not know the exact spiritual significance of this act.

In 1669 George Fox fairly succumbed to the softer passions of our nature, and took to wife Margaret Fell, a middle-aged, comfortable widow, with a good estate. Margaret had been the spouse of a Welsh judge, and had been early converted by the preaching of Fox, and from this time forward had been one of his most ardent admirers and friends.† She frequently sheltered him in his times of need; and when he was lying in Lancaster Jail she travelled to London to petition the king for his release. She, moreover, preached and wrote pamphlets in the Quaker cause. Her first husband was now dead, and what better help-meet could the apostle of Quakerism find? Fox tells us that for some time "he had seen from the Lord that he was to take Margaret for his wife;" and when he mentioned his movements to her, Margaret confessed (blushingly, no doubt) that a corresponding illumi-

* Sewel's History, p. 486.

† The extent of her admiration may be judged of by a letter which she and some other female enthusiasts on one occasion wrote to Fox. They wrote—"Our dear father in the Lord. For though we have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet we have not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus thou hast begotten us through the gospel—eternal praises be to our father. We, thy babes, with one consent being gathered together in the power of the spirit, thou being present with us, our souls doth thirst and languish after thee. . . . O thou bread of life, without which bread our souls will starve. Oh, for evermore give us thy bread. . . . In thy presence is fulness of joy, and where thou dwell is pleasure for evermore. O thou fountain of eternal life, our souls thirst after thee, for in thee alone is our life and peace," &c., &c.

nation had been given to her;* all which heavenly admonitions, I am afraid, can be very easily translated into the language of earth. There being thus no hindrance in the way, George took Margaret to his wife, and Margaret took George to be her husband, in a public meeting of the Friends at Bristol. "She was a woman of a noble endowment," says Sewel; "and this I know not only by her writings, but I have also heard her preach an hour together, delivering her matter compactly and orderly."† Fox, however, was not a man to waste his life in uxorious sloth, and so, after comforting his widow-wife for a week, he parted from her, and started on one of his missionary tours.

The old act against conventicles having expired, a new one, with clauses of additional severity, was carried through parliament in 1670. Both the court and the church gave it their support, though Bishop Wilkins had the generous courage to speak strongly against it. By this act, if more than five persons met together for religious worship, except according to the forms of the Church of England, they were liable to heavy fines, and these fines might be levied by the seizure and sale of their goods. Informers were encouraged to industry in their infamous calling by receiving one-third of the fines; and magistrates who, through a mistaken humanity, shirked their duty, were made liable in a penalty of £5. As if this were not enough to make the wheels of this Juggernaut car go smoothly, a clause was added to the effect, that the act "should be construed most largely and beneficially for the suppressing conventicles, and for the justification and encouragement of all persons to be employed in the execution thereof." Under the kindly shadow of this law, a vile set of informers sprang

* Fox's Journal, p. 412.

† History of the Quakers, p. 488.

up, who crept into private houses and religious meetings, and lived upon the labour of conscientious industry. The dissenters, who thought it their duty to worship God without a surplice and without a liturgy, were liable any day to be carried before a magistrate, and see their household goods sold at the market cross to pay their fines. The sharpest edge of the statute, however, was turned against the Quakers, who were not intimidated by its terrors, and obstinately continued their meetings. On the very day on which the law came into force, Fox repaired to the meeting held in Gracechurch Street, in London. He found the doors of the meeting-house barred and guarded by soldiers, and a large crowd collected in the street. A Friend was already holding forth. As soon as he had finished Fox took his place, and at once gave out the defiant cry—"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

It was not in London only that the fiery breath of the persecution was felt. It is said that at one time in Bristol every adult Quaker was in prison; and in the same city fines were levied to the amount of upwards of £16,000. From the records of the Society it appears that over the whole country about this period property was taken or destroyed to the value of a million sterling. In 1670 Charles signed an order, which was countersigned by the Archbishop of Canterbury and thirteen others, to Christopher Wren, to pull down their meeting-houses at Ratcliffe and Horselydown, which was accordingly done, and the materials sold. Similar devastation was wrought in other places, and the Quakers could only endure what they could not prevent.*

In the same year a trial took place which will ever be memorable in the history of the Jury. William Penn and

* Article, Quakers, in the last edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica," understood to be written by Wm. Howitt.

William Mead were indicted at the Old Bailey for having, with other persons, to the number of three hundred, tumultuously, with force and arms, assembled in Gracechurch Street, and for having preached there in contempt of the king's laws, and to the disturbance of the peace. They pleaded not guilty. The witnesses who were called declared that they saw William Penn speaking to the crowd, but that they could not hear what he said. "We confess ourselves," said Penn, "to be so far from recanting or declining to vindicate the assembling of ourselves to preach and worship the Eternal God, that we declare to all the world that we believe it to be our indispensable duty to meet incessantly upon so good an account, nor shall all the powers of earth be able to divert us from it." "You are not here for worshipping God," said one of the aldermen, "but for breaking the law." "I have broken no law," said Penn, "and should like to know upon what law you ground my indictment." "Upon the common law," said the recorder. "Where is it?" asked Penn. "The common law is *lex non scripta*," retorted the recorder. "According to Coke, common law is common right," replied Penn, not to be baffled; "and if you deny me my right, you evidence to the world your resolution to sacrifice the privileges of Englishmen to your sinister and arbitrary designs." "If you take not some course, my lord, to stop the mouth of this pestilent fellow," said the recorder, addressing the mayor, "we shall not be able to do anything to-night." "Take him off to the bail-dock," said the mayor. "Am I to be taken away," cried the undaunted Quaker-son of the undaunted old admiral, as he was being removed, "because I plead for the fundamental laws of England? If so, who can say he hath a right to the coat on his back? Is it so, that our liberties are to be invaded, our wives ravished, our children enslaved, our families ruined, and our estates

led away in triumph by every sturdy beggar and malicious informer as their trophies?"

When Mead was left alone at the bar, he rose and said, "You men of the Jury, I stand here to answer to an indictment which is a bundle of lies, for I am accused of having met *vi et armis, illicite et tumultuose*. Time was when I had freedom to use a carnal weapon, and then I feared no man; but now I fear the living God, and dare hurt no man, and therefore I demand to know upon what law my indictment is founded. If the recorder will not tell what makes a riot, Coke tells us that it is when three or more are met together to beat a man, or forcibly enter his lands, or cut his grass or wood, or break down his pales." After some altercation, in which the mayor told Mead that he deserved to have his tongue cut out, he also was removed to the bail-dock.

After Mead was removed, the recorder began to charge the jury, when the voice of Penn was heard sounding from the bail-dock—"I appeal to the jury, who are my judges," he cried, "whether the proceedings of the court are not most arbitrary in charging the jury in the absence of the prisoners." "Why, you are present; you hear, do you not?" said the recorder, with a sneer. "No thanks to the court," said Penn, who was forthwith removed, together with Mead, to the Black Hole, to prevent further interruptions. The jury were then charged, with menaces, as to the kind of verdict they should give, and then they were allowed to retire. When they again came into court, "Are you agreed upon your verdict?" said the clerk. "Yes," said the foreman. "Look upon the prisoners at the bar," resumed the clerk. "How say you? Is William Penn guilty of the matter whereof he stands indicted, or not guilty?" "Guilty of speaking in Gracechurch Street," said the foreman. "Is that all," asked the court? "That is

all," replied the foreman. "You had as good said nothing," said the recorder. "Was it not an unlawful assembly?" interposed the Lord Mayor. "I have said all I was commissioned to say," answered the imperturbable foreman. With threats, the jury were now sent back to reconsider their verdict; but when they returned, they handed to the court a paper signed by them all, in which they again found that William Penn was guilty simply of speaking in Gracechurch Street, and that William Mead was not guilty. The court, now losing all patience, threatened to lock them up without food till they brought in a proper verdict. "The jury, who are my judges," said Penn, "ought not to be thus menaced. The agreement of twelve men is a verdict in law, and I require the clerk to record it, as he will answer at his peril." Notwithstanding this remonstrance, the jury were locked up for the night; but when they were brought into court the next day, which was Sunday, half-famished through want of food, still their answer to the question, "How say you, guilty or not guilty?" "William Penn is guilty of speaking in Gracechurch Street." In spite of their protestations, the jury were again locked up, in the hope that by the following day they would be starved into submission. But when the next day came, and the old question was put, "How say you, guilty or not guilty?" "Not guilty," said the foreman, with a voice firmer than ever. The court, enraged at their defeat, and unwilling to let their prey escape altogether out of their hands, fined the prisoners for contempt of court, in keeping their hats on, and also the jurymen, forty merks a-piece, for giving a verdict in the face of the directions they had received from the court.* It was a noble stand these men made, for which they deserve to be for ever famous. Seldom has

* "The People's Ancient and Just Liberties Asserted," by W. Penn.

a court behaved worse, and never has a jury behaved better.

Not contented with having traversed all England, Scotland, and Ireland, proclaiming his principles, as with a trumpet, George Fox now resolved to cross the Atlantic and visit America, where Quakerism was taking firm root, and throwing out vigorous branches. In 1672 he left England and sailed for Barbadoes. From Barbadoes he went to Jamaica, and from Jamaica to Maryland, New England, Virginia, and Carolina. Albeit his health was now much broken by the terrible imprisonments he had endured, he made long journeys through the boundless forests (now cultivated fields) of the new world, and spoke of the divine light not only to the colonists in their towns, but to the Red Indians in their wig-wams. After wandering about in this way for more than a year, he returned home; but he had scarcely set his foot on English soil again when he was apprehended and thrown into Worcester Jail, for being present at a conventicle. His trial was put off time after time; sometimes he lay in jail, and sometimes he was allowed to be a prisoner at large, for his health would not now stand close confinement, and thus a year slipped away, and his release seemed as far distant as ever. In these circumstances his wife, who had herself tasted the bitterness of captivity, travelled to London and obtained an audience of the king at Whitehall, and begged that her husband might be set at liberty. The king referred her to the Lord Chancellor Finch. To Finch, therefore, the devoted woman went; but Finch told her that the king could not set her husband free unless by granting him a pardon. Now, George Fox knew long ago that the king was willing to grant him a pardon, but he would not accept of it, for he argued, that to accept of a pardon involved a confession that he had committed a crime. When this was explained

to the chancellor, he had respect to the scruples of the great Quaker, and therefore procured a writ of *habeas corpus* for him, that so he might be brought to London and tried before the King's Bench. He stood, therefore, before this high court, over which Sir Matthew Hales presided, willing rather to receive the sentence of the law than the pardon of the king. Happily his indictment was quashed, and he was set at liberty.

His case was a hard one, to have suffered so long and for no crime which the law, rigorous though it was, could take hold of. But it was not harder than was that of hundreds of his followers. The jails were everywhere crowded with the victims of the intolerable tyranny of the church and the court; and about this time it was calculated that, since the Restoration, two hundred Quakers alone had died in prison from the rigours of the confinement and ill-usage they had endured. If only half this number died such a death, it gives us a fearful picture of the horrors of imprisonment in the seventeenth century.





Chapter V.

FP to this time the doctrines of the Quakers had not been digested into any system. Fox had received his revelations at sundry times and in divers manners. These he had communicated to his followers and the world in his discourses and letters. When he preached, he spoke as an oracle, and the devout listened to what he said as to divine truth. When he penned his epistles in the solitude of his prison, he knew they would be afterwards printed, and everywhere read in the meetings of the Friends. The days seemed to be revived when the epistles of St. Paul and St. Peter were read in the churches. It is hard for us now, when we peruse the letters of Fox, to see in them anything but burlesques of the Bible, always rhapsodical, frequently obscure, without one gleam of the Bible's beauty, or even of the eloquence to which Mahomet appealed as the proof of the inspiration of the Koran; and yet we know they produced a profound impression on the Quaker community. The gifted converts, when they began to preach, lit their lamps at the great central luminary, and helped to diffuse its light. They also wrote letters, and even pamphlets, which had less or more authority in the sect. Thus a Quaker theology gradually sprang up; but as of yore, the inspirations of the sybil were written on stray leaves, which were tossed about and scattered by the wind.

There was needed a man who would collect the scattered fragments of truth, and neatly compact them together. Such a one was found in Robert Barclay, who did for Quakerism what St. Paul and St. Augustine had done for Christianity. In his "Apology for the True Christian Divinity," published in 1675, he reduced a very unpromising heap of materials into a logical system, which he states with perspicuity, illustrates with taste, and supports with quotations from the apostles, fathers, and reformers of the church. In his hands the incoherent ravings, the blunders and the vulgarities of half-crazed and wholly uneducated men, assumed the aspect of a mystical but not altogether unreasonable piety. Indecencies were draped, rough places made smooth, defects supplied, and the whole reduced into an admirable method. One is tempted to think that Fox himself must have been somewhat amazed when he found his unlettered theology arrayed in the classical and patristic garments with which Barclay had invested it.

Barclay states his creed in fifteen propositions, and his book has such authority in his sect that these may be regarded as the Fifteen Articles of the Society of Friends. They may be briefly expressed thus:—

1. Seeing the height of all happiness flows from the true knowledge of God, a right understanding of this is necessary above everything else.

2. It is only by the Spirit that the true knowledge of God can be revealed: by Him was it revealed to the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, and by Him is it in the same way revealed still. This divine inward revelation is not contrary to Scripture or reason; but neither is it to be tried by Scripture or reason: for it has a self-evidencing power, and inclines the mind to assent to it as to the natural truth, that the whole is greater than the part.

3. The Scriptures are revelations of God's Spirit, and contain histories, prophecies, and doctrines; but as they are only a stream from the fountain itself, they are not to be esteemed as the highest source of divine truth, nor the primary rule of faith and manners.

4. All mankind are by nature fallen and dead to the inward feeling of the divine testimony.

5. God sent His Son as a light to lighten every man that cometh into the world

6. Christ's redemption is universal, and the benefit of it extends even to those who know not the gospel.

7. In all who resist not the inward light, but attend to it, is produced a holy, pure, and spiritual birth. This regeneration involves both justification and sanctification.

8. Those who are fully regenerated are free from sin, and in that respect perfect.

9. It is possible for those who have made some progress in the divine life to fall away; but there may be such perfection that total apostasy is impossible.

10. All who have received the gift of God, the divine light in their hearts, may minister in holy things, and they must do so without hire.

11. All true and acceptable worship comes from the inward and immediate movement of the Holy Spirit.

12. Baptism is a pure and spiritual thing, of which the baptism of John was a figure, and the baptism of infants with water is a mere human tradition, with no authority in Scripture.

13. The communion of the body and blood of Christ is inward and spiritual, of which the breaking of bread by Christ with His disciples was a figure, which figure is now done away.

14. God is the alone Lord of the conscience, and therefore no human authority has a right to force the conscience, but only to see that no one under pretence of conscience does anything inconsistent with the welfare of society.

15. Since the end of religion is to redeem man from the spirit of the world, and to lead him to inward communion with God, all the vain customs, pomps, and pleasures of the world ought to be abandoned.

The stem-doctrine of this system, out of which all the others grow, is that of immediate revelation. God reveals Himself in the heart of all His creatures. Christ is a light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. The Holy Spirit is the great teacher. It is a mistake, say the Quakers, to suppose that inspiration is confined to the prophets and apostles; it is common to all men. In some,

indeed, the divine light is extinguished by the native darkness of the human heart; the spices exhale their perfumes from the garments of the heavenly bridegroom, but there is no quick sense of smell to feel them; the voice of the divine Sophia speaks within us, but there is no open ear to hear it; the quickening seed drops into the soul, but there is no fertile soil in which it may take root and spring up. But in every case God speaks within us as truly as He spoke to Isaiah or to Paul; we have but to listen and we shall hear, and we can do so if we please, for the soul has spiritual senses by which it can discern spiritual truth. It is not by the study of books, not even of the Bible, that we shall attain to the highest knowledge of divine things. God has placed His gospel in our hearts. We must abstract our attention from the world; we must turn our eye in upon ourselves, and then we shall, with ecstasy, behold the beams of the Sun of Righteousness brightly shining. In the depths of our own nature we shall find that God has opened up wells of salvation, out of which we may drink and live. Nor are these divine gifts bestowed upon Christians only. Every rational soul is a partaker of the light and life of God; and by these, those who have never heard of the historical Christ, but who have yet the Christ of God formed in their hearts, may come to holiness and the heavenly happiness.

With the Quakers the Holy Scriptures are not, therefore, the highest source of religious truth, nor the primary rule of faith and morals. They are a pure stream flowing from the fountain, out of which the Christian may draw living water and slake his thirst, but they are not the fountain. The same spirit who spoke in the writers of the Scriptures, still speaks in every devout soul; and if we would receive the truth in its greatest freshness and force, it is by humbly consulting at this oracle. God has written His law upon

our hearts. It is true the oracle appears, at least, to give different responses in different hearts; but the same may be said of the Scriptures, which have been differently interpreted by different men. It is true it gives no information regarding the historical part of our faith; but that history, though pleasant and profitable to those who know it, is not at all essential to salvation.* Where there is an inward illumination, Holy Scripture serves as a mirror in which we shall find our own inspired thoughts reflected and repeated. But without the inward illumination it is but a dead letter.

Those who have been thus born again by the incorruptible seed of God, commit no sin. All evil passion is subdued within them; they are the immaculate spouse of Christ—perfect before God. The worship of a people thus lifted above human infirmities, and abstracted from sense, has no need of those carnal ordinances and vain ceremonies which have hitherto prevailed so largely in the church. There is no need of an educated ministry, for every one should speak in the church as he has been taught of God, and as God may give him utterance. There is no use of a liturgy, for all true prayer and praise proceed from the inward movements of the heart; and when there is no such movement, it is the duty of all to be still, and in silence to wait upon God. In a religion so spiritual as this, the outward signs in the sacraments are of no avail. The only true baptism is the baptism of the Holy Spirit; the only true communion is the communion of the heart with its Maker. To shake ourselves free from the shackles of sense, to rise above the world, to live near to God, should ever be our great object; and, therefore, it behoves us to flee all earthly pleasures, to renounce all earthly pomps, to dis-

* Barclay's Apology, pp. 141-2.

courage all pride, both in ourselves and others, that so the soul, with its eye purged of every film, may see most clearly the glory of the Lord.

Such are the religious principles which were first preached by Fox, and afterwards reduced to a system by his disciples; and it is not difficult to recognise in them a form of that mysticism which has such deep root in the human heart, and which is, accordingly, as old as the world. "Whether in the Vedas, in the Platonists, or in the Hege- lians," says Stuart Mill, "mysticism is neither more nor less than ascribing objective existence to the subjective creations of our own faculties, to ideas or feelings of the mind; and believing that by watching and contemplating these ideas of its own making, it can read in them what takes place in the world without."* "Mysticism," says Victor Cousin, "consists in the substitution of direct illumination for indirect revelation."† Both these definitions are true, though written from different points of view. The one is the sceptical, the other is the believing view of the matter. Both are applicable to the principles of the Quakers; they mistake their subjective feelings for objec- tive realities; they substitute direct illumination for in- direct revelation.

It is marvellous how uniform in type mysticism has been in all its manifold developments. We first find it in India, the earliest cradle of religious thought. In the celebrated "Bhagavad-Gita," Khrisna enjoins his pupil to rise to a knowledge of pure being by means of contemplation. He speaks with contempt of the knowledge which one can acquire from books; even the Vedas can give little insight

* System of Logic, Vol. II., p. 138.

† "Le mysticisme consiste à substituer l'illumination directe à la révélation in- directe, l'extase à la raison, l'éblouissement à la philosophie."—Fragments Phi- losophiques—Religion, Mysticisme, Stoïcisme.

into the absolute and divine. He treats with ridicule a religion which consists of ceremonies, and holds out to its devotees the hope of rewards in the future world. It is superstitious to cleave to the letter of the Vedas, and to pretend that religious certainty cannot be otherwise attained. The Holy Books, like all other books, are profitable only for those who are capable of contemplation; and when one is capable of contemplation, they are, in truth, no longer needed. As a cistern filled with stagnant water is useless to him who has at hand a bubbling fountain, so are the sacred books useless to him who is himself inspired.* Thus, in the far east and in remote antiquity, we discover the identical doctrines of the Quaker creed.

We find the same ideas repeated in the philosophy of the west; and, strange to say, they first appeared in Alexandria, the city which, to this day, is the connecting link between the eastern and western worlds. The Alexandrian School was as much religious as philosophical in its character and aspirations, and in such a school mysticism was almost certain to exhibit itself, as in one of its aspects it is simply a compromise between religion and philosophy. The highest religion, according to this school, is the union of man to God. The highest happiness is the absorption of the human in the divine. This object was best to be attained by mortifying the senses, withdrawing the mind from all external objects, and giving it up to the contemplation of things spiritual and divine. Thus might the soul at last find repose in the bosom of its God. This Platonic school sent forth some of the ablest apologists of the Christian faith, who, of course, carried into their Christianity the principles of their philosophy. Among these

* The "Bhagavad-Gita" has been frequently translated. I have taken my account of it, however, from Cousin's "Cours de l'histoire de la Philosophie." He follows Schegel's Latin version.

Origen was the greatest. The first, and in some respects the most illustrious of biblical commentators, he held that the Scriptures could not be interpreted literally, without the admission of incredible absurdities, and that they must be explained in the same allegorical manner in which the Platonists explained the history of the gods. The letter itself was dead, and behind the letter a hidden and mystic meaning must be sought. "The Scriptures," says he, "are of little use to those who understand them as they are written." "The source of many evils lies in adhering to the carnal or external part of Scripture. Those who do so shall not attain to the kingdom of God. Let us, therefore, seek after the spirit and the substantial fruit of the word, which are hidden and mysterious."* Applying this rule to every part of the sacred text, he attached to it such an allegorical, mystical sense, as his fancy suggested, and thus constructed a Christianity which was wholly his own, or rather a compromise between the philosophy of Plotinus and the theology of St. Paul.

This mystical theology frequently repeated itself in the future history of the church. Even among the subtle thinkers of the middle ages it made its appearance. The most distinguished mystic of that epoch was the chancellor Gerson, who in his celebrated treatise, "Theologia Mystica," not only expounded the doctrines, but, for the first time, boldly adopted the name of mystic. This theology, he teaches, is based upon the deep experiences of the religious soul. These experiences are not fictitious but real, and conduct to a system as real. The surest of all knowledge is that which rests upon the immediate intuition of God by the soul. He who has this intuition, however ignorant he may be otherwise, is at once the best philosopher and

* Stromata, Book X.

the best theologian, for he reaches the truth not by the round-about road of argumentation and learning, but immediately and at once. Such a theology, he argues, is superior to that of the schools. It depends not upon a knowledge of abstract principles, but upon an experimental knowledge of God revealing Himself within us. In order to its attainment, it is not necessary to be a learned man, it is enough to be a good man. Without science, without literature, with nothing but a devout heart, any one may reach the highest steps of this theology, and know God even as He is known. Such a divinity elevates man above himself, warms his heart, and plants there the seeds of peace and happiness.

When the Reformation broke upon Europe, and men everywhere began to speculate regarding the relation of man to his God, mysticism appeared in several quarters. But as if to prove the statement of Gerson, that a mystic theology may exist without human learning, the most famous mystic of the Reformation school was a poor illiterate cobbler called Jacob Böhmen, a native of Görlitz in Brandenburgh. He studied nothing but nature, his Bible, and his own heart; and, as the result, published a number of books, which have been called the Gospel of Mysticism. Two of his chief doctrines are the essential identity of God and the human soul, and the impossibility of receiving truth in any way but by illumination. His works were translated into many languages, and extensively read in England by the religious enthusiasts of the puritanic times, of whom there was a small sect called by his name. Thus we ever and anon find the same doctrines cropping out, shewing that they form one of the strata of religious thought in the human heart.

It is easy to account for the original inspirations of Fox,

by supposing that he had become acquainted with the writings of some of the German mystics, which were well known among the Seekers, Ranters, and Böhmenists. But it is not so easy to explain the profound impression which these mystical doctrines made upon his mind, and the eagerness with which they were received by thousands of his countrymen. I suspect that in this mysticism we have a reaction from the dogmatism of the day. The Quakers sprung up at a time when the molten religion of the Reformation was beginning to harden in the moulds into which it had been poured. Every part of Christianity was being reduced to a fixed form. The highest mysteries were made the subjects of definition. The holiest feelings were encased in technicalities. Everything was made methodical by the square and the plummet of human reason. In a word, it was an age of councils and creeds. But there were thousands who did not understand the metaphysical theology which was in vogue, and longed for something simpler to satisfy the yearnings of their heart. There were thousands more who could understand, in some degree, the dogmatic divinity, but who declared that religion did not consist in scholastic distinctions, definitions, and abstractions, but in the inner communion of the soul with its God. And there were very many who, weary of the polemical strife which filled the whole country with its din, became disgusted with polemics altogether, and sought for peace elsewhere. In such a state of thought and feeling, a mystical religion was almost sure to spring up. Forced to renounce dogmatism, and unwilling to resign itself to scepticism, the religious mind throws itself back upon its own devotional instincts, which now appear to it in the light of divine inspirations. "Mysticism," says the French philosopher whom we have already quoted, "may be defined in a general way, as the predominance accorded to senti-

ment."* If so, it is easy to understand the origin of the mystic piety of the Quakers, and the eager welcome which it received, for the natural reaction from a religion purely intellectual, is toward one in which feeling predominates. The mind swings from one extreme to the other. We know that the first Quakers complained of the lifeless forms of faith which were substituted for a living faith on the Son of God. The people asked for bread and they got a stone. They cried for living water and they were directed to drink at stagnant pools. They would believe simply in Jesus, and they were commanded to believe in all the formularies of human divines. There was no allowance made for religious sentiment, for the secret struggles of the soul after the infinite and divine, for the voice of God speaking in the heart. Thus Quakerism was nothing else than a protest against the dogmatic tendencies of the time, which had culminated in the Confession of the Westminster Divines.

But that age was not more remarkable for its dogmatic tendencies than it was for its devotion to the letter of the sacred writings. And unfortunately the Old Testament was more studied than the New. Men spoke of the Jewish commonwealth as a pattern for all others. Fathers called their children Jeremiah and Habbakuk, Ichabod and Enoch, after the names and incidents of the Jewish Scriptures. The Hebrew histories, the struggles of the Israelites, Hivites, and Amalekites, were to them the richest possible record of human experience in the things of God. But there were some who read these annals and yet received from them no such enlightenment, and who believed that in the struggles which went on in their own hearts, they heard God's voice more clearly than in the denunciations of Hebrew prophets or the chronicles of Hebrew kings.

* Le mysticisme peut être défini d'une manière générale, la prédominance accordée au sentiment.—Cours de Philosophie. Du Vrai, du Beau, et du Bien.

When the feelings of these visionaries took shape, they did not deny the inspiration of the Scriptures; they took higher ground, and declared that the same spirit which spake to the apostles and prophets spoke in them. They did not deny that divine lessons might be learnt from the Holy Scriptures, but they maintained that lessons still more divine might be learned from listening to the voice of God within them. Some went still farther, and held that the accounts we have in the gospels of Jesus Christ do not apply so much to any actual historical character as to Christ formed within us. Others, though they did not deny the reality of the Saviour's history, yet attributed, like Origen, an allegorical meaning to every event in it, and delighted to talk of the birth, life, sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ in the hearts of the faithful. The whole system was an energetic protest against what a modern school of theology calls bibliolatry.

Beyond the pale of the Society of Friends, their pretensions to divine illumination were treated with ridicule and contempt. Scoffers said they mistook their own crazy fancies for heavenly inspirations. Religious men, among whom was Oliver Cromwell, said that the supernatural light to which they pretended was nothing else than the light of nature. But the Quakers indignantly repudiated such explanations. It was not reason—it was not even conscience that illuminated them in the inward parts. Conscience, they said, might be a lantern, but it was a dark lantern, and the candle of the Lord must be placed within it that it might give light to all who were in the house. Some adversaries proved, by arguments difficult to refute, that their principles were simply those of natural religion, and amounted in their consequences to an abandonment of revelation; but the Quakers always earnestly protested against this interpretation of their creed; and it must be

remembered that mysticism is seldom logical, and that when put into a syllogistic crucible it quickly evaporates. A faith founded upon feeling does not calculate the consequences.

In our own day a form of religious mysticism has been developed, in some of its aspects not unlike that of Fox and Barclay. But it has sprung up not among illiterate enthusiasts, but among some of the finest and most highly cultured minds which the age has produced. The German Schleiermacher may be regarded as the first and great apostle of this modern mysticism; and his school has exercised a prodigious influence on the religious speculation of his country. Newman in England, and Theodore Parker in America, are perhaps the most eminent of its more recent exponents. They teach that it is in our own religious consciousness that we must look for the highest forms of religious truth. A subjective theology must always have more of a life-giving power than one which is objective, and hence a book-revelation, if possible, is not necessary. It lowers rather than heightens the religious idea; it may teach dogmas, it cannot breathe life. They deny not inspiration; but like the Quakers, they hold that it is a divine gift bestowed upon many, if not upon all. Not only St. John and St. Paul, but Dante, Shakespeare, and Goethe, were recipients of this grace; even Raffael, when he drew his madonnas, and Canova when he chiselled his marble into life, were under an inspiration truly divine. The inspiration of the Almighty has given understanding to all; and if there be any difference, it is only in degree.

There is another school of religious thinkers which has plucked from this dangerous tree of knowledge still riper fruit. It is most true, they say, that in God we live and move and have our being. Everything is of God. What are our feelings but the divine manifesting itself in the

human? What are our thoughts but echoes from heaven? Is not the voice of nature the voice of God? Eternal law sits at the roaring loom of time and weaves the living robes of deity.* This is the extreme limit of mysticism, and here it coalesces with a fatalistic pantheism.

The defenders of a dogmatic orthodoxy maintain that every form of mysticism is bad; and they are certainly able to point to many lamentable results which have sprung from its aberrations and excesses. But it is certain from history, that it has its root in human nature, and that it will occasionally manifest itself so long as human nature endures. There are many who cannot endure a religion which is expressed in logical forms, arranged in chapters, and published as a thing to be learned and believed. Their religion must rise out of the depths of their own souls, like a majestic shade—a thing too divine to have her loose and flowing robes shaped by human scissors into any fashionable mode. There must be obscurity in their religious impressions, for obscurity generates awe, and definiteness dispels it. It is certain that mysticism has co-existed with the profoundest piety. We cannot doubt the piety of Origen, of Gerson, or of Fox. There are few more interesting characters in French history than Madame Guyon, and she was a mystic, and her mysticism had such a fascination for the great Fenelon that he published a book in its defence, which afterwards brought down upon him the thunders of the Pope. Antonia Bourignon is another of those female mystics who arose in the Church of Rome and laboured unweariedly to bring back Christianity to what she conceived to be its primitive forms; and her pale, thoughtful face and nun-like habit, are in accordance with the pure and pious life which she led. Some of the sacred writers them-

* So schaff' ich am sausenenden Webstuhl der Zeit, Und wirke der Gottheit lebendiges Kleid.—*Goethe's Faust.*

selves approach the regions of mysticism. There are passages of St. Paul which appear to envelope a profoundly mystical meaning; and many have regarded the writings of John as the noblest effusion of a mystical piety the world has seen, rivalling, and even surpassing, in soft hazy beauty the greatest of the Platonists. In truth, it seems to be impossible to treat of those infinite subjects which theology presents to us, without at times lapsing into mysticism.*

Such is the mysticism of which the Quaker theology was but a form, and which, when preached by Fox, Keith, and Penn, took such a firm hold on the imagination of practical matter-of-fact England.

Mysticism has almost uniformly led to asceticism, and so it was among the Quakers; but their asceticism is, in many respects, very peculiar. From the first they had a fondness for drab, or otherwise dingy-coloured garments, for splendour of apparel, they thought, did not become men who clothed themselves simply to cover their nakedness, and protect themselves from the cold, and not to pamper a sinful pride.† They rejoiced, however, in buttons, even in shining metallic buttons,‡ and were not like the anabaptists of Germany, who repudiated such vanities as useless, and kept their habiliments from falling asunder by

* It is strange to find Cousin, when treating of mysticism, quoting the passage from St. John which is usually called the Quaker text, and attaching to it a meaning in accordance with his philosophy.—“ L’homme étant dans une impuissance absolue de créer lui-même l’échelle qui doit élever jusqu’ à Dieu, de là la nécessité d’une révélation. Or cette révélation commence avec la vie dans l’individu comme dans l’espèce; le Médiateur est donné á tous les hommes; c’est la lumière qui éclaire tout homme qui vient en ce monde.”—Fragments Philosophique—Religion, Mysticism, Stoïcisme.

† Barclay’s Apology, p. 534.

‡ The Quakers were frequently twitted about their buttons. Fox was charged with ostentation in wearing silver ones, but he replied they were but ochymy. Ames, on the contrary, was called a deceiver because he wore pewter buttons, to make people believe they were silver ones.—Sewel’s History, p. 204.

means of hooks and eyes. All periwigs, and powdering, and plaiting of the hair, they condemned as contrary to Scripture; but Fox, to the scandal of some, wore his locks long and flowing, to show that he was no vulgar, cropped puritan, as, indeed, he was not. The first apostles of Quakerism did not prescribe that peculiar cut of garment which afterwards became orthodox among the Friends. It became orthodox because it was the pattern of the time when the Quakers sprung up, and Quakers did not follow the changing fashions. When they followed a deceased brother or sister to the grave, they did not clothe themselves in hypocritical black as the world did, for they were not hired mourners, and sorrow was a thing of the heart. The coffin also was left bare, that it might not, by its drapery, simulate a grief which it could not feel.*

The Quakers abjured all sports and merriment as inconsistent with the seriousness and gravity of the Christian life. They would not dance nor take a hand at cards, nor attend the theatre, nor even sing a song, for all these things they held ministered to the lusts of the eye and the pride of life. To have a picture hanging on their wall even was a sin. For the relaxation of the mind, however, they considerably allowed Friends "to visit one another,

* Antonia Bouwignon, though herself a mystic, had a dislike of the Quakers, and mocks at many of their practices, and among others at this. "It is the custom with these Quakers," she says, "to carry their dead to the grave in a bare coffin; and the bearers run like a dog that has got away with a bone, which is followed by the other dogs that are in the streets, who run after him that has the bone. Just so these Quakers do with their dead. They run in the same manner to the place of burial, without putting a cloth on the coffin, or anything else that is proper for a dead body, and the other Quakers follow the corpse, some with their cloaks, others without them, each of them clothed as when they are at work; one has a blue cap, another white stockings, or coarse cloths, running all in confusion; and a great number of boys follow them, crying and mocking, and throwing dirt, which the Quakers suffer patiently, thinking they merit by it."—A Warning against the Quakers, pp. 38-9.

to hear or read history, to speak soberly of the present or past transactions, to follow after gardening, to use geometrical and mathematical experiments,"* and other occupations of a like exhilarating character.

As they strove to repress pride in themselves, they would do nothing to encourage it in others. They would not bow or take off their hats to the highest; for the sinfulness of hat-honour was divinely revealed to Fox; and, moreover, they were cautioned in Scripture in regard to receiving honour of one another, while they forgot the honour which came from God. To keep their hats on their heads in all places, and in every presence, therefore became a prime part of the Quakers' religion. In like manner they refused to take or to give titles of honour, and recognised nothing as true but the naked name, unless it were the designation of an office which any one filled. They could call Cromwell protector, and Charles king, but to address them as your highness, or your majesty, or even to address one another as Mr. or Sir, would be highly sinful, as it gave occasion to the corrupt pride of the flesh. For the same reason, they abandoned the use of the second person plural in addressing individuals, and employed, according to its primitive intention, the second person singular. The plural form, they maintained, multiplied and magnified a person, and tended to vanity.† This also was the subject of a special revelation to Fox; but to confirm his revelation, he had a book published, to which his name was appended, in thirty different languages, (though it is certain he did not know one,) to prove that in all of them the

* Barclay's Apology, p. 541.

† It would appear that some people were at first much offended by the Quakers' mode of address. Penn humourously satirises this. "Thou me, thou my dog; if thou thouest me, I will thou thy teeth down thy throat."—See his Introduction to Fox's Journal.

second person singular was found.* It was a needless waste of learning, for no one doubts that all languages, above the lowest, have a singular as well as a plural number. Had Fox come as the reformer of our grammar, he was undoubtedly right, as the reformer of our religion he was, in this matter, ridiculously wrong.

There were other forms of speech and modes of salutation at which the Quakers also took offence. They declined to say "good morning" or "good evening," for that, they argued, implied that some mornings and evenings were bad, which was a wicked aspersion upon Providence. They refused also to call the days and the months by their ordinary names; for to call a day Monday, they said, was to render an indirect act of homage to the moon; and to speak of March was to recognise the old heathen god of battles. They, therefore, designated days and months by their number; or if they ventured upon their names, they added "so called," to guard themselves from giving any countenance to a sinful custom. A letter of Perrot's is dated, "Written to you all without the gates of Rome, the 2d day of the fourth month 1661." And Barclay dates the introduction to his "Apology" in this pleasantly quaint way—"From Ury, the place of my pilgrimage in my native country of Scotland, the 25th of the month called November, in the year 1675."

There was nothing in which the Quakers were more inflexible than in refusing to take an oath under any circumstances. When presented with the Bible to swear upon it, as often happened in courts of justice, they opened

* This book was called "A Battledoor." It is designed to shew that every language has its particular denomination for the singular and plural, and on every page where the description begins, a battledoor is delineated. It was compiled by two Quakers, called John Stubbs and Benjamin Furly, who had some skill in languages, but George Fox appended his name to it as well as they, for which he is not unjustly censured by Gerard Croese.

it and said they found it there written, "Swear not at all." They could not, they declared, swear upon a book which expressly prohibited swearing; their communication must be yea yea, and nay nay. Nor would they pay tithes, as they believed these were a relict of Judaism, and had no place under the gospel. These opinions, unflinchingly acted on, were thought to interfere with their duties as citizens, and were the cause of much of their sufferings.

They have the honour of having seen clearly that conscience should not be subjected to force, and that every man should have the most perfect liberty to worship God as he pleased. When papists, prelatists, and presbyterians were equally violent against religious toleration; and when even the independents forgot in America the principles they had proclaimed at home, the Quakers from the very first steadily maintained that God alone was the Lord of the conscience. This was the first great service which the Society of Friends rendered to humanity; and had they done nothing else, they would not have existed in vain. But when they proceeded to teach that the civil magistrate should henceforward and for ever sheath his sword, and refrain from using it, not only against heretics, but even against the enemies of the state; that all war was unlawful; and even self-defence inexcusable, they uttered sentiments which were simply absurd, and which, however fenced by texts of Scripture, are not in accordance with the fiery light which flashes up on certain occasions in the heart of even the meekest of men. But though the Friends have, in this matter, by sticking to the letter of Scripture, violated nature and sense, they have yet done good service, by everywhere appearing as the apostles of peace and good-will; and perhaps before their mission on earth is fulfilled, they may see swords beat into ploughshares, and spears into pruning-hooks.



Chapter VI.

THE ecclesiastical polity of the Society of Friends was from the first very simple, and grew out of the circumstances in which it was placed. But Fox always declared that he was divinely moved to every step which he took in building up the framework of his sect. The pattern of the tabernacle he was to rear was shewn him in the mount.

Wherever Quakers were they met together upon the first day of the week to wait upon God, and hear any word which a brother or sister might be moved to speak. At these congregational meetings they not only preached as they were moved, they also prayed; but they never sung Psalms, for they declared they could not use the words of David without frequently telling lies, as his circumstances were quite different from theirs. Frequently, however, they thus met and parted without a single word being spoken; but though they were laughed at on this account by scoffers, they declared there was precious benefit and even a peculiar glory in such silent meetings.* As Friends increased, it was deemed advisable that they should have monthly and quarterly

* There is a pamphlet by George Keith, published at London in 1670, entitled, "The Benefit, Advantage, and Glory of Silent Meetings." Another pamphlet on the subject which I have seen is entitled, "Silent Meeting a Wonder to the World, yet practised by the Apostles." It is maintained that the apostles were waiting upon God in silence when the Spirit was given at Pentecost.

meetings for the management of their affairs. "And the Lord appeared unto me," says George Fox, "and bid me see what I must do, and how men and women's monthly and quarterly meetings should be ordered and established in England and other nations."*

According to this revelation there was established in every county monthly meetings varying in number with the number of Friends. These meetings were charged to attend to the poor and orphans, to see that the rules of the Society were observed in regard to births, marriages, and burials, that all the members walked orderly and according to their profession, and that those who suffered for their faith were sympathised with or assisted. The women had meetings by themselves, with a co-ordinate jurisdiction over their own sex, and though the establishment of these was in some instances warmly opposed, we may believe they had a certain convenience in regard to delicate questions which could not be conveniently talked of in a promiscuous assemblage. All the monthly meetings in a county constituted a quarterly meeting, where the most zealous and eminent of the Friends met to decide matters referred to them by the monthly meetings, and otherwise to legislate for the good of the Society within their bounds. A yearly meeting, held in London at Whitsuntide, crowned the whole. To this meeting members were deputed from the quarterly meetings, and the sentiments of these alone regulated the decisions of the assembly, but any Friend might appear and freely speak anything which he was moved to say; for, while the Quakers greatly commended silence, they imagined it would have been impious to restrain the movements of the Spirit. At these different

* Journal, p. 390.

meetings no one presided, as they recognised Christ alone as their president.* In this gradation of courts we have a simple and natural frame of government resembling that of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, which has its kirk-sessions, presbyteries, synods, and General Assembly.

The power claimed by these meetings over the members of the Society was "to oversee, exhort, reprove, and after long-suffering and waiting upon the disobedient and refractory, to disown them as any more of their communion."† They claimed, in short, an authority which every Society must possess, and which churches usually call the power of the keys—an authority to admit and to exclude.

Among other matters ordered in the monthly meetings were marriages. No Quaker might dare under the impulse of any sudden affection to solicit the hand of a maiden without the previous consent of his and her parents, nor might he woo any but a Quakeress, for no allowance was made for the erratic tendencies of love. The consent of the parents and the daughter being obtained, the matter was propounded in a meeting of the Friends, lest any might have something to object. This done, at the next monthly meeting the parties appeared, and, if no hindrance arose, they publicly took each other as husband and wife, and promised, with God's assistance, to be loving and faithful in that relation till death should separate them. A record of this was entered in the register of the meeting, to which the couple attached their names, and there the matter ended.

The annual meeting received reports from the monthly and quarterly meetings of the condition of affairs within their bounds, and in return addressed a pastoral containing

* See Penn's Introduction to Fox's Journal, Sewel's History, &c. &c.

† Penn's Introduction to Fox's Journal.

admonition and advice to all the meetings connected with the Society.

It was not without a struggle, however, that this polity was established. Some of the more consistent Quakers cried out that it interfered with the free operation of the Holy Spirit, and substituted the inventions of man for the guidance of God. They would have no government of human device. Fox and his friends, however, stood firm in this matter, and the simple, yet effective, government soon became famous over the world.

But though this polity was worldly-wise, there can be no doubt those Quakers had the truest perception of the bearings of their religion who maintained that there should be no human government at all. If no one presided in their meetings because Christ was the only president; there should have been no meetings for legislation for Christ was the alone law-giver; no meetings for judgment for Christ was the only judge. The same free spirit which guided their devotions should have been left to dictate their conduct. Men who were the subjects of a heavenly illumination should never have been subjected to the yoke of an earthly authority. The establishment of a polity was a tacit confession that a purely spiritual church was an impossibility.

Popery is the most perfect piece of ecclesiasticism which the world has seen: Quakerism is the most perfect opposite of Popery, inasmuch as it is the negative of all ecclesiasticism. Many of the puritans aimed at this, but the Quakers alone attained to it. Popery places all religion in a dependence upon sacerdotal virtue: it has its consecrated cathedrals, its apostolically-descended priests, its liturgical services, its gradation of ranks from the humble chorister to the sovereign pontiff. Quakerism abjures all this. It has no churches, no ordained ministry, no forms of worship,

not even any sacraments. It rejects the shadows and seeks for the substance. It covets a purely spiritual worship—prompted by the Holy Spirit—addressed to the Great Spirit. Every man must be his own priest, under Christ the great High Priest, and present his own sacrifices of prayer and praise.

There can be no doubt the Quakers have reached the highest idea of worship, if such a worship be possible. The more man's intellect is developed and cultivated, the more will he prefer a spiritual to a symbolical religion. But I am afraid that after all religious worship must clothe itself in some forms. Man is not a purely intellectual being. He ever must, in some measure, be dependent upon symbolical representations. He ever must be affected by objects of sense. Religion stripped of all form must ever end in mysticism, if it does not evaporate altogether. Coleridge advocated such a religion—a religion which would mainly consist in the intellectual contemplation of Deity—but however suited such a religion might be for angels it is plainly unsuited for men. It is impossible for the outside world to understand how the Quakers feel when they retire within themselves for silent worship and waiting upon God; but I am afraid their thoughts must very often be shrouded in mist, if they are not wandering away upon the mountains of vanity. Their establishment of a human polity is an acknowledgment that the measure of illumination we receive is not enough to guide us in all our ways.





Chapter VII.

THE Society of Friends had now, like other religious communities, a creed and a polity. They did not, however, exact from their members any subscription to their articles of belief, for that would have been an interference with the freedom of immediate revelation; but they insisted on a rigid adherence to their rules of conduct. There must be no lifting of the hat under any circumstances, no swearing, no tampering with tithes, no conversation but in the second person singular, no music or dancing, no marrying or giving in marriage, but according to their own fashion, which was frequently opposed to the waywardness of young desires. The doctrines of the Quakers naturally gave rise to fierce controversy. They were charged with despising the Scriptures, repudiating the atonement, and even denying the resurrection of the dead; and it is certain that some of their principles tend to these conclusions. But they vehemently denied that they held any such opinions; and it must be remembered that a religion founded upon feeling is never logical. Perhaps no religion is altogether so. Both the Calvinist and the Arminian may be driven by their own principles, rigidly pushed, to conclusions from which they recoil with horror.

The Society of Friends was beginning to accumulate a literature. The writings of Penn, Barclay, and Keith, were

read, not only by the Quakers themselves, but by all who took delight in religious controversy, and they helped to redeem the body from the general contempt with which it was regarded. Though not particularly distinguished by elegance or wit, they are in a great measure free from rhapsody and bad taste, and may still be regarded as the classics in this department of literature. But the great majority of the Quaker pamphlets issued at this time were widely different from the productions of these three, who were scholars and gentlemen, albeit they were members of the Society of Friends. In many of these we find such delirious raving, as reminds us that we have at present in our asylums some thousands of religious lunatics who would write such pamphlets too were they free. Their predecessors, two centuries ago, had no such restraints upon their liberty, and accordingly swelled the ranks of religious dissent. It is probable that with the rise of asylums new religions will cease. These pamphleteers, of whom I speak, usually assume the name and attributes of Deity; and with no niggard hand dispense His judgments upon the inhabitants of the world. They call upon the heavens and the earth to be still while they speak.* Sometimes they

* Examples of what I here state might be cited in any number. Thus there is a Quaker sheet, dated 1664, which begins thus:—"Heaven and earth, sea and dry land, bear the word of the Lord sounded through an earthen vessel, who hath seen, heard, felt. as he doth declare. I have seen Ariel, the city of abominations, cast as a stone into the midst of the sea. Amen, hallelujah, glory, glory, for ever to the lamb." There is another by the same author, which opens thus—"To the inhabitants of the whole earth, I thus write in the name and power and dread of the Lord God." A pamphlet by a man named Taylor begins thus—"Hear, O earth, and hearken ye heavens, for the Lord hath spoken, even the Lord God mighty in power, and excellent in wisdom." Another is prefaced in this way—"The word of the Lord to his beloved city, New Jerusalem, come from God, clothed with the excellency of the glory of His love, and is the bride, the Lamb's wife, with the flowings of the tender compassionate bowels of the Lord Jesus." In a pamphlet by Fox we have this parody of the beginning of St. John's gospel—"In the beginning was the Word, and none knows this Word but who are come

burst forth into verse, but their ardent piety kindles no glow in their poetry, and proves itself impotent to give dignity to doggerel. With all their inspirations they had not that of poesy.

We have already seen the Quakers endeavouring to reform our grammar, and making a due observance of the singular number a point of piety. A member of the sect proceeded still farther in the same direction, and attempted to remodel our spelling; and though his system of orthography never received the sanction of religion, he has the undoubted merit of having anticipated phonography.* The author of this invention subscribes himself "John, the servant of the most high God, the former and upholder of all things, (who weigheth the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance, and taketh up the isles as a very little thing.)" He tells us that he wrote from a place called "Great Gomara, on a certain island in Hungary," where he was a prisoner; and his pamphlet, which is entitled "The Arraignment of Christendom," is declared on the title-page, with a sublime generality, to have been "printed in Europe in year 1667." In the preface to this production, we are told that the author had endeavoured to spell as people speak; and three advantages are pointed out as likely to result from this improved orthography—children would learn to read more readily; all would learn to write more correctly; and foreigners would acquire our pronunciation more certainly; the very arguments which are used by

to the beginning," &c. In the same production there is the following rough imitation of the denunciatory prophets—"I'll break into pieces; I'll make nations like dirt; I'll tread them into mire; I'll make religions, professions, teachings, time-servers, callers upon me with their lips, and hearts afar off;—I'll make mire of them; I'll make mortar; I'll make dirt of them; the wrath of the Lamb is risen upon all apostates who are gathered in the apostacy."

* Sir John Cheke in 1540, and Bishop Wilkins in 1668, are usually mentioned as the pioneers of phonography.

phonographers at the present day. As an example of his meaning, he points out that "righteousness" has four superfluous letters,* which, after all, do not represent the sound, and therefore he strikes them out, and spells it "ryteosnes." The man and his pamphlet are full of extravagance, but here there is a gleam of sense. Had the Quakers consecrated the idea, and made it a matter of conscience to spell as they spoke, they might have relieved overburdened memories from the "letter which killeth."

We have seen that when Fox and his apostles first visited Scotland, they did not receive a very hearty welcome. Presbytery and the Covenant were then dominant, but now all things were changed. With the restoration of the monarchy had come the restoration of the hierarchy, and the covenanters were a persecuted remnant in the western counties, holding out valiantly against any attempt to dragoon them into episcopacy. Still Quakerism had not thriven greatly in the north; but two of the ablest of the sect, Barclay and Keith, were Scotchmen, and some of the students of the University of Aberdeen, in 1675, challenged them to a discussion. They were not unworthy antagonists for the keenest wits of any university, and, in the contest which followed, if they did not defeat the university champions, they at least made converts of four students, who had come to hear the debate. A war of pamphlets followed the platform encounter. The students published a treatise entitled "Quakerism Canvassed," and Barclay and Keith retorted in another, entitled, "Quakerism Confirmed." Both sides handled their rapiers very cleverly. The rumour of the strife spread far and wide, and when Fox heard that converts had been made, he rejoiced greatly. The students of Oxford and Cambridge had already sig-

* The word is spelled righteousness by the Quaker phonographer, as was common in his day, and therefore he enumerates five superfluous letters.

nalised their antipathy to Quakerism, and their zeal for orthodoxy and the church, but it was in a somewhat different fashion. They hooted, pelted, and ducked every Quaker who came within their reach, stank them out of their meetings, and threw nut-shells in their face "to make the spirit speak." Other scapegraces, of a different temperament, took a delight in kissing by stealth the demure Quaker-women, to see if any seed of sin remained in them.*

The Quakers had for some time been making considerable progress in Holland. Among the English settlers there who attached themselves to the sect, were the parents of William Sewel, who afterwards became the historian of Quakerism, and in many ways rendered eminent service to the cause. Once when at a meeting in London, as he himself relates, his mother attracted attention by her Dutch costume, and a constable said with surprise—"What, a Dutch woman among the Quakers?" Barclay had met with a celebrated Dutchman called Adrian Paets, who had served his country as ambassador to Spain, and was distinguished alike in politics and letters, and he had entered into conversation with him regarding the Quaker faith, and Heer Paets had frankly acknowledged that he found more could be said in its favour than he had imagined. To follow up his supposed advantage, Barclay afterwards wrote a long letter to him in Latin, in which we have one of the best expositions of the Quaker doctrine of immediate revelation; but the Dutch statesman made no reply. He

* There was a curious pamphlet published in 1659 by John Peace, entitled "A discovery of the education of the scholars of Cambridge, by their abominations and wicked practices, acted upon and against the despised people in Sion called Quakers, brought forth by the young ministers at several times in the said town, whereby all men may see the un-Christian breeding, and the horrible fruits of the university men, and how that the spirit of the whore and the false prophets, and the remainder of the dregs of Popery, boils up in them, in persecution, and madness, and ignorance. And this is written for all sober people to read and consider." See also Sewel's History, pp. 90-1.

was too much of a politician to become a polemic, and the Quakers were disappointed of a proselyte.*

In 1677, Fox, Penn, Barclay, and Keith, (all who were great among the Quakers,) started for the Continent. In Rotterdam the rich and the noble flocked to their meetings. In the city of the erudite Erasmus, crowds came to learn religion from the lips of the illiterate Fox. At Leyden, at Haarlem, at Amsterdam, they were welcomed by disciples who listened to them as oracles. But a still loftier ambition had concurred to bring them across the German Sea. They were hopeful of gaining to their cause the Princess Elizabeth of the Palatinate, for Barclay and Penn had already conversed with her regarding the faith, and thought that the soil was ready for the seed. This royal lady was daughter of Frederick, King of Bohemia and Prince Palatine of the Rhine, and sister of Sophia, the Duchess of Hanover, the progenitrix of our present reigning family. From Amsterdam George Fox sent her an epistle, of which three Quakeresses were the bearers. The messengers were courteously received, and the epistle of the great apostle of Quakerism kindly answered. Encouraged by this, Penn and Barclay, the most courtly of the band, started for Herwerden, and were welcomed by the princess and her guest, the Countess of Horn, the bearer of a name illustrious in the annals of political martyrdom. The next day was Sunday, and the princess called together not only her domestics, but the people of the town, that they might hear the renowned Quakers preach. At the close of the meeting she took Penn by the hand, and declared how deeply she had been moved by what she had heard, and then her emotions completely overmastering her, she sobbed out, "I cannot speak to you, my heart is full." From this

* This letter was afterwards rendered into English by Barclay, and published. Sewel gives it entire in his History.

time onward she maintained a very friendly correspondence with Penn, but she never openly threw in her lot with the despised sect.

Penn and Keith penetrated still farther into Germany, visiting Frankfort and several towns on the Upper Rhine. They spoke to the crowds who came to hear them preach, not only of the unknown land beyond the grave, but of the great country beyond the sea, where multitudes were already finding a refuge from political and religious oppression; for American colonisation was now filling the mind and firing the imagination of Penn. Some words were spoken at Kirchheim, which led some peasants to emigrate from that district, whose children began that agitation against slavery which has recently culminated in every slave being set free. The work of the embassy been accomplished, the Quakers returned to England.

In 1679 Fox was moved to pose the pope in regard to several matters, but more especially in regard to religious persecution, and therefore he framed a number of queries, which were to be answered by his Holiness. These Sewel translated into Latin, and forwarded, with a letter, to Innocent XI., but there is no record of the manner in which the holy father got through his catechism.*

But the Quakers were now destined to become the founders of a great state in the New World. The government was owing Penn a considerable sum of money for services rendered by his father, and was ill able to pay it. Dreams of founding a colony in America had for long been constantly floating before the mind of Penn; and now, on his petition, the king, after some hesitation, agreed to give in lieu of the money a large tract of crown land, with a patent under the great seal, to him and his heirs for ever. The

* Sewel's History, pp. 570-2.

bargain was concluded, and a patent drawn, conferring upon Penn a district on the Delaware, stretching three hundred miles in length and a hundred and fifty in breadth, touching the bay of Delaware on the south-east, and extending to Loch Erie on the north-west. This vast tract was then covered with dense forests of oak, chestnut, and hickory, mingled with myrtle, cyprus, and cedar, except where, here and there, a wide prairie opened up its bosom to the sun. In these great solitudes the Indians trapped the beaver and hunted the deer, and listened with wonder, as they sat at their camp-fires, to the strange stories which were now being told of the white strangers who had come across the sea in ships. By the king's command it was henceforward to be called Pennsylvania, in honour of its possessor, and in commemoration of its being then almost entirely covered with wood. In this great country Penn was empowered to erect a colony, to sell lands, create magistrates, make laws with the consent of the freeholders of the territory, and both punish and pardon crime. In the character of a trustee he had already, for four years, managed the thriving colony of West New Jersey, to which many Quakers had emigrated; and the experience which he had thus gained, had led him to turn his thoughts toward the valley of the Delaware, and to petition the king that his debt should be paid in American soil rather than in sterling gold. It had occurred to him that in this vast unoccupied region a safe asylum might be found for his persecuted co-religionists; and that if they carried thither their piety and industry, they might become a great and flourishing people.

When his charter was completed, he drew out, with the assistance of Algernon Sydney, a constitution for his yet unformed settlement, of which the first and fundamental article was, that liberty of conscience and worship should

be accorded to every settler. "In reverence," says he, "to God, the Father of light and spirits, the Author, as well as object of all divine knowledge, faith and worship, I do, for me and mine, declare and establish for the first fundamental of the government of my province, that every person that doth and shall reside therein, shall have and enjoy the free profession of his faith, and exercise of worship toward God, in such way and manner as every such person shall, in conscience, believe is most acceptable to God. And so long as every such person useth not this Christian liberty to licentiousness or the destruction of others, that is to say, to speak loosely and profanely, or contemptuously of God, Christ, the Holy Scriptures, or religion, or commit any moral evil or injury against others in their conversation, he shall be protected in the enjoyment of the foresaid Christian liberty by the civil magistrate." Penn, as will be seen from this last clause, had not yet reached the conception of that perfect liberty of religious thought at which we have now arrived, when Jew and Gentile, sceptic and believer, are placed on the same political level; but his ideas were vastly a-head of his age.* He had not the honour, however, of being the first Christian ruler of a country where liberty of conscience was secured to all. That honour, strange as it seems, belongs to a Roman Catholic. Shortly before this, Lord Baltimore, a member of the Catholic Church, had founded the colony of Maryland, and had guaranteed to every one who settled in it, the free exercise of his religion. After all, this is not to be wondered at. The founder of a new country, anxious to attract emigrants from every land, who may convert his

* "Cette loi," says Voltaire, "est encore plus indulgente, plus humaine que celle qui fut donnée aux peuples de la Carolina par Locke, le Platon de l'Angleterre, si supérieur au Platon de la Grèce. Locke n'a permis d'autres religions publiques que celles qui seraient approuvées par sept pères de famille. C'est une autre sorte de sagesse que celle de Penn."—*Questions sur l'Encyclopédie*.

wilderness into a well-cultivated field, will look upon religion in a different light from the ruler of an old country, with a large population born upon the soil. For such an one to insist upon every new comer subscribing a creed, were almost as absurd as for a merchant to exact of his customers obedience to his faith before selling to them his goods.

Penn offered his land for forty shillings the hundred acres, with an annual quit-rent of one shilling, secured to himself and his heirs for ever. A considerable number of persons were ready to accept terms so favourable, and to bid farewell to home and poverty and persecution, that in the glades of Pennsylvania they might enjoy freedom, plenty, and a future gilded with hope. Accordingly, towards the end of 1681, three ships laden with emigrants, the most of whom were Quakers, set sail for the promised land. These were the first English settlers in that vast forest, now the seat of great cities, and an abounding population. But besides the uninhabited and uncleared tract of land which Penn received from the crown, he had obtained from the Duke of York a similar tract—now the state of Delaware—which lay contiguous to it, and commanded the mouth of the river, and which had already a sparse population of between two and three thousand, mostly of Swedish and Dutch extraction; for, first of all, the Swedes had possessed the land, and then the Dutch had overcome them, and, last of all, the English had made themselves masters of both. Thus, through war and conquest, these Swedes and Dutchmen had become the subjects of a man of peace.*

In the autumn of 1682 Penn himself set sail for America, that he might see with his own eyes the great country of

* Clarkson's Life of Penn, Vol. 1.

which he had become the proprietor, and arrange its affairs. Upon his arrival one of his first cares was to call a general assembly of all the freemen, that by the universal suffrage of these, laws might be made for the government of the country. The foreigners were naturalised, and placed upon the same level as the English with respect to rights and privileges. Two offences only were made capital, murder and treason; whereas in England at that time a man might be hanged for stealing a sheep. The prisons were to be considered as workshops and reformatories, where offenders were to be weaned from their evil ways, and trained to industry. The whole code, both civil and criminal, shews that Penn had legislative talent, and was, in many respects, far in advance of his time.*

Penn was particularly anxious to secure the good wishes of the Indians; and the Quakers who had already settled in New Jersey, had shewn that this was perfectly possible. "Ye are our brothers," said the Sachems to them, "and we will live like brothers with you. We will have a broad path for you and us to walk in. If an Englishman falls asleep in this path, we will pass him by and say it is an Englishman, he is asleep, let him alone. The path shall be plain; there shall not be a stump in it to hurt the feet."†

* "Locke," says Clarkson in his *Life of Penn*, "drew up, at the request of Lord Shaftesbury, a form of government for Carolina, which then comprehended both the northern and the southern districts of that name. It happened that he and William Penn and Mr. (afterwards Sir Isaac) Newton, and others, were in company, and that the conversation turned upon the comparative excellence of the new American governments, but particularly of those of Carolina and Pennsylvania. The matter was argued at length in the presence of the two legislators, when Locke ingenuously yielded the palm to Penn."—Vol. II., p. 409. The two constitutions were diametrically opposed. Locke's was feudal and aristocratic, Penn's was purely democratic.

† *Smith's History of New Jersey*, p. 100. *Bancroft's History of the United States*, p. 332.

The proprietor of Pennsylvania was resolved that the same state of feeling should exist on the opposite bank of the Delaware. To protect the simple aborigines from the violence and fraud which the more astute colonist was so prone to practise on him, he had already provided that all barter between the Indians and planters should be carried on in the public market-place; that if any one wronged an Indian, he should incur the same penalty as if he had wronged a fellow-planter, and that all disputes between Indians and planters should be determined by a jury of twelve, of whom six should be Indians and six planters.

Though he himself had received the land in purchase from the English government, he felt it would be wrong to overlook the rights of the native tribes who, from time immemorial, had hunted in the woods, and properly regarded the country as their own. He resolved to buy a title to the soil from them too; and for this purpose had despatched, with the first emigrants, commissioners who might negotiate with the natives regarding a transference of their rights, and make with them a league of eternal friendship. This had been satisfactorily accomplished, and now Penn, as proprietor and governor of the province, arranged that the treaty should be publicly ratified in presence of the assembled tribes. Accompanied by a number of his Quaker friends, he proceeded to Coaquannoch, the Indian name for the place, where Philadelphia now stands. The Indians were already assembling. In every opening in the woods their swarthy skins and gay head-dresses of feathers, could be seen. They came armed with bows and arrows, after the manner of their tribes, but the Quakers came unarmed, as men of peace. At Shakamaxon, where Kensington, a suburb of Philadelphia, is now built, there stood an elm of gigantic size. Under its branches Penn and the Indian Sachems met. He wore his usual plain

clothes, but he was distinguished from his followers by a sky-blue sash tied round his waist. He held in his hand a roll of parchment, containing the confirmation of the treaty of purchase and amity. Before him were borne various articles of merchandise, the price of the province of Pennsylvania. The chief of the Sachems, when everything was arranged, placed on his head a kind of crown, from which their jutted a small horn, an emblem of his kingly power. The ground where they met was now sacred, and the persons of all were inviolable. The Indians, therefore, threw down their bows and arrows, and seated themselves round their respective chiefs in the form of a half moon. This done, the great Sachem announced to Penn, through an interpreter, that the nations were ready to hear him.

The Quaker chief declared that the Great Spirit, who searched the innermost thoughts of the heart, knew that he and his friends desired to live in peace with them. They came to do them no harm, but rather good. He then unrolled the parchment, and by means of the same interpreter, read it to them clause by clause. According to the treaty they were not to be molested in their lawful pursuits, even in the territory they had alienated, for it was to be common to them and the English. They were to have the same rights and privileges as the strangers; and any disputes which arose, were to be settled by a jury, chosen equally from both. When the parchment was read, Penn paid the stipulated price, and made many presents to the chiefs. He then spread the roll upon the ground to indicate more clearly to the simple Indian intellect, that the soil was to be common to both. Then taking it up, he presented it to the horned Sachem, and desired him to see that it was preserved for three generations, that their children and their children's children, might know what had passed between them, and their covenant might never

be forgotten. The Indians, in return, solemnly vowed, according to the customs of their country, to live in love with William Penn and his children so long as the sun and moon should endure. So the treaty was concluded, and the gray Quakers and red Indians buried the hatchet and smoked the pipe of peace.* “This,” says Voltaire, with a concealed sneer, “was the only treaty between these people and the Christians that was not ratified by an oath, and that was never broken.” “The simple Sons of the Wilderness,” says Bancroft, “returning to their wigwams, kept the history of the covenant by strings of wampum, and long afterwards in their cabins would count over the shells on a clean piece of bark, and recal to their own memory, or repeat to their children or to the stranger, the words of William Penn.” †

The next care of Penn was to found a metropolis for his province. He fixed upon a spot at the confluence of the Skuylkill and Delaware; had plans of streets and squares prepared, and named his Quaker city Philadelphia, in token of the brotherly love which he hoped would prevail in the land. Within a few months many houses were erected by the eager settlers; and in less than two years the city could boast of a population of two thousand five hundred persons. In three years from its foundation it had gained more than New York had done in half a century. ‡

The colony throve wonderfully. Within a short period twenty-three vessels arrived in the Delaware, bringing with them two thousand colonists, the majority of whom were Quakers. While a population was thus flowing into the country, Penn was busy dividing it into counties and

* Dixon's *Life of Penn*, pp. 267, 72. Clarkson's *Life of Penn*, Vol. I. The scene here described is made the subject of a picture by West.

† *History of the United States*, p. 342.

‡ Bancroft's *History of the United States*.

townships, and marking out the lots which had been assigned to the planters. He thought it right that a portion of the land to which the Quakers were fleeing, as to a home, should be assigned to the founder of the sect, and therefore he reserved for George Fox an allotment of a thousand acres. Everything went well with the hardy adventurers. They had, indeed, come to a land flowing with milk and honey. The forests fell before their axe. The fields yielded such crops as they had never seen before. The Indians were friendly. They met for worship, and were silent or poured forth their inspirations, and none jeered at them or forcibly broke up their meetings, and dragged them to jail. But amid their toils and hopes, they could scarcely dream of the greatness to which the province has since grown. These humble settlers on the banks of the Delaware were laying the foundations broad and deep of a mighty state; and from their loins were to come a people, as the stars of heaven innumerable, who were to preserve for ages their manly virtues. In Pennsylvania, notwithstanding the changes which time has wrought, the genuine descendants of the Quaker pilgrims are still to be found.

After a residence of two years in America, Penn returned to England. He left the colony flourishing, and already possessed of a population of about seven thousand persons. Just before setting sail, he addressed a letter to the council appointed to conduct the government during his absence, and of which a Quaker preacher was the head. "My love," he wrote, "and my life is to you, and with you, and no water can quench it, nor distance wear it out, or bring it to an end. I have been with you, cared over you, and served you with unfeigned love; and you are beloved of me, and near to me beyond utterance. I bless you in the name and by the power of the Lord; and may God bless

you with his righteousness, peace, and plenty, all the land over. * * And thou Philadelphia, the virgin settlement of this province, named before thou wert born, what love, what care, what service, and what travail has there been to bring thee forth and preserve thee from such as would abuse and defile thee!"* &c., &c.

It is remarkable that, notwithstanding the constant feuds between the other colonists of the New World and the aborigines, Quaker blood was never shed by an Indian. On one occasion friendship was for a moment interrupted, and it was reported that the Indians were assembling on the Brandywine for massacre. Immediately Caleb Pusey and five unarmed Friends hastened to the scene. The Sachem indignantly repelled the report that he had contemplated a butchery of the children of Penn, and the complaints of the tribe were heard and redressed. "The Great God," said the Quaker, "who made all mankind, extends his love to Indians and English. The rain and the dews fall alike on the ground of both; the sun shines on us equally, and we ought to love one another." The King of the Delawares replied—"What you say is true. Go home and harvest the corn God hath given you. We intend you no harm."†

After this sketch of the rise of the Quaker state, we must return with its founder to England, and follow the fortunes of the Quakers there.

* Clarkson's *Life of Penn*, Vol. 1.

† Bancroft's *History of the United States*, p. 349; also Proud's *History*. See also Caspina's *Letters*.



Chapter VIII.

SUCH was the veneration with which Fox was regarded by the Quakers, that he had hitherto ruled them with almost absolute authority. But in 1683 a spirit of insubordination broke out. There were some who were not yet reconciled to the polity which Fox had framed for the body. They thought there was no need for a polity at all. Meetings were useless, they said, every one should be guided by the Spirit of God, and not by the rules of men. These mutineers were especially violent against the women's meetings; at which, they declared, subjects were talked of which it was not proper for young women to hear. In some places a schism took place, separate congregations were formed, and the battle-cry of the separatists was, that every one having received a measure of the Spirit of God ought to follow that leader without regard to any rules prescribed by others. The result of all this was much bitterness and bad blood, which vented itself both in prose and verse. But gradually the cause of order prevailed, and the separatists, as Sewel tells us, vanished like snow in the fields.*

The year 1683 was famous for the Rye-House Plot, which brought Lord Russel and Algernon Sidney to the

* Sewel's History of the Quakers, p. 534.

block. The suspicions and alarms it created in the government increased the severities used against the Quakers, which led them to present an address to the king, in which they declared that they owned magistracy to be an ordinance of God, and all plotting to be a work of darkness and the devil.

1685.] In less than two years from this time Charles II. was dead. He has the reputation of being a good-natured man, and yet, during his reign, there was more suffering for conscience-sake, both in England and Scotland, than at any other period of our history. Of no religion himself, or, if of any, a non-conformist, he has not even the excuse of bigotry for the misery he caused. A secret dissenter, a disguised papist, he might have honoured in others those scruples which he felt, though somewhat feebly, himself, and allowed in public that liberty of thought which he enjoyed by stealth. He was not altogether to blame for the inconsistency. He did not so much persecute himself, as allowed others to do so. The church was intensely intolerant, and the king would rather be left to toy with his mistresses in peace than bring a nest of hornets about his ears, for the sake of sectaries whose vulgarity he despised. It was not possible for such an easy profligate as Charles to feel the dark passions which drove St. Dominic and Philip II. to persecute; but, as a man of the world, he could laugh at conscience, and leave those who felt its qualms to pay for the luxury. He could not hate dissent like a churchman, but he disliked it as a gentleman; and, at least, connived at its oppression. The church was soon to be taught toleration, by being herself called to suffer.

Charles II. was succeeded by his brother, James II., an avowed and bigoted papist. Nevertheless the clergy, and the universities, hastened to the foot of the throne to assure

him of their unlimited obedience.* The Quakers, in their humble address, spoke more wisely and honestly. "Whereas it hath pleased Almighty God, by whom kings reign," said they, "to take hence the late King Charles II., and to preserve thee peaceably to succeed, we, thy subjects, heartily desire that the Giver of all good and perfect gifts may please to endow thee with wisdom and mercy in the use of thy great power, to His glory, the king's honour, and the kingdom's good."† They farther presented a petition to the king and both houses of parliament, in which they stated that there were fourteen hundred of their number lying in prison at that time; and that since 1660 three hundred and twenty had died in jail, of whom, they believed, more than a hundred had died entirely from the effects of their confinement. This is in itself a sufficiently sad picture, but it is only a very small part of the fearful sum of suffering endured by the dissenters of England during the last twenty-five years. No fewer than sixty thousand persons are said to have suffered, in some way, on account of their religion, and from six to eight thousand to have perished in prison.‡ In Scotland hundreds were hanged or shot, besides a multitude, whom no man can number, who were fined, imprisoned, or banished to the plantations.

The king was not long upon the throne till the Duke of

* Neal's History of the Puritans, Vol. II., p. 747.

† Neal gives quite a different address. "We are come," said the Quakers, according to Neal, "to testify our sorrow for the death of our good friend Charles, and our joy for thy being made our governor. We are told thou art not of the persuasion of the Church of England, no more than we, therefore we hope thou wilt grant us the same liberty which thou allowest thyself." Neal quotes Sewel and Eachard as his authorities for giving this address, but it is not to be found in Sewel, who gives the one I have quoted in the text; and Gough declares it is fictitious. It has certainly a strong fragrance of Quakerism about it, and is an admirable mimicry of what a Quaker might say.

‡ Neal's History of the Puritans, Vol. II., p. 759.

Monmouth's unhappy insurrection prepared a field in the West of England for the judicial butcheries of Jeffreys, whose name is still remembered there with hereditary abhorrence. The non-conformists, though not involved in the rising, felt the anger of the king; and for a time the fires of persecution in Scotland burned as fiercely as ever. But a change for the better was now happily at hand. The papists, according to the laws of the country, were subject to pains and disabilities as much as the other dissenters from the church. The king wished to free his co-religionists from these; he even wished to raise them to places of trust and honour, from which they were at present debarred. But he could not with any show of decency tolerate the papists without also tolerating the non-conformists; in truth, it was only under colour of shewing kindness to the latter that he could, in the face of a nation still jealous of popery, shew favour to the former. He therefore resolved to become the advocate of universal toleration. Had he been honest in his intentions, he would have deserved the eternal gratitude of the country, and the Revolution would have been a crime; but it was justly suspected that he merely meant, by means of toleration, to bring into power his own intolerant church.

James was only two months upon the throne when he issued a proclamation, throwing open the doors of the prison-house to all who had been sent there for refusing to take the oaths of allegiance or supremacy, absenting themselves from church, or neglecting to take the sacraments.* In the course of the same year he set at liberty all the Quakers who were lying in prison, except those who were imprisoned for non-payment of their tithes. We need not wonder that they felt grateful to the man who

* Sewel's History, p. 594.

had allowed them to breathe the fresh air of freedom ; and that, in the midst of their exultation, they did not construe harshly the motives which had procured for them so great a blessing. Some of them hastened into the king's presence, and thanked him for their deliverance ; and he, on the other hand, received them most graciously, and assured them of his desire to bring about a complete liberty of conscience ; words which were like music in a Quaker's ears. It was not long, however, before he betrayed his designs, by forcing Roman Catholics into the honours and offices of the universities, contrary to their privileges ; and it was remarked, not without a sneer, that Oxford, which had four years before in a solemn decree, pronounced all resistance to the kingly power damnable, was the first body in the kingdom to resist the encroachments of James. So does Providence slowly, but surely and sternly, teach wisdom.

The king knew that he need not ask the parliament to abrogate the penal and test laws, which had been written, as with blood, on the statute-book. There was not only a universal dread of popery, but a strong antipathy to dissent in every shape in the legislature. If presbyterians, baptists, and Quakers, were imprisoned and fined till they were ruined, it was only what they deserved. The idea of a universal religious toleration had not yet found a resting-place on English soil. The great majority of English gentlemen, and almost all English priests in that day, shrunk with abhorrence from the very thought. James, therefore, resolved to do by means of his own royal dispensing power what he knew the parliament would not do for him ; and the judges had pronounced such a dispensing power part of his prerogative. On the 4th of April 1687 he published his Declaration for Liberty of Conscience, in which he declared it to be his royal will

and pleasure, that all penal laws for non-conformity to the established religion should be immediately suspended. In compliance with this proclamation, the jails were emptied of their captives for conscience-sake, all ecclesiastical processes were stopped, and every place of trust and emolument opened to dissenters, whatever their religious creed. At the same time, instructions were given to magistrates not to press oaths upon Quakers, or, at least, not to fine them if they refused to swear.

Here, then, after centuries of struggle, and rivers of tears and blood, was complete toleration at length proclaimed; such a toleration as the Quakers had, through good report and bad report, unwaveringly preached, and which every dissenter in the kingdom at present enjoys. No marvel they believed the year of jubilee was come, and that the millennium was not far off. With many other non-conformists the London Quakers, without waiting for the annual meeting of the whole Society, hastened to thank the popish king who had rescued them from the house of bondage. "Though we are not the first in this way," said they,* "we hope we are not the least sensible of the great favours for which we are come to present the king our humble, open, and hearty thanks, since no people have received greater benefits, as well by opening our prison-doors, as by his late excellent and Christian declaration for liberty of conscience, none having more severely suffered, or stood more generally exposed to the malice of ill men on account of religion; and though we entertain this act of mercy with all the acknowledgments of a persecuted and grateful people, yet we must needs say, it doth the less surprise us, since it is what some of us have known to be the declared principle of the king, as well long before as

* The Anabaptists had been before them; the Independents, the Presbyterians, and the Roman Catholics, followed.

since he came to the throne of his ancestors. And we rejoice to see the day that a king of England should, from his royal seat, so universally assert this glorious principle, that conscience ought not to be constrained, nor people forced for matters of religion.”

The toleration, as we learn from this address, had not come upon the Quakers by surprise; they had known what was coming from Penn, who had been on intimate terms with the king when he was Duke of York, and who now was to be seen constantly in the ante-chambers of Whitehall. But the Quakers did not think the London address sufficient to evince their universal gratitude, and accordingly, when they met in their annual meeting in the month of May, they drew up another address to the king, which was to be considered as expressing the sentiments of the whole Society. Penn, with some other Friends, was deputed to present it. So joyful were they in their deliverance, that they actually left their hats behind them in the ante-chamber, and appeared before the king uncovered.* In presenting the address the Arch-Quaker said—“That the king had relieved his distressed subjects from their cruel sufferings, and raised to himself a new and lasting empire, by adding their affections to their duty. And we pray God,” he proceeded, “to continue the king in this noble resolution, for he is now upon a principle that has good nature, Christianity, and the welfare of civil society on its side; a security to him beyond all the little arts of government. I would not,” he continued, “that any should think that we came hither with the design to fill the *Gazette* with our thanks. But as our sufferings would have moved stones to compassion, so we should be harder than stones if we were not moved to gratitude.” This

* Barillon to Louis, May 12. Quoted by Dixon in his *Life of Penn*, p. 318.

speech shews that Penn could be a courtier as well as a Quaker; but there can be no doubt he was sincere in all that he said. In the address, the Society of Friends declared, "We cannot but bless and praise the name of Almighty God, who hath the hearts of princes in His hand, that He hath inclined the king to hear the cries of his suffering subjects for conscience-sake; and we rejoice that, instead of troubling him with complaints of our sufferings, he hath given us so eminent an occasion to present him with our thanks."

When the address was read, the king said,—“Gentlemen, I thank you heartily for your address. Some of you know (I am sure you do, Mr Penn) that it was always my principle that conscience ought not to be forced, and that all men ought to have the liberty of their consciences. And what I have promised in my declaration, I will continue to perform as long as I live; and I hope, before I die, to settle it so that after ages shall have no reason to alter it.”*

One should imagine from this royal speech, that the popish monarch had become a convert to the Quaker doctrine of universal toleration. No wonder that Penn was proud of his pupil; no wonder that every Quaker was loud in praises of the king. It is true there was a wide-spread uneasiness about the dispensing power which the king had claimed. If he could thus suspend the penal laws, he might, by a nod of his imperial head, at any time overthrow the whole constitution of the country, and render himself irresponsible and supreme. But why should the Quakers love laws which had been made to crush them? Why should they kiss the rod which had so sorely smitten them? Legislation had not been for them; and now, when

* Sewel's History, pp. 606-8.

twelve hundred of them were free from their sickening prison holes, and when they could meet and worship as they pleased, "none daring to make them afraid," and even aspire to places of trust and power,* no wonder they should think the king better than the law. The royal sceptre stretched out in mercy, was naturally more pleasant to them than parliamentary statutes, which breathed forth cruelty. But was not this toleration of the protestant non-conformists only a pretext for tolerating the papists? No doubt it was, and the Quakers partly knew this, but they always held that toleration should be universal, and should include papists as well as protestants. None had protested more strongly than they against the mummeries of Romanism, but they had constantly maintained that no man should be deprived of his civil rights on account of his religious belief, much less should he be subjected to pains and penalties. The royal Declaration of Liberty of Conscience was, therefore, no more than a proclamation of the principles which they had always maintained.

As James was very anxious to conciliate the favour of the dissenters, that they might balance the power of the church, he did everything he could to encourage these friendly sentiments of the Quakers. Penn was always a welcome visitor at the palace, and was known to have a large share of the royal confidence. Great nobles were kept waiting in the ante-room while he was closeted with the king. Other Friends were also admitted into the royal presence with their hats undisturbed, and that was always the point of honour with them. On this matter the grim, monkish monarch, even ventured on a joke. A rustic Quaker had been admitted to an audience with his majesty, and of course kept his hat on his head; but the king

* It was debated at their meeting whether they should not now accept magistracies.—*Records in Devonshire House*, quoted by Mr. Dixon.

pulled off his own beaver and held it under his arm while the Quaker spoke. The man, in his simplicity, thought this was doing him too much honour, and ventured to say, "The king needs not keep off his hat for me." "You don't know the custom," replied his majesty, no doubt with a hardly repressed smile, "for that requires that but one hat must be on here."*

In the spring of 1688 the king published anew his Declaration for Liberty of Conscience. It was immediately followed by an Order of Council, requiring it to be read in time of divine service in all churches and chapels throughout the kingdom; and in order to this, the bishops were enjoined to have it distributed throughout their respective dioceses. Some of the bishops at once complied, and some of the clergy intimated their willingness to do anything they were asked by the king. The great majority, however, were of a different mind, for their ideas of the kingly power were now undergoing a rapid change, and they resolved that they would not be parties to the contempt of law which the dispensing power implied. The bishops, in this crisis of the country's fate, resolved to bear the brunt of the battle, and so earned for ever the country's gratitude. Seven of them met at Lambeth and drew up an address to the king, in which they declared that they could not give their sanction to a dispensing power which might set aside all law, civil and ecclesiastical, by causing the declaration to be read during divine service in church; but they, at the same time, protested that they were ready to render all dutiful obedience to his majesty, and to exhibit all tenderness toward dissenters when the matter came to be debated in parliament.

* Sewel's History, p. 609. Mr. Dixon makes this scene take place between King Charles and William Penn when he was getting his great charter signed, but I think it safer to follow Sewel.

The king was startled by the bishops' address, and said so to those who presented it. He had been encouraged in his course by the doctrine which had so often been expressed in episcopal pastorals, and demonstrated in a thousand pulpits, that the people ought, in all things, to yield to the king as unto God. And now all things were changed; it was the law and not the king that must be supreme. After some hesitation he ordered the bishops to be prosecuted; and they were accordingly brought before the King's Bench in Westminster Hall, but after a long trial of ten hours they were acquitted, to the immense joy of the nation, which regarded them as the champions of its liberty.

While these things were in progress, the annual meeting of the Quakers was held in London, and they resolved again to thank the king for the deliverance which he had wrought for them. "We bless God and thank the king," said they, "the jails are everywhere clear, except in cases of tithes, and the repairs of parish churches, and some few about oaths. We think ourselves deeply engaged to renew our assurances of fidelity and affection, and, with God's help, intend to do our part for the perfecting so blessed and glorious a work, that so it may be out of the power of any party to hurt another on account of conscience. And as we firmly believe that God will never desert this just and righteous cause of liberty, nor the king in maintaining of it, so we hope, by God's grace, to let the world see we can honestly and heartily appear for liberty of conscience, and be inviolably true to our own religion, whatever the folly or malice of some men may suggest to the contrary."*

Such were the different views which different men took of the same conduct. The churchmen saw in the king's

* Sewel's History, p. 611.

dispensation the overthrow of the laws, the coming in of popery as a flood, and the ruin of the country. The Quakers, and many of the other non-conformists, saw in it the beginning of a new era of religious liberty and universal toleration. It is certain the church had hitherto preached the doctrine which the king now practised; and had, in its day of power, laid intolerable hardships upon the dissenters. But it did not like its doctrines to be turned against itself. What was the dispossession of a few fellows at Magdalene College, or the comfortable confinement of seven bishops for a week in the Tower, to the cruel scourging and life-long imprisonments, and ruinous finings, to which the non-conformists had been exposed, while priests and prelates looked on with an approving countenance, if they did not lend a helping hand! The dissenters could not, all at once, forget this; and when the bishops lay in the Tower, they talked of how the persecutors were now, in their turn, persecuted. Robert Barclay even managed to get access to the incarcerated prelates, and soothed their captivity by laying before them evidence that, by the orders of some of them, Quakers had been kept in prison till death released them. Their address was at the same time published, with a satirical paraphrase, in which it was set forth that hitherto they had shewn no bowels of mercy for the dissenters, though now they promised to love them like brothers, and that they had applauded arbitrary power when it was used to oppress those who differed from them, though now they condemned it when it was exercised for the common good.

Though the church did not like dissent, and would rather be rid of it, it must be acknowledged that at this crisis it was not the puritans but the papists which it dreaded. This feeling was almost universal. The laity felt it as strongly as the clergy—the populace as much as the gentry.

Even many of the most eminent non-conformists, while they could not but exult in their deliverance from oppression, suspected the designs of the king, and feared lest a worse thing should come upon them. They blamed the very exercise of the royal power by which they had been emancipated from suffering. People could not believe that the man who had persecuted so fiercely in Scotland, and had shewn his taste for blood by encouraging the hangings in Somerset, could be so humane as he now pretended to be. They could not believe that a bigoted papist had embraced the tolerant principles of the Quakers. The heart of the nation had instinctively seized upon the truth, for it believed that after the toleration of all religions, there would come the supremacy of one, and that the one which it most dreaded and abhorred. It feared the king even when bringing gifts; for under the Quaker's beaver it discerned the triple crown. The excitement and alarm increased daily. The dissenters, who were joyful in their deliverance from pains and penalties, were regarded as traitors, and the prelates, who had been a week in the Tower, were hailed as the defenders of religion and liberty.

In these circumstances William Penn became an object of violent suspicion. He was almost daily at Whitehall. He was sometimes closeted with the king for hours. It was rumoured that he was the prime instigator of the arbitrary proceedings of the court. Some said that he was willing to ruin the nation to get a toleration for his sect. Others declared that he was a Jesuit in disguise, and had been educated at St. Omers.* This put him on his defence,

* Among those who were led away by these rumours, was Dr. Tillotson, (afterwards Archbishop,) who had been on terms of intimacy with Penn. A correspondence took place betwixt them on the subject, in which Penn not only denied the truth of the accusations, but shewed their absurdity, and Tillotson was convinced. The mistake about St Omers arose from his having studied at Saumur.

and he made his apology in a very spirited way. "Is anything more foolish," said he, "as well as false, than that because I am often at Whitehall, therefore I must be author of all that is done there which does not please abroad? But supposing some such things to have been done, pray tell me if I am bound to oppose anything I am not called to do. I never was a member of council, cabinet, or committee, where the affairs of the kingdom are transacted. I have had no office or trust, and consequently nothing can be said to be done by me; nor, for that reason, could I be under any obligation to discover my opinion of public acts of state, and therefore neither can any such acts, nor any silence about them, in justice, be made my crime. Volunteers are blanks and cyphers in all governments. I am not without apprehensions of the cause of this behaviour toward me. I mean my constant zeal for an impartial liberty of conscience. But if that be it, the cause is too good to be in any pain about it. I ever understood that to be the natural right of all men, and without it religion is impossible."*

Meanwhile things hurried rapidly towards a crisis. The birth of a prince, which rumour declared to be supposititious, put an end to the hopes that the danger would cease with the king's life. Protestant England appeared doomed to be governed for ever by a popish dynasty. The only succour for the nation was in the Prince of Orange, whose wife was heir to the throne had that suspicious babe not made its appearance so inopportunately at Whitehall. The prince had calculated upon the crown in the usual course of succession, but now there was small chance of that. What he could not obtain by inheritance, he resolved to have as the gift of the people; and the people were as

* Letter to William Popple. See Penn's Works.

anxious to give as he was to receive. The malcontents were begging him to come and save them. With a small fleet, accompanied by transports, freighted with fourteen thousand men, he sailed from Holland; and though at first driven back by violent contrary winds, he ultimately effected a landing at Torbay on the 5th of November 1688. The people, the troops, the generals, even the Prince and Princess of Denmark, flocked to his standard; and James, seeing himself abandoned by all, even by his own family, sought safety in flight. His experiments in the way of universal toleration had come to this; but happily, when he was gone, there reigned a prince in his stead whose motives the people did not fear, and who laid deep in the constitution the foundations of our present religious liberty. The Quakers are not without a share of the glory, though in the days of James they had a large share of the blame.





Chapter IX.

1689.

THE Quakers might now rejoice and be glad, for the days of their sufferings were ended. A prince was upon the throne whose great honour it was to give to the country the blessings, not only of civil, but of religious liberty. The convention which had declared the throne vacant, and then called William and Mary to fill it, was no sooner converted into a parliament by the presence of royalty, than it took into consideration the state of the penal laws. These were so modified, that all dissenters from the Established Church, who took the oath of allegiance, were allowed the free exercise of their worship; and that the toleration might extend to the Quakers, a declaration of fidelity was in their case accepted in place of the oath. The Quakers might now assemble in their meeting-houses, and be either silent or speak as they chose, without fear of the constable. The parliament had made that law which the king had conferred contrary to law, so that the Friends could henceforward enjoy their freedom without the reproach that their liberty was the country's slavery. In one important respect, indeed, William's legislation fell short of James's dispensation. The penal laws were abrogated, but the Test Acts were allowed to remain on the statute-book, and are not even yet entirely removed.

1690.] This happy result was scarcely accomplished when Robert Barclay died. He had done more than any other man to develop and systematise the Quaker mysticism, and to make it respectable in the eyes of scholars and divines. He found his "City of God" of brick, and he left it of marble. His "Apology" will always be ranked as his greatest work, but he published many other treatises, among which, his treatise on "Universal Love," written in Aberdeen Jail, was greatly admired for the spirit of universal beneficence which it breathed. Though all his life engaged in polemical controversy, he was no polemic. His temper was particularly sweet, and his conversation pleasing, without any trace of that dictatorial tone which too often characterizes controversialists. He was universally beloved. Possessed of an ample fortune, and happy in a wife and numerous family, he spent the greater part of his latter years on his patrimonial estate, but he was always at the service of the Society of Friends when occasion required. Notwithstanding his gentle breeding and cultured mind, he was thoroughly obedient to the spirit of his sect, insomuch that on one occasion, feeling an impression which he conceived to be from God, to pass through the streets of Aberdeen in sackcloth and ashes, and preach repentance to the people, he did not hesitate to do so, and was miserable till it was done. He died young. In his forty-second year, at Ury, in Aberdeenshire, "the place of his pilgrimage," as he quaintly called it, he breathed his last. The whole Quaker community united in lamenting his irreparable loss. Many beyond the pale of the Society bore testimony to his eminent virtues and many accomplishments. His writings rapidly acquired a universal reputation. Gerard Croese, in his "History of the Quakers," always speaks of him with respect. The author of the "Histoire des Trembleurs," supposed to be a learned Jesuit,

declares that the "Apology" is written with elegance, purity, and an appearance of truth. And Voltaire, who had in general little reverence for sacred things, admits that the book is as well executed as the subject would allow.

The grass was not green upon Barclay's grave when George Fox, after his stormy and eventful life, sank to his rest. For many years his health had been somewhat broken from the terrible hardships to which he had been exposed; but still, though now sixty-seven, he was ever at the post of duty, and only two days before his death he preached at Gracechurch Meeting-house. His last words have the strong odour of his Quaker piety. Being asked how he did, he replied, "The power of the Lord is above all sickness and death, the seed reigns, blessed be the Lord."* His life may be pronounced happy, if it is to be judged by comparing its former with its latter end. He began life as a cobbler, and ended it as the leader of a great sect, which had its thousands and tens of thousands in both the old world and the new. Cruelly persecuted in the beginning of his career, he had the blessedness to live till his religion was recognised by law, and his followers freed from pains and penalties. He did not die before his time; and the firmament brightened rather than darkened as the day of his departure drew near.

In his youth we can recognise little more than a hair-brained enthusiast, who had moped and mused upon divine things till his own disordered fancies took the shape of heavenly visions, or sounded within him like the echo of voices from above. But united with his enthusiasm there was a terrible energy, a dauntless courage, a resolution which never once faltered or failed. As he ad-

* Sewel's History, p. 637.

vanced in years his character mellowed, many of his early extravagances evaporated like impure fumes, and there was left a residuum of solid worth and wisdom. He no more entered churches and disturbed the service. He no more went bare-foot crying, "Woe! woe! to the inhabitants of the world." Sound sense gradually asserted its supremacy over absurd revelations; and he finally sat in the midst of his community "clothed, and in his right mind." The polity which he framed for his Society was prudently planned; and even the pretence that it was divinely revealed to him, betrayed that wisdom of the serpent which has made so many legislators declare that their laws were given them from heaven. We may safely say, that he could not have governed his Society with such absolute sway as he did unless he had had both sagacity and tact. Like other men, he had his alloy of human weakness. A ridiculous vanity continually peeps out from behind his piety; for he ever imagines that the most learned divines could not withstand the wisdom of his words, and he had but to speak to put them to shame. More unfortunately still, a fierce vindictiveness too often reveals itself in his Journal. Whenever he heard of distress or death overtaking any one who had enforced the laws against his sect, he instantly attributed it to the just judgments of God, and had generally some fabulous story to relate of supernatural horrors and the agonies of remorse. Though he had endured much, it is evident he was not the meekest of men; he had a strong spice of that rebellious human nature which has exhibited itself so strongly in so many of his followers, whose very, "The Lord rebuke thee," has been a form of cursing.

He was a tall man, of a goodly size, especially in his latter years, and of a pleasant countenance, but no writer I have seen has told us exactly what that countenance was

like; and how much would the world not now give to have a photograph of George Fox? I have searched in vain to discover in his life or writings the elements of greatness, and yet he was undoubtedly one of the world's great ones. He who can found a great religious sect can scarcely be a mean man. He who could command the obeisance of a keen-witted man like Keith, a scholar like Barclay, a courtier like Penn, could not be a mere vulgar fanatic. It is certain he was not made of the fine porcelain of human clay; he was rather fashioned out of some stuff as tough as the leather in which he had worked when a boy. Without genius, without taste, without literature, there was yet something colossal in his character, which reminds us of those rude but giant forms which figure as the deities of the Scandinavian world.

It was at ten o'clock at night on the 13th day of January 1691 that he died. On the 16th of the same month he was buried near Bunhill Fields. A vast concourse of Quakers followed him to the grave. They were not clothed in the weeds of woe, but their serious aspect testified to their grief. Many others joined in the procession, for Fox had his friends and admirers everywhere. At the open grave Penn pronounced his funeral oration, and told how a great man had fallen in Israel. But though Fox was laid in the grave, he could not, in a sense, see corruption. His spirit still lives in his sect; and his image is stamped deep upon the heart, and often upon the very face, of his followers to this day.

Penn had no sooner performed the last duties to his great leader and friend than he absconded. And it was time; for a warrant was already out to apprehend him. It seems to be too true that ever since the Revolution Penn had been plotting and conspiring for the overthrow of the government and the return of James. He was personally

attached to the late king, and grateful for the toleration he had given to his sect; and though William and Mary had not withheld what James had given, he could not forget an allegiance which was strengthened by love. In the previous year there is some ground to believe that, altogether forgetful of his Quaker creed, he had advised a Jacobite invasion; and a rumour of this having reached the government he was examined by the Privy Council, but fortunately escaped for want of proof. Not long afterwards a letter from the exiled monarch to him was intercepted, and he was again examined, but pleaded that he was not responsible for what people might write to him—a plea which might bar judgment, but could not allay suspicion. Once again, in the month of December, he was engaged in a Jacobite plot; and on this occasion one of his accomplices informed against him.* A warrant was instantly issued to apprehend him; but the funeral over, and the solemn words of farewell spoken, he had sought safety in concealment. From his place of hiding he wrote to Lord Sidney, begging for an interview, with free liberty to return to his retreat, and this request was granted. In this interview, in his anxiety to clear himself, he “departed,” says Lord Macaulay, “from his yea, yea, protested by God, and told lies to the horror of the minister.” After this he lay

* Burnet's History of his Own Times. Macaulay's History. Clarkson's Life of Penn. I think that Mr. Hepworth Dixon, in his supplementary chapter to his Life of Penn, entitled, “The Macaulay Charges,” has very successfully rebutted the charges against his hero there referred to, but those mentioned in the text are quite different. It is true that Fuller, the informer, upon whose evidence the warrants for Penn's arrest were issued, at the time he escaped from the funeral, was afterwards proved to be a perjurer; but, taking all the circumstances into account, and Penn's future history, I am inclined to believe there was some ground for his testimony in this case. There seems reason, however, to believe that it was arranged he should be allowed to escape. He knew the warrants were out, and yet went to the funeral, and the officers conveniently came too late.

hid in London for some time, and afterwards escaped to France.*

This is certainly a sad story regarding a man who has been in many ways a benefactor of his race. But there is much to explain, if not to excuse, such a course of conduct. King James had been his father's patron, and his own intimate friend. He had adopted, moreover, a principle very dear to Penn, and had granted to every non-conformist in the kingdom a complete toleration. Penn could not all at once forget this. He would have been a bad-hearted traitor if he had. In all probability he believed the king sincere in his professions, and had not, at any rate, the same reasons to desire a revolution which many of the nobles and clergy had. The Revolution accomplished, we may easily understand how his heart would revolt against it. All his sympathies were with the exiled dynasty; his faith had been plighted to it, though no oath of allegiance had been sworn; and, with many others, he could not help regarding William and Mary as unnatural usurpers. Joyful in the results of the Revolution, let us yet confess that such feelings could be cherished without sin. But though Penn took a part in the dark counsels of conspirators and plotters, and even wished to bring a civil war on his country, the Friends were in no way involved in these proceedings. As a body, they were loyal to the new government, and justly thankful for the liberty of worship which they enjoyed.

The Quakers were now rapidly losing their great leaders. Fox was dead, and Barclay was dead, and Penn was not to be found. Keith alone remained, and Keith was bring-

* Lord Macaulay says he fled to France, but Clarkson, his biographer, says he remained concealed in London; and from certain letters and tracts written by Penn at this time, he seems to have lain, for a considerable period at any rate, concealed in the city, where he was even visited by some of his confidential friends.

ing upon the sect the grief and disgrace of apostacy. This able, but somewhat changeful man, was at this time residing in Pennsylvania, and there the waters of bitterness first broke out. He charged some of the American Friends with teaching that the light within was sufficient for salvation, and even with reducing the whole gospel narrative of Christ's life and sufferings upon earth to a pictorial representation of a Christian's experiences and duties. He was a hot-tempered man, and would not administer his rebukes in the most loving spirit. Others, on the contrary, charged him with believing in two Christs; as he had preached the necessity of faith in Christ within and Christ without—the heart Christ and the historical Christ. As Keith could not admonish with tenderness, much less could he bear to be admonished with meekness, Quaker though he was. The Pennsylvanian Friends were divided, and wrath reigned. Forgetting his principles, and letting loose his tongue, Keith called one of the magistrates “an impudent rascal,” and even ventured to say to the deputy-governor that “he was unfit to be a governor, and his name would stink.”* By this energetic way of speaking, and by a pamphlet which he published, upbraiding the government for slackness in the discharge of duty, he made the country too hot for him; he was prosecuted and fined, and finally he returned to England to make his complaints known there.†

* Sewel's History; also Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, with Maclean's Notes.

† Voltaire seems to have got very bad accounts of Keith from the Quakers he met with in London. He says he wished to introduce intolerance into Pennsylvania, and was possessed by a devil. “Il n'y a qu'un seul exemple,” says he, speaking of Pennsylvania, “d'un homme banni du pays. Il le méritait bien; c'était un prêtre Anglican qui s'étant fait Quaker, fut indigne de l'être. Ce malheureux fut sans doute possédé du diable; car il osa prêcher l'intolérance; il s'appellait George Keith; on le chassa; je ne sais pas où il est allé, mais puissent tous les intolérans aller avec lui.”—*Questions sur l'Encyclopédie.*

He made his appearance before the annual assembly at London in 1694, and the points in dispute were debated. He had no match in the meeting in acuteness and learning, but probably this made him overbearing to the more illiterate members of the sect. They complained that he was passionate and boisterous, and that so it was impossible to heal the breach. The meeting broke up and nothing was done. But Keith was not allowed to stand alone. Many of his Quaker brethren rallied around him; some of the other non-conformists in London joined these; he opened a separate meeting-house, and it was crowded with worshippers. The unity of the Quaker Church was likely to be destroyed, and now there was no Fox, with his traditional authority, or Barclay with his sweet temper, to compose the differences. Keith charged his former brethren with holding most horrible heresies—with virtually repudiating the Christ of history, and denying the resurrection of the dead. They replied, and vindicated their orthodoxy. He challenged them to a public discussion, but they declined, saying, they were afraid of his fiery temper, and dreaded a popular commotion might be the result of a meeting. Still he did not altogether renounce his Quakerism; for years he kept his separate meetings, and declared that those who differed from him were apostates, but he gradually got tired of his isolated position, and at last fairly threw up the opinions he had so long and ably defended, and received priests' orders in the Church of England.

1696.] Though the Quakers had now for many years enjoyed complete liberty of worship, they were still liable to be harassed for refusing to take an oath in a court of justice; and, on the other hand, the course of justice had been frequently disturbed by their conscientious obstinacy in refusing to comply with the requirements of the law.

In 1693 they petitioned parliament that their solemn declaration should be taken instead of an oath. The commons referred this petition to a committee, and the committee reported that, upon the whole, they were disposed to recommend that its prayer should be granted; but nothing was done. In 1695 the matter was revived; a bill was brought into parliament, the king gave it his earnest support, and in the beginning of 1696 it was carried. According to the provisions of this bill, "the solemn affirmation and declaration of the people called Quakers was to be accepted, instead of an oath in the usual form;" but if a Quaker made a false affirmation, he was to be punished as for perjury. The Friends were thus relieved by a generous legislation from another of the hardships which their interpretation of Scripture had evoked; the law bowed itself to meet their scruples. At the same time it is worthy of remark, that though the country is not likely soon to adopt the Quaker creed and abolish all swearing in courts of law, the tendency of modern legislation has been to substitute, in many cases, an affirmation for an oath.

The only grievance of which the Quakers had now to complain was the payment of tithes; and it was evident the legislature could not relieve their pockets in this matter, as it had their consciences in others, without beggaring the church, and endangering the whole rights of property in the kingdom. If to be a Quaker was not to pay tithes, what tithe-holder would not be a Quaker? The parliament, however, in the same act in which an affirmation was substituted for an oath, gave what relief it could. It made more easy than before the methods by which payment was to be enforced in cases of recusancy.

Penn's reputation had been irreparably damaged among the people, not only by the wide-spread suspicion that he

was a papist, but by the still stronger and better-founded suspicion, that he was a conspirator. When he absconded the feeling spread to the Quakers, and his protestations of innocence did not help him.* He had still, however, his admirers and friends. When Locke was living a political exile at the Hague, Penn offered to procure for him the pardon of James. Locke declined the offer, on the ground that to receive a pardon would be tantamount to an acknowledgment that he had committed a crime. Locke now offered to use his best offices to procure a pardon for Penn; but Penn, in turn, declined the proposal, and for the same reason which Locke had assigned. He appears, however, before this time to have returned to England, but he was still skulking from justice. In 1693 he was deprived by the king of his government of Pennsylvania, and both his fortunes and reputation were at the very lowest ebb. But, notwithstanding this, it would appear he could not refrain from conspiring; for in this very year one of the agents of James in France reported to his master that Penn had given it as his opinion that there had never been such a favourable opportunity for a descent upon England.† Happily this was unknown to the government, and in the same year in which this treasonable advice was given he was acquitted of all treason by the king. The proofs of his guilt in the hands of the government were not conclusive. He strongly protested his innocency in the presence of the Council; he had confessedly been a self-denying, devoted man, and William, with his usual clemency, let him go free. In the following year the large-hearted Dutchman shewed his royal generosity still further, by restoring to him the government of Pennsylvania, where,

* Clarkson's Life of Penn, Vol. II.

† Nairne State Papers. See also Lord Macaulay's History of England, and Clarkson's Life of Penn.

unfortunately, affairs were not proceeding so smoothly as they had done at first. By degrees Penn regained the esteem and confidence of his brethren, and took an active part in the measures which led to the law accepting a Quaker's affirmation in place of his oath.

At this time Peter the Great was in England. He was generally to be found working busily as a ship-wright in the dockyards at Deptford. But he had a house in London—the residence of Prince Menzchikoff—to which he sometimes came, and from which he and his suite proceeded to court, or to visit the nobility, in more than barbaric splendour. The Quakers were always ambitious of making proselytes of princes, and two of them managed to get access to this wonderful man, in whom the highest genius was grafted on the most savage stock. They explained to him, through an interpreter, the principles of their religion, and presented him with a copy of “Barclay's Apology,” and with some other books bearing on their faith. He asked if the books were not written by a Jesuit—a question which we can explain only by supposing that he had heard something of the charges brought against Penn. The Quakers, of course, protested that it was not so. The Czar next inquired why they did not pay respect to the great when they came into their presence by removing their hats, and of what use they could be in any kingdom seeing they would not bear arms? The Friends answered the searching questions of the great savage as they best could.

It was the Latin edition of “Barclay's Apology” which had been presented to the Czar. But his majesty did not know a word of that tongue. When this became known, William Penn, attended by George Whitehead and a deputation of Friends, sought a second interview with Peter; for they knew if they could only make him a Quaker, he

held in his hand the religion as well as the government of the great Muscovite Empire. The idea, though it seems absurd to us, was by no means so to them. The audience was granted, and Penn presented the Czar with some Quaker books which had been translated into German, and entered into conversation with him in that language. Peter, full of inquisitiveness, and anxious to know everything, was so interested in this peculiar people, who had twice sought his presence, that more than once afterwards he went into the Quaker meeting at Deptford to see how their worship was conducted. It is even related, that sixteen years afterwards, when he was at Frederickstadt in Holstein, at the head of five thousand men, to assist the Danes against the Swedes, he inquired whether there were not any Quaker meeting in the place; and, on learning that there was, he proceeded to it, attended by a brilliant retinue. A Quaker, named Philip Defair, rose up to preach. As all the Muscovite nobles did not understand the language of the preacher, the Czar occasionally interpreted, and at the close is said to have remarked that whoever lived according to the principles they had heard must be happy.* Alas! for Peter, it may have been the passing sentiment of his heart, but he would have made a strange member of the Society of Friends.

In 1697 the terrible war which had been so long raging on the Continent, and in which the English had played so conspicuous a part, was happily brought to a close by the Treaty of Ryswick, in which Louis XIV. acknowledged William as King of Great Britain. When all the public bodies in the kingdom were hastening to the foot of the throne with their congratulations, the Quakers were not behind. They presented an address, in which they declared

* Clarkson's Life of Penn, Vol. II.

their thankfulness that his majesty had escaped the dangers of war, and their fervent hope that he would long live to reign over them and enjoy the blessings of peace.

In 1698 a bill was introduced into parliament "for restraining the licentiousness of the press," which justly excited the jealousy of the Quakers and other non-conformists, who dreaded that if the bill were made law it might seriously curtail the religious liberty which they had, after a hard struggle, secured. The Friends, therefore, drew up in the form of a memorial their objections to the bill, and had them circulated among the members of parliament. "To limit religious books," said they, "to a license, where the tolerated persons are many, seems altogether unsafe to all, but those of whose opinion the licenser is, who by this bill has power to allow what he shall judge sound and orthodox, or reject what he shall construe to be either heretical, seditious, or offensive. History and experience have taught how the obscure term of heresy has been turned and stretched against primitive Christians, martyrs, and famous reformers. Nor is it forgotten for what reasons the writ *De Heretico Comburendo* was abolished," &c. The bill was dropt.

Now that the Quakers were safe from pains and penalties, they were attacked through the press with double energy. At this time a virulent pamphlet, entitled, "The Snake in the Grass," was published, the object of which was to strike, like a two-edged sword, against the Quakers and Bourignons, though these two sets of mystics had waged war with one another from the first. A certain apostate, Francis Bugg, also fastened upon his former friends with instinctive ferocity. When travelling in Ireland, Penn had visited the Bishop of Cork, and presented him with one of his tracts, entitled, "Gospel Truths held by the people called Quakers," and the Bishop had afterwards

written him a letter, in which he remarked that a sect which held so meagre a creed could scarcely be called Christians. This led Penn to write "A Defence of a Paper called Gospel Truths against the Exceptions of the Bishop of Cork's Testimony." But the most formidable opponent of the Quakers was Keith, who, from a defender of the faith, had become an accuser of the brethren. He published in 1699 a work, entitled, "The Deism of William Penn and his Brethren destructive to the Christian Religion, exposed and plainly laid open." Penn was a ready writer, and was not slow in replying to these charges, and maintaining that by diverging from modern a man might adhere all the more closely to ancient Christianity. When Keith, in 1700, took orders in the Church of England, the Quakers had their revenge for the indignities he had put upon them, by publishing some of his former sentiments and presenting them to the Bishop of London.*

In 1701 the exiled King James died at St. Germain's, and next year William III. followed him to the grave. When Queen Anne ascended the throne the London Quakers hastened to address her, and assure her of their loyalty. In answer to their address she assured them of her protection. Shortly afterwards, in proroguing the parliament, she declared her intention of maintaining inviolable the Act of Toleration, which filled all the non-conformists in the kingdom with joy and gratitude. When the Quakers assembled in their annual May-meeting they drew up a second address to the queen, expressive of their loyalty and thankfulness. William Penn might now again venture to appear at court, and therefore he was placed at the head of the deputation appointed to present the address. When it was read, the queen turned to him and said, "Mr.

* Sewel's History, p. 672.

Penn, I am so well pleased that what I have said is to your satisfaction, that you and your friends may be assured of my protection."* This language, however formal, gave the Quakers assurance that the liberty which they had received in the last reign would not be wrested from them in this.

The Quakers had now entered the haven of peace, and, as usually happens, their history, for a time, declines in interest. They had no longer severe trials to bring into display heroic virtues. They held their meetings, and religiously adhered to their principles, and stood out before the public as a distinct people, but their outside history consisted in little more than in their appearing at court at appropriate times to present, with others, dutiful addresses. When England and Scotland were united into one kingdom; when a threatened invasion came to naught; when the queen declared anew to the parliament her resolution to maintain liberty of conscience; when peace was proclaimed, the Friends hastened to the foot of the throne to say how glad they were. But loyal addresses and royal replies are not profoundly interesting to the world at large. The presentation of the stereotyped address, however, to George I., when he came to the throne in 1714, was so Quaker-like that it deserves record. When the address was read, and the king's answer made, George Whitehead, who was at the head of the deputation, and was indeed one of the most eminent Quakers of the day, stood forward and said—

“Thou art welcome to us, King George; we heartily wish thee health and happiness, and thy son the prince also. King William III. was a happy instrument in putting a stop to persecution, by promoting toleration. We

* Sewel's History, p. 686.

desire the king may have farther knowledge of us and our innocency, and that to live a peaceable and quiet life, in all godliness and honesty, under the king and his government, is according to our principle and practice."

When this speech was spoken, the deputation desired they might be permitted to see the Prince of Wales. The request was at once granted, and they were conducted to the prince's chamber, when the Quaker, George, again stood forward and said—

"We take it as a favour that we are thus admitted to see the Prince of Wales, and truly are very glad to see thee; having delivered our address to the king, thy royal father, and being desirous to give thyself a visit in true love, we very heartily wish health and happiness to you both; and that, if it should please God, thou shouldst survive thy father and come to the throne, thou mayst enjoy tranquillity and peace. I am persuaded that if the king, thy father, and thyself, do stand for the toleration for liberty of conscience to be kept inviolable, God will stand by you. May King Solomon's choice of wisdom be thy choice, with holy Job's integrity, and compassion to the distressed," &c.*

In this wise did the Quakers welcome the house of Hanover to the British throne, and pay their respects to the first two Georges.

The whole interest of the Quaker history at this period centres in William Penn, and William Penn was hurrying to the grave with shattered fortunes and a broken heart. Almost from the beginning affairs had gone badly in Pennsylvania. Jealousies, heart-burnings, and quarrels, had reigned between the deputy-governors, the assembly, and people; the quit-rents were unpaid; and that great country,

* Sewel's History, pp. 710-11.

instead of being a source of wealth, had been a cause of poverty to its proprietor. In 1699 he had crossed the Atlantic and visited it for the second time, and his presence had helped to allay disputes; but the fire was smothered rather than quenched. He penetrated into the boundless forests, and visited the Indians in their wigwams, ate their venison and cakes; and, forgetting he was a Quaker, beheld them with pleasure dancing their wild dances on the green. In return, he invited them to his house, and treated them with such kindness, that for generations they spoke to their children of the good Onas—the word in their language which signifies a pen, and by which their benefactor was known to them. In 1701 he returned to England and resumed his labours as a writer and preacher in the Quaker cause; but affairs in America again became worse than ever. In 1707 he was involved in a law-suit with the executors of a man who had once been his steward, and to whom he appears to have incautiously signed some papers. The decision went against him, and unable to meet the pecuniary demands now so unexpectedly made upon him, he was obliged to seek a lodging within the Rules of the Fleet, a distressed, bailiff-hunted debtor. Two years afterwards his embarrassments were so great that he was compelled to mortgage his province of Pennsylvania for £6,600.*

His public career was now nearly run. He was creeping into old age, for he was now threescore years and ten. He was harassed by money obligations, which he was unable to discharge, though the annual value of his property in England and Ireland was still considerable. His first wife, the good and romantic Guli Springett, was long since dead. He left London and took a country house at Rushcomb in

* Clarkson's Life of Penn, Vol. II.

Berkshire. In 1712 he had made up his mind to part with his province of Pennsylvania to the government, and the government had agreed to give him £12,000 for it. But before the bargain was concluded he had three several attacks of apoplexy, and was no longer able to transact business. Providence so ordered it that he was to die lord of Pennsylvania. From this time he was a wreck, still able to converse occasionally with his friends, but distressing them by his frequent obliviousness, his absence of mind, and the difficulty with which he could so collect himself as to utter his thoughts. The memory had lost its grasp. But in most such cases nature is kind. It was merciful that many things were plunged in forgetfulness, which, if constantly remembered, would have embittered the old man's last days; and that the very blunting of his intellect rendered him incapable of feeling, so sorely as he otherwise would, the pangs of disappointed hope. The mind, by breaking down, had escaped from its persecutors, and yet it was not incapable of a tranquil happiness, nor untrue to its former religious impressions. So he lingered till 1718, when he died.

With William Penn departed the last of the great Quakers. He undoubtedly rendered in his day eminent service, not only to his sect, but to society. In his early youth he made a noble struggle for the independence of the jury, in defending from intimidation the jury who tried him; and the jury, in turn, shewed they were worthy of his defence by the verdict which they gave in the face of a menacing recorder and judge. As the founder of Pennsylvania, he will ever be remembered as one of the great colonisers of the New World. To convert the wilderness into a garden; to lay, in the midst of a vast solitude, the foundations of a mighty state, is no mean honour. The wisdom of his legislation is not disproved by the

jars and ingratitude of the colonists; and the saying of Benjamin Franklin, that he began his government as a man of conscience, proceeded in it as a man of reason, and ended it as a man of the world, has more point than truth in it; for no one is to be blamed for a reasonable attention to his own interests. The fruit of his kindness to the Indians was seen in the peaceable way in which they lived with the men of peace even after he was in his grave; while they were harassing, by their murderous excursions, the other British settlements. They loved, and wished to live in peace with the children of Onas. But his greatest service to the world was his persistent, life-long defence of liberty of conscience. For this we can almost excuse him for his blinded attachment to James, whom, he fondly imagined, he had made a convert to his creed; though it is not so easy to excuse or explain his repudiation of his principles, in advising an invasion of his country. But let those who are without sin cast the first stone at him.

That he was a thoroughly sincere, unselfish man, with strong religious instincts, admits of no doubt. His throwing in his lot with the despised Quakers, and thereby sacrificing all his hopes of worldly promotion and splendid living, is the best proof of this. From the moment he joined the Quakers he gave himself up to them soul and body, and worked unweariedly in their cause. He became a voluminous writer; and it is difficult to know how he found time to write so much, when we consider the multitude of his avocations. Though reared among the proud English aristocracy, he had no trace of arrogance or pride. He was simply a Quaker with the Quakers; and it is still told in Pennsylvania how, on one occasion, riding into Haverford, he overtook a young girl wearily walking to the same place, and kindly took her up on the saddle, and

rode into the town with the little bare-legged lassie behind him.

His intellect was not of the highest order, and, of course, it was not expanded by the religion which he had embraced. But he frequently writes with vigour, though not with brilliancy or wit. When he was attacked he could reply in a way which shewed that the spirit of the old admiral, his father, was in him. Bishop Burnet, who did not like him, says he was a vain man, and had a luscious, tedious way of speaking in conversation;* of which, I think, it is possible to detect a slight tincture in his writings. But the man who could number among his acquaintances Dr. Tillotson and John Locke, and of whom Dean Swift said, "that he talked very agreeably and with much spirit," must have been much above the common, even in that age of exceeding intellect.

He was a tall man, and in the latter part of his life somewhat portly. It is a curious circumstance, that the only genuine portrait of this apostle of peace and good-will exhibits him clothed in armour; for, in his youth, he had served as a volunteer at Carrickfergus; and with the usual vanity of the young soldier, he had himself painted in his coat of mail. His regular features, full, round eyes, and well-formed mouth, constitute a pleasing, and even handsome countenance. A bust of him was made after his death, in which we can trace a thoughtful eye, and an expression of much benevolence. Years, no doubt, had worked a change. Though his sect exacted plainness of attire, he was always particularly neat in his person, for this he had

* "He was a talking, vain man, who had such a high opinion of his own eloquence, that he thought nothing could stand before it; and a tedious, luscious way of talking, that was not apt to overcome a man's reason, though it might tire his patience."—*History of his Own Times.*

learned from his gentle breeding. He generally carried a cane, which he sometimes took even into his study; and, as he walked up and down dictating to his amanuensis, gave emphasis to his sentences by striking it on the floor. He reached the long age of seventy-four; but his life can scarcely be called a happy one. He was constantly assailed by suspicions and aspersions; he had to drink the cup of bitter disappointment in regard to America; and his mind, harassed by pecuniary difficulties, broke down just before he had signed away the province which was his pride.





Chapter X.

THE Society of Friends had now reached a testing-point in their history. Their principles were fully developed, the days of their suffering over and gone, their great men dead, and it was now to be seen whether they were to become like those many religious sects which existed merely to perpetuate dissension. If it had been so, their history would henceforward have lost all interest to others, however engaging it might have been to themselves. But they were born for better things. Having "been illuminated, and endured their great fight of afflictions," they entered upon a God-given work, and hence they still live and are honoured, while other sects, which at one time promised as fairly, have sunk into obscurity and contempt. In truth, their history from this period is worthy of record only so far as they took part in schemes of general philanthropy; and hence it becomes not so much a history of Quakerism as of what Quakers did beyond the narrow circle of their peculiar religion. During the whole of the eighteenth century the Quaker faith and manners remained as changeless as those of the Chinese. No prophet arose among them who inherited the mantle of Fox or Penn. No madman found his way into the sect to shock or amuse the outside world by his extravagances. These days were past for ever, and everything connected

with the Friends wore an aspect as sober as the drab of their garments. They had their weekly, monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings, with perfect regularity, and sometimes they were silent, and sometimes they spoke; but a chronicle of their doings and sayings in this way would not greatly edify the uninitiated. They must go beyond themselves and do some work in the great world, if they were to shew that they had not struggled into existence in vain.

There was plenty of work waiting to be done, for the system of things was not perfect in the eighteenth century. Might not the Quakers bear their part in the regeneration of the age? Their religion was emphatically one of peace and good-will. It had, moreover, consecrated in England, before it was spoken in France, the idea of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Their first leaders were living epistles of their religion. George Fox was without doubt a great-hearted man. He was no narrow sectarian though he dissented from the church; his dissent was in some respects a protest against the narrowness of the church. He wished broader ground, a more unfenced field on which to build his hopes of heaven. Robert Barclay was conspicuously gentle, loving, and loveable. William Penn shewed his benevolence and humanity by refusing to follow in the bloody tracks of Cortes and Pizarro, and so gained for himself the lasting veneration, not only of the artless Indians, whom he had used kindly, but of all mankind. These three men could scarcely fail to leave the stamp of their own loving-kindness on their followers; and thus, both by precept and example, the primitive Quakers were trained for their future work.

In the early part of the eighteenth century the Quakers were already known as a benevolent sect. One of our testimonies to their worth comes from a quarter from which

we should hardly have expected it. Voltaire, still a young man, was at this time residing in England, having expatriated himself on account of a brutal assault made upon him by one of the blackguard nobles, who were then slowly filling up to the brim the cup of their order's iniquity. He came in contact with some of the Quakers in London, and was attracted by their simple manners, their benevolent dispositions, their zeal for universal toleration, and their attempt to lead Christianity back to its first forms. He has left an account of them, which though in many points embellished by imagination, and contrary to fact, is written with his usual elegance and wit. "I love the Quakers," he exclaims, and somewhat comically proceeds, "were it not for the horrors of sea-sickness, would cross the Atlantic and end my days in Pennsylvania."* Pity that so small a matter should have prevented him. Like the Muscovite Peter, he would have been a strange member of the Society of Friends.

One of the great evils of the eighteenth century was slavery and the slave-trade, and men did not see that it was an evil. The most pious persons took part in the infamous traffic. To be the owner of a slave-vessel, and make rich by the tears and blood of unhappy Africans, violently reft from their homes and carried into captivity, brought no slur upon the fairest fame. The thing had become customary, and custom had given a false consecration to the great crime. The Quakers were not so much superior to their age as to have washed their hands of the accursed thing from the first. Those of them who had settled in America and the West Indies had slaves like their neighbours. Slaves were even imported into Pennsylvania, and

* "Je vous dirai sans me répéter que j'aime les Quakers. Oui, si la mer ne me faisait pas un mal insupportable, ce serait dans ton sein, O Pensilvanie! que j'irais finir le reste de ma carrière, s'il y a du reste."—*Questions sur l'Encyclopédie.*

sold like cattle in the streets of Philadelphia, and no one saw that it was a sin. Here there was a subject upon which the Quakers might receive a ray of the true light, and do some useful work.

Let us shortly glance, then, at the origin of a system, the tearing down of which was to give work to the Quakers during the eighteenth century. Slavery is nearly as old as the world. It is the natural product of the state of things where might is right. All the nations of antiquity had their slaves, these being generally captives taken in war. The Jews, in this respect, were not better than the Gentiles. They had their bondsmen and their bondswomen, and slavery was incorporated in the code of law given by God to Moses amid the thunders of Horeb. After the breaking up of the Roman Empire under the pressure of the hordes of Huns, Goths, and Franks, who poured down upon the southern and western countries of Europe and possessed them, slavery again arose, and out of similar circumstances. The conquered races became the slaves of the conquerors. The serfdom which perished in Russia, only a few years ago, prevailed over all Europe during the middle ages. The population was bought and sold with the soil upon which they resided, and which they were compelled to till. Sometimes they were even sold, or given in gift, apart from the soil, but this was of comparatively rare occurrence. The church was implicated in the universal sin; and bishops and monasteries had their slaves, who were sometimes bequeathed to them as an act of piety, or in payment of masses to be said for souls in purgatory. Gradually, however, and without any convulsion, in most cases even without any new legislation on the subject, the hardy bondsmen regained their independence, and by the beginning of the fifteenth century the system of villanage had everywhere died out in the west of Europe.

The system of African slavery which sprung up in America was of a different type from any which had previously existed in the world, and rose out of widely different circumstances. When the Spaniards took possession of the New World, which the genius of Columbus bestowed upon them, not content with depriving the natives of their cities and gold mines, their forests and fields, they reduced them to the condition of slaves, and treated them with the most inhuman cruelty. Under this barbarous usage the population rapidly diminished. Small-pox and other deadly diseases broke out amongst them, and carried thousands to the grave. The gums of the forest and the gold of the mine were like to be lost for want of labourers to gather them. In these circumstances it occurred to some speculators that the sturdy African race might be substituted in the place of the sickly Indians. The Portuguese had already settlements on the west coast of Africa; and from these, so early as 1503, a few negroes were carried across the Atlantic and sold to the American planters as slaves. The experiment succeeded beyond expectation. It was found that one negro did the work of four Indians, and that while the Indians were fast becoming extinct, the negroes were multiplying and giving promise that they would soon replenish the land.

But one is surprised to find the benevolent Bartholomew Las Casas, who had heroically devoted his life to mitigate the sufferings of the Indians, appearing as the earnest advocate of the infamous traffic now fairly begun. The truth is, the good priest had fixed his eyes so intently on the woes of the Indians, and was so bent on delivering them from the yoke of their oppressors, that he was ready to embrace any project which would accomplish this result. He laid before the Cardinal Ximenes, who at that time held in his hands the government of Spain, a proposal to estab-

lish a regular system of traffic in negroes between Africa and America. The statesman rejected the proposal of the philanthropist, on the ground that it was wrong to deliver the inhabitants of one country from bondage by consigning those of another to its horrors. But, notwithstanding the opposition of Ximenes, the trade increased, for nothing could resist the lust for gold which had seized upon the Spanish adventurers. When Charles V. ascended the throne he took the traffic under his royal protection, and in 1517 granted a patent to one of his Flemish favourites, conferring upon him the exclusive right of importing 4,000 negroes into America. The favourite sold the monopoly to some Genoese merchants for 25,000 ducats, and these organised and extended the trade, so that vessels were now continually crossing the ocean with their freights of hapless victims, carried away from country and kindred to toil for the Spaniards. At first they fetched a very high price in the market, but they multiplied so rapidly, and were imported in such numbers, that their value gradually fell, and it was not long before there was a negro for every Spaniard in the colonies.

In 1562, when Elizabeth was upon the throne, the trade was recognised by the English Government, and a captain so distinguished as Sir John Hawkins engaged in it. But, as the English had as yet no colonies in America, they had only a small share of the piratical trade. It was 1616 before negroes were imported into Virginia, and these were brought by a Dutch trader; but as the experiment succeeded there as it had previously done in Hispaniola and Mexico, the demand for more African slaves soon created the means of supply, and the English entered upon the trade with as great eagerness as ever the Spaniards had done. As it was remunerative beyond any other, every seafaring people soon became partners at once in its profits

and its guilt. Nations, like individuals, struggled for the largest share of its unholy gains, and at the peace of Utrecht, Great Britain, as part of the price of her victories at Malplaquet and Blenheim, obtained the execrable privilege of supplying slaves to Spanish America for thirty years, at the rate of 4,800 annually, and, at the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, bargained for a continuation of the unblest monopoly.

Still no one lifted up his voice against the great sin, for no one thought it a sin; and negroes were carried away captive, and kept in captivity, with none to plead for them. The Great Father, however, had "opened" very clearly to the Quaker mind that "He had made of one blood all nations to dwell on the face of the earth," and from this they began very early to have a glimmering perception that they ought to use the negroes like brothers, and not like brutes. When George Fox was in Barbadoes, in 1671, he spake to his brethren in this wise—"Consider with yourselves, if you were in the same condition as the poor Africans are, who came strangers to you, and were sold to you as slaves. I say, if this should be the condition of you or yours, you would think it a hard measure, yea, and very great bondage and cruelty. And, therefore, consider seriously of this, and do you for them, and to them, as you would willingly have them or any others do to you, were you in the like slavish condition, and bring them to know the Lord Christ." Following up these Christian principles, he exhorted the planters to charge their overseers to deal gently with their negroes, and after a season of servitude to set them free. George was thinking, no doubt, of the year of jubilee among the Jews, and wishing to see it realised in Barbadoes. Here, then, Fox himself deposited in the soul of his sect the small seed, which was afterwards to be fruitful of such blessed consequences. We need not wonder that the followers of

this man did so much in after years for the suppression of the slave-trade.

The Quaker planters in Barbadoes acted upon the advice of their venerated leader. They instructed their slaves in the principles of Christianity, and even admitted them to their religious meetings. The other planters instantly took alarm. If the negroes, they said, imbibed the religion of their masters, they could no longer be slaves. They would rise in revolt, cut the throats of their owners, and spread devastation over the whole island. The safety of the island must not be jeopardized for a religious whim. The slaves must be kept in ignorance if they were to be kept in subordination. In accordance with these sentiments an act was passed in 1676, prohibiting the Quakers from admitting their negroes into their religious meetings.* Some of the Quakers ventured to disregard this prohibition, and two of them were severely fined for having had meetings at their house at which negroes were present. But this severity was not enough to deter this resolute people from doing what they conceived to be their duty, and, accordingly, in 1680 the governor prohibited all meetings of the Society. The same course was pursued in other islands, and the Quakers were thus gradually expelled, and the African left there to bear his fetters, for more than a century longer, without a friend.†

Slavery had got a footing in Pennsylvania, and there slaves were to be found tilling Quaker soil, and drudging in Quaker houses; but it was not suffered to exist long without being questioned. Some German emigrants from Kirchein, not far from the Rhine, who had adopted the principles of Penn, and followed him to his promised land,

* Sewel's History, p. 535. Clarkson's History of the Abolition of the Slave-Trade, Vol. I., p. 134.

† Clarkson's History of the Abolition of the Slave-Trade, Vol. I., p. 135.

have the high honour of having been the first to lift up their voices against it. In the yearly meeting of the Society, in 1688, they boldly proclaimed their opinion that the buying, selling, and holding men in slavery was inconsistent with the principles of their religion.* Here was a blow struck at the universal opinion of the day, which, in course of time, must tell; for these Germans had seen the true light more clearly than Fox, or any other man of their time, and uttered a great truth which could not die. Once spoken it was certain to become a power in the world. It was eight years before it had quickened into sensitiveness the Quakers of Pennsylvania; but after eight years some fruit of it was seen; for, in the annual meeting of the province in 1696, the subject of slavery was taken up as one of public concern, and the brethren were warned to have no hand in the future importation of African slaves, and to be kind to those already in their possession.† They were beginning to feel ill at ease, or, according to their own dialect, “tender” in regard to their slaves.

When Penn visited the province in 1699 he took the condition of the slaves into earnest consideration, for the friend of the Indian could scarcely fail to take an interest in the oppressed African. He began by recommending to his sect that the proper treatment of their negroes should be made a matter of Christian duty, and, as such, incorporated with the discipline of the Society. His persuasions prevailed, and accordingly a minute was passed by the monthly meeting of Philadelphia, and properly registered there, by which a religious meeting, more particularly for the negroes, was appointed to be held once every month. Once every moon, then, the slave might meet and worship with his master. It was but a small crumb of comfort

* Clarkson's History, Vol. 1, p. 136.

† Ibid.

which was thus thrown to the dogs; they were to be recognised as having souls to be saved, but still they were to be detained in the house of bondage. Still, for that day it was much, for it was the day of small things. Having succeeded thus far with his sect, Penn next ventured upon state legislation. He introduced into the assembly a bill which was designed to protect the negroes from mal-treatment, by appointing fair trials and legal punishments in cases of alleged misconduct, and also to regulate their marriages, and save the province from the sin and shame of their promiscuous concubinage. But the legislators of Pennsylvania were not so enlightened as its governor, and the bill was thrown out.* They were resolved to preserve the proud privilege of whipping their niggers as they pleased. Even among the Society of Friends the cause of the slave made slow progress. For after the matter had been allowed to rest for many years, the annual meeting in 1711 did nothing more than repeat the advice which had been given in 1696, that Friends should not import negroes, and should treat tenderly those whom they had. But let us be thankful that a gleam of light had broken in upon the thick darkness; that some words had been spoken which declared that to be wrong which every person practised as right.

Such was the state of matters when William Penn closed his troubled life, and bereft the Society of Friends of the interest attaching to his great name.

The Quakers in England maintained a close correspondence with their brethren in America. Reports of everything of consequence which befell the Society on the one continent, were rapidly transmitted to the other. The struggles, the temptations, the backslidings of the Friends

* Clarkson's Life of Penn, Vol. II, p. 473.

in Philadelphia, were discussed at the annual meeting of the Friends in London, and advice and encouragement sent to them according to their need. When slavery began gently to agitate the Quaker conscience in America, intelligence of it reached the mother country, but it was some years before it produced any visible effect. The question, however, was discussed in private, information was slowly accumulated, and at length the decision came. In 1727 the yearly meeting in London entered the following resolution in their minutes:—"It is the sense of this meeting that the importing of negroes from their native country and relations by Friends is not a commendable nor allowed practice, and is therefore censured by this meeting."*

It was a holy resolution. One body of Christians had now branded the slave trade with infamy, and no Quaker could henceforward engage in it without incurring the censure of his Society. The trumpet had been sounded, and it had given no uncertain sound; though, after all, it was but a feeble blast. But from this time we date the commencement of the Quaker crusade against slavery. From the year of grace, 1727, every Quaker child would be reared in an abhorrence of the traffic in which the most pious of all other sects engaged. The Society had assumed the attitude of protesters against the crime, and their protest was sure to awaken doubts and alarm in consciences not only within but beyond their pale. A few enlightened and humane individuals had indeed before this time denied the right of man to buy and sell his brother man, but their individual voices had scarcely been heard. No church had pronounced its anathemas on the sin. The Society of Friends, though they cursed not at all, first pronounced its solemn censure on it. And they were in many respects

* Extracts from the Minutes and Epistles of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, p. 113. 1861.

well qualified for the work upon which they were almost unconsciously entering, led by a higher than human hand. They formed a compact band, bound to one another by closer ties than those of a mere common Christianity. "They were a chosen nation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people"—feeling as the Christians must have felt toward one another, and toward the world, during the first three centuries. The very persecutions they had endured had made them cling more closely together; they had been welded into one in the fire. The wide Atlantic had not been suffered to divide their sympathies or lessen their love, and whatever affected one member of the body was instantly felt by all the others. If they were comparatively weak in numbers and influence, they could yet enter the field of fight firm and compact as the Macedonian phalanx. We cheer them and bless them as they march to the battle.

But while we admire the Quakers for having seen the truth a little clearer than their neighbours, and bid them God speed in the struggle upon which they are entering, let us not too severely condemn those who did not see as they did. All history teaches us to be charitable in our estimate of the morals of a past period. While good and evil, abstractly speaking, are immutable and eternal, the moral sentiment of mankind has undergone many great revolutions; it is, in truth, never fixed, it is continually fluctuating; and as we differ from those who have gone before us in our moral judgments, so will those who follow differ from us. Accordingly, we must not judge the people of one age by the standard of right and wrong set up in another, or we shall judge unjustly. Utility, no doubt, lies at the bottom of much virtue, if not all, and we are ever prone to exalt into a virtue that which is simply useful to ourselves. So the planters and slave-traders deceived themselves. The slave-trade was believed to be beneficial to America and

the whole civilised world; it was particularly profitable to those who were engaged in it, and the wrongs of Africa and the sufferings of the slave were never taken into account. By the prevalence of this opinion a moral atmosphere was created in which slave-holding and slave-dealing, if not regarded as virtues, were neither condemned as crimes. Before self-interest had created this state of feeling men saw the truth more clearly, and were shocked at practices to which they were afterwards reconciled. Cardinal Ximenes clearly saw the injustice and inhumanity of the slave-trade. Queen Elizabeth, when her government sanctioned the traffic, expressed, in her ignorance, a hope that no negro would be carried off without his consent, as nothing could be more sure to draw down the vengeance of Heaven. Even Charles V., before he died, appears to have repented of the sanction which he gave to the trade in the commencement of his reign. Eighty years after this no such qualms arose in either royal or priestly bosoms. Unchallenged custom had sanctioned the trade. To think it a crime now was to rise superior to the age—to throw off the fetters of universal opinion. This is an achievement more difficult than we think, and even when a man, by his superior moral stature, towers above his compeers, and sees farther and clearer than they can, the chances are that he has not the courage to fly in the face of society, and make a martyr of himself for the sake of truth.

The difficulty of forming our moral judgments in such cases is increased by the fact, that virtue, as well as vice, sometimes springs from selfishness—like twin saplings from the same root, though destined to bear such different fruit. How much do we do from the hope of reward, and how much do we not do from the dread of punishment, and how entirely are we preserved in the path of rectitude by the pressure on the one side and the other of these two opposite

and opposing forces ! Yet hope and fear are selfish, both in their origin and end. It is probable we cheat even ourselves in regard to this, for there is no such arrant impostor as self, and what we call a man's character is generally the product of a strange mixture of motives. The chemist often startles us by his analysis, proving that substances which we had fancied were simple are really composite, and that elements which we could not have dreamt of enter into their composition. But a careful mental analysis brings to light facts quite as wonderful, and shews how many opposing elements go to make up the man. Strange ! that honour and honesty, that justice and truth, and even an apparent piety, should spring from selfishness ; that the virtues should be so closely allied to the vices ; and that here, as in the physical world, the fairest flowers and richest fruits should grow from rank putridity.





Chapter XX.

WE must again cross the Atlantic, for after the Society of Friends in London had pronounced its censure upon the slave-trade, it sunk into silence, and continued silent for many years. Still, its censure remained to scare from the traffic any Quaker greedy of gain.

In America the system of slavery was ever present. The rakish-looking slaver might be seen any day entering the harbour, and, if you walked on board, the stench which rose from between the decks, where hundreds of human beings were stowed, was worse than that of any dog-kennel. You could scarcely go to the market-place without seeing men and women offered for sale, soul and body, to the highest bidder. You could not ride into the country without seeing slaves at work in the sugar plantations and cotton fields, jesting and frolicsome, perhaps, but still slaves. You might avoid thinking about slavery in England, but you could not do so in America. There it was constantly staring you in the face, and asking your opinion of it; demanding if it was right that your fellow-creatures should be bought and sold like brutes, and deprived for ever of that heritage of liberty which is so dear to all? The Quakers, who were anxious to keep their consciences "tender," could not help hearing these questions echoing everywhere. Hence the

subject of slavery was much more agitated in Pennsylvania than in Middlesex. It was never allowed altogether to rest. From the day the German emigrants had pronounced slave-keeping to be inconsistent with religion their voice had never died away.

There were reformers before the Reformation—men who sowed the good seed, though they did not live to reap the bountiful harvest. So there were slavery abolitionists before abolition had become a great public question—men who have sunk into obscurity, but who were, nevertheless, the pioneers in a glorious cause. Let us piously preserve the names at least of the good Quakers who had the clearest illumination on this subject, and the truest courage to follow the light which God had given them. Among the first of these was William Burling, a Quaker of Long Island, who published several tracts upon slavery, and every year, in the meeting of his Society, gave his testimony against it. Next to him comes Ralph Sandiford, a merchant of Philadelphia. This true Philadelphian published, in 1729, a work upon slavery, entitled, the "Mystery of Iniquity," in which he denounced the institution in energetic language, and supported his conclusions by a multitude of facts. He devoted a large part of his life to the cause which he advocated in his work, and went about urging upon all with whom he came into contact the emancipation of their slaves. Next to Sandiford, in this list of forerunners, stands Benjamin Lay, a man of Abington. This Quaker, when in England, was known to the royal family, and had the honour of private access to its sacred circle. He was an eccentric and hot-tempered, but, withal, benevolent man, and the abolition of slavery was his hobby, and he rode it hard. He published on the subject, and talked on the subject wherever he went, and if any one ventured to say a word in favour of the accursed thing, his terrible wrath was in-

stantly kindled, and woe betide the man who had spoken the apologetic word.

These men were like voices crying in the wilderness—they were little heeded, for self-interest closes men's ears, and shuts their eyes; but there now arose a man who was destined to make his opinions felt not only in his Society but beyond it, and to inflict wounds upon the system of slave-keeping which are open and bleeding to this day. This was John Woolman, whose life and labours deserve a fuller record.

John Woolman was born at Northampton in New Jersey, in the year 1720. A Quaker by birth, the training which he received increased his natural religious thoughtfulness; and even as a boy he was particularly solicitous to have a conscience void of offence; he was even anxious, as he tells us, to rival the good men, of whom he had read, who had lived in the olden time, when "people walked in uprightness before God in a degree exceeding any that he knew or heard of then living." To earn his bread he took employment from a shopkeeper. When in this situation his master sold a negro woman, whom he chanced to have, and desired him to write out a bill of sale; and the thing must be done instantly, for the man who bought the woman was waiting for the document. The duty which young Woolman was thus called to discharge took him by surprise, and while he wrote he could not help feeling what a horrid thing it was for him to be writing an instrument of slavery for one of his fellow-creatures. The thought haunted him afterwards, and he could not help debating within himself whether he should not in such a case have disobeyed his master, and risked all rather than do what was wrong. Not long after this he was subjected to a second temptation, and on this occasion he triumphed over it. A young Quaker friend asked him to write out for him a conveyance of a slave.

He at once replied that "he was not easy to write it," and begged to be excused; for though many of the Society kept slaves, he thought it wrong. The acquaintance frankly confessed that he had his misgivings too, but that as the negress was a present to his wife he could not refuse her.

At the age of twenty-two Woolman was recognised as a preacher in the Society of Friends, and he may be regarded as a good specimen of the best type of the American Quaker of last century. He had learned in his youth tailoring as well as shop-keeping, and, being a handy fellow, he could draw a will for a friend, and even on occasion let blood. Starting a store on his own account, his trade quickly increased, but this only increased his distress, for he thought his mind was thus being weaned from its inward exercises; and, moreover, that the trimmings which he sold encouraged female vanity, and the rum and molasses were the produce of slaves. He therefore shut his shop, and resolved to rely upon his thimble and needle alone for support. Like other Quakers, he was favoured with visions. On one occasion the true light appeared to him, and twice he heard the words—*Certain evidence of Divine Truth*. The light was "about nine inches diameter, of a clear easy brightness, and near its centre most radiant." His asceticism was carious. His conscience would upbraid him for entering a carpeted room, and when he came to England he took a steerage passage because he observed some "carved work and imagery, and superfluity of workmanship" about the cabin. When some drink was offered him in a silver cup he burst into tears, and begged that a plainer vessel might be given him. No dyed stuff was allowed to form part of his clothing, as he thought dyeing was designed not to remove dirt but to conceal it. But notwithstanding his oddities and whims he was, no doubt, a good and honest man. In 1746, in accordance with "draw-

ings" which he had, he made a journey through Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina, where slaves were very numerous; and at the different preaching-stations he generally resided with members of the Society, of whom many were slave-owners. As he sat at their tables and partook of their bounty, and reflected that it was wrung out of slave labour, his conscience was offended—it was worse than eating meat which had been offered to idols. "When I ate, drank, and lodged free-cost," says the conscientious Quaker, "with people who lived in ease on the hard labour of their slaves, I felt uneasy; and as my mind was inward to the Lord, I found this uneasiness return upon me at times through the whole visit. Where the masters bore a good share of the burden, and lived frugally, so that their servants were well provided for, and their labour moderate, I felt more easy. But where they lived in a costly way, and laid heavy burdens on their slaves, my exercise was often great, and I frequently had conversations with them in private concerning it." These private conversations of the earnest Quaker-preacher, no doubt, had their effect, for "a word in season how good it is!"

In 1753 Woolman published a book entitled "Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes," which helped to leaven the public mind with a sense both of the injustice and impolicy of the system. He had soon several opportunities of practically showing his consistency. Being a good penman, and something of a lawyer, he was frequently asked to write wills for the members of his sect, and on such occasions he was always well paid for his work. About this time a man came to him and asked him to write out a will for his brother, who lay sick; but when Woolman learned that he wished to bequeath his slaves to his children he declined to do it. On two subsequent occasions, shortly afterwards, he was solicited to do the same duty,

and refused for the same reason; and he had his reward, for in both cases the persons were so impressed by what he said that they bequeathed liberty to their slaves,* and, no doubt, died happier for having done so.

The Quaker-conscience was now beginning to be awakened; many Friends had emancipated their slaves, and others were tormented by the struggle between interest and duty. In this state of matters the yearly meeting of the Society for Pennsylvania and Jersey ventured upon a fuller declaration of its sentiments. It addressed a letter to all the members of the Society within its jurisdiction, expressing concern that any of them should be still implicated in a system so contrary to religion and humanity. "Now, dear Friends," says the epistle, "if we continually bear in mind the royal law of doing to others as we would be done by, we should never think of bereaving our fellow-creatures of that valuable blessing—liberty; nor endure to grow rich by their bondage. To live in ease and plenty by the toil of those whom violence and cruelty have put in our power, is neither consistent with Christianity nor common justice; and we have good reason to believe draws down the displeasure of Heaven; it being a melancholy but true reflection, that where slave-keeping prevails, pure religion and sobriety decline."† The letter did not insist upon immediate and unconditional emancipation, but it exhorted the Quakers to desist from the importation and purchase of negroes, to use kindly those whom they had, and to consider how far they were at liberty to retain fellow-creatures in bondage. Following up the opinions expressed in the letter, the meeting of the Society, in 1755, came to a resolution

* I have taken these particulars from Woolman's Journal—a book written with much quaint simplicity, and betraying in every line an honest, conscientious, kind-hearted man.

† Clarkson's Abolition of the Slave Trade, Vol. 1., pp. 137-43.

that if any of their members imported or purchased slaves, the overseers should report them to their respective monthly meetings, that "these might treat with them as they might be directed in the wisdom of truth."*

By 1758 the Quakers in England had acquired fuller information regarding the slave trade, and the more they knew of it the more they detested it; and, accordingly, they at once placed themselves in the van of the movement which had sprung up in the Society against it, and issued a warning to all their members against being implicated in its unrighteous gains. "We fervently warn," said they, "all in profession with us that they be careful to avoid being any way concerned in reaping the unrighteous profits arising from the iniquitous practice of dealing in negroes and other slaves; whereby, in the original purchase, one man selleth another as he doth the beast that perisheth, without any better pretension to a property in him than that of superior force, in direct violation of the gospel rule, which teacheth all to do as they would be done by, and to do good to all; being the reverse of that covetous disposition which furnisheth encouragement to those poor ignorant people to perpetuate their savage wars, in order to supply the demands of this most unnatural traffic, by which great numbers of mankind, free by nature, are subject to inextricable bondage. * * We therefore can do no less than, with the greatest earnestness, impress it upon Friends everywhere that they endeavour to keep their hands clear of this unrighteous gain of oppression."†

The English Quakers vigorously followed up the blow which they had struck by striking another heavier still. They had been behind their American brethren in beginning the battle; but, having fairly begun it, they fought it

* Clarkson's Abolition of the Slave Trade, Vol. I., p. 144.

† Extracts from the Minutes and Epistles of the Yearly Meeting, pp. 113-4. 1861.

more vigorously. They were not held back by the sight of negroes in the houses of their wealthiest members. Hitherto they had only warned those under their care of the sin and shame of the slave-trade, but in 1761 they resolved to disown any who should persist in it. "This meeting"—such was their noble resolution—"having reason to apprehend that divers under our name are concerned in the unchristian traffic in negroes, doth recommend it earnestly to the care of Friends everywhere, to discourage, as much as in them lies, a practice so repugnant to our Christian profession; and to deal with all such as shall persevere in a conduct so reproachful to Christianity; and to disown them if they desist not therefrom."* It was a memorable resolution! The Quakers were again a-head of all the churches of Christendom, for not one of these had yet dreamt of casting slave dealers out of its communion. But henceforward no English Quaker could be a trafficker in slaves. Verily these Friends seem to have had more of the true light than was vouchsafed to others.

In 1763 they issued another exhortation to their members, warning them against aiding or abetting the trade in any shape. "We renew our exhortation," said they, "that Friends everywhere be especially careful to keep their hands clear of giving encouragement, in any shape, to the slave-trade, it being evidently destructive of the natural rights of mankind, who are all ransomed by one Saviour, and visited by one divine light, in order to salvation; a traffic calculated to enrich and aggrandize some upon the misery of others; in its nature abhorrent to every just and tender sentiment, and contrary to the whole tenor of the gospel." "By the minute which was made on this occasion," says Clarkson, "I apprehend that no one belonging to

* Extracts from the Minutes and Epistles of the Yearly Meeting, p. 114. 1861.

the Society could furnish even materials for a slave voyage."*

Meanwhile, John Woolman was pursuing his philanthropic work on the other side of the Atlantic. In 1757 he travelled over Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina, for the express purpose of denouncing slavery in its stronghold. Like many other ardent reformers, however, "he found that old Adam was too strong for young Melancthon." He discovered it was no easy matter to convince men against their own interests and wishes, and that conscience is, in a marvellous degree, kept in leading-strings by selfishness. "Soon after I entered this province," he says, in his Quaker dialect, "a deep and painful exercise came upon me, which I often had some feeling of since my mind was drawn toward these parts."† Had he been lifted up, as Fox often was, in a prophetic rapture, and seen these same provinces a century afterwards deluged with civic blood on account of that very institution which he then denounced as sinful, his exercises would have been deeper and more painful still.

In 1758 Woolman attended the yearly meeting of the Society at Philadelphia, and urged upon his brethren that it was high time they should take some more decisive steps in regard to slavery, and "deal" with those who should thereafter become purchasers of slaves. He had the satisfaction of seeing a minute drawn up on the subject, and a committee appointed to advance the cause which he had so much at heart. Still the American Society hesitated to cast out of their community all who persisted in the sin; but we shall applaud their courage for doing so much, rather than blame their cowardice for doing so little, when we remember how many sins are tolerated at this day by all

* Clarkson's *Abolition of the Slave-Trade*, Vol. I., p. 115.

† Woolman's *Journal*, p. 137.

the churches in the world, because they are sanctioned by custom and practised by all. For several years after this Woolman devoted himself almost entirely to the anti-slavery mission, for he felt that this was the work which God had given him to do. He visited the different states, and everywhere unburdened his mind to the planters and the people. The good man had little genius, and only the influence which a Quaker preacher may be presumed to have; but he had his "painful exercises," his deep convictions, his earnest reasonings, his unfaltering persistency, and ruth and truth on his side, and by these he conquered. It is marvellous how much may be accomplished by such humble instrumentalities; how strongholds of error will yield to them; just as the proudest cities and highest battlements must ultimately fall before lines of ditches dug in the earth.

Another Quaker now arose who was destined to have a wider if not a more powerful influence than Woolman in preparing the way for the abolition of slavery in his sect. Anthony Benezet was born at St. Quentin, in Picardy, in 1713. While he was yet an infant, his father, who was a Protestant, fled from the persecutions which followed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and, after a short stay in Holland, settled with his family in London. Anthony there served his apprenticeship in an eminent mercantile house, and in 1731 emigrated to Pennsylvania, where he joined the Society of Friends. Instead of devoting himself to mercantile pursuits he became a schoolmaster, as he imagined that in this way he would do most good; and to do good, rather than to make rich, he resolved should be the object of his life. He early contracted a hatred of slavery, and he lost no opportunity of inoculating his scholars with his views. He seized upon other means of diffusing his sentiments more widely. Almanacs at that period were

more important publications than they are now ; besides the days of the month and the eclipses of the moon, every kind of information might be found in them ; and the reader, who probably never saw a newspaper, carefully spelled through every page of these great depositaries of wisdom and truth. Benezet managed to get articles calling in question the justice of slavery and the slave-trade inserted in those published at Philadelphia. He made a still larger use of the public press, which was now slowly rising into power. He wrote in the newspapers as opportunities of saying something in season occurred ; and published tracts in which he denounced the trade in human beings as iniquitous and accursed.

As his sentiments matured, and his stores of information increased, he resolved upon a more ambitious work than any he had yet attempted, and in 1762 published a treatise, entitled, "A short account of that part of Africa inhabited by the Negroes." Five years afterwards he published "A Caution and Warning to Great Britain and her Colonies, on the calamitous state of the enslaved negroes in the British Dominions ;" and not long afterwards appeared his ablest work—"An Historical Account of Guinea ; its situation, produce, and the general disposition of its inhabitants ; with an Inquiry into the rise and progress of the Slave Trade, its nature and calamitous effects." This treatise is said to have produced a greater effect than any book on the subject hitherto published in America. Woolman had confined his attention principally to slavery as it existed in their midst, as a "domestic institution ;" Benezet struck his blows chiefly at the slave-trade, as he regarded it as the root of the evil, and as it presented the system in its most painful aspects.

But about this time an event occurred in England which had a prodigious effect upon the fortunes of slavery. It

was not unusual for American and West Indian planters, when they visited England, to bring a negro servant with them. Some of these had absconded, and in several cases had been seized again, and carried back to captivity. But this had given rise to much questioning as to whether or not slavery could exist on British soil. In 1729 the attorney and solicitor-general for the time, had unfortunately given it as their opinion that a slave, by coming into Great Britain or Ireland, did not become free, and was still the property of his master, even though he had been baptized; but many believed that this opinion was contrary to the most fundamental principles of English law. Among these was Granville Sharp. He had studied law for the very purpose of satisfying himself on this point, and published a book on the subject, entitled, "A Representation of the injustice and dangerous tendency of tolerating Slavery in England," and had been the means of saving from slavery several run-away negroes. Still the broad question, whether a slave, by coming into England, became free? had never yet been authoritatively settled. Mr. Sharp resolved to have this question tried before the highest tribunal in the kingdom, and a case was soon found for trying it. James Somerset, an African slave, had been brought to England by his owner in 1769, and, after a while, absconded. His master, however, took an opportunity of seizing him, and had him put on board a vessel to be carried to Jamaica; but before the vessel set sail he was brought back by a writ of *habeas corpus*, and his case was to decide whether or not slavery could exist in England. In 1772 the case was tried; the eloquence of the greatest luminaries of the English bar was exerted on behalf of the oppressed Africans, and the memorable decision of Lord Mansfield was, that as soon as a slave sets his foot on English soil, that moment he is free.

In the year in which this celebrated trial occurred

Woolman was in England. He did not find slaves in Yorkshire as he had found them everywhere in Maryland and Carolina; but he could not forbear from speaking of that which was ever present to his mind, and had formed the labour of his life. At the quarterly meeting of the Society of Friends for that county he addressed his brethren upon slavery, and earnestly urged them to do all in their power to have it abolished everywhere and for ever. It was his last testimony on behalf of the oppressed, for a few days afterwards he was seized with small-pox—a disease which had not yet been deprived of its sting—and died in York in the house of a Friend. His humble labours deserve a perpetual record. He is one of the many examples which history affords of men with but slender talents and small means accomplishing much through the mere power of perseverance. He had little eloquence, and less learning, but he saw clearly and felt profoundly, and did more than perhaps any other man to lead the American Quakers to wash their hands of the guilt of slavery. He died in the faith, not having yet received the promises, but he saw them afar off.

Though Woolman now rested from his labours, Benezet continued the good work. He entered into a correspondence with Granville Sharp, who had obtained a world-wide celebrity for having preserved England from the taint of slavery; and also with George Whitefield and John Wesley, both of whom had, when in America, expressed their sympathy with the suffering slaves. On the recommendation of Whitefield, the Countess of Huntingdon had founded and endowed a college, called the Orphan House, near Savannah, in Georgia, to furnish a good education to the poor, and train those who had talents and piety for the ministry. Whitefield, in his large-heartedness, had even dreamed that negroes might some day be educated

there. But soon after his death the trustees for the college purchased a large number of slaves to extend the rice and indigo plantations belonging to the college. Benezet, indignant at this perversion of the gift of a religious lady, wrote to the countess, pointing out the misery she was unwittingly causing in Africa by allowing the managers of her college in Georgia to give encouragement to the slave-trade. The answer from the countess was such as we would expect from her. She said that such measures for enriching the orphan-house would never have her sanction, and she would take care to put a stop to them.*

The yearly meetings in America had hitherto shrunk from the decisive step of casting out of their communion all who had property in slaves. But matters were gradually ripening toward this consummation. The number of Quakers who had slaves was daily growing less. Many were setting the noble example of liberating those whom they had. And emancipation was no easy matter. It was not only the loss of property—and some men's principal wealth consisted in slaves—but the hardship of complying with the requirements of the law in regard to manumission. The legislation of the States had been studiously framed to prevent the liberation of slaves by liberal-minded masters. In Pennsylvania, where the law was least rigid, the man who manumitted a slave was obliged to enter into a bond for the payment of £30, in case the slave became liable to the state for his maintenance. In New Jersey the owner was liable for all the consequences which might result from the misconduct of a liberated slave, and even for the misconduct of his posterity. In the more Southern States the conditions were so hard as to amount

* Clarkson's *Abolition of the Slave-Trade*, Vol. I., pp. 171-2.

to prohibition. The presence of a liberated slave was felt to have a bad effect upon all the slaves in the district; it created a feeling of restlessness amongst them; and the planters were resolved that there should be no negroes in America but those in bondage. Notwithstanding these difficulties, the Quakers were not deterred from doing what was right. They sacrificed their property, and risked the penalties of the law. There were examples of still nobler disinterestedness. One man, Warner Mifflin by name, with a generosity almost Quixotic, not only manumitted his slaves, but paid the wages which were due to them from the first day of their servitude, according to the award of arbiters mutually chosen.

Such was the state of matters when the yearly meeting of the Society for Pennsylvania and the Jerseys resolved to take the decisive step. The pear was ripe. In 1774 it was agreed that any member who took part in importing, buying or selling negroes, or keeping them in slavery beyond the term of servitude allowed in the case of white persons, should be disowned. Two years afterwards the good work of emancipation among the Quakers was completed by a resolution, that the owners of slaves who refused to execute proper instruments for manumitting them should be cast out of the Society.* Every Quaker must now part with his slaves, or part with his religious profession. The Friends in America, amidst innumerable difficulties, had at length reached the same point as the Friends in England, and declared that no slave-owner could be one of their Society. It was nobly done! These men, whose grandfathers many thought were fit only for bedlam as religious enthusiasts, had set such an example

* Clarkson's *Abolition of the Slave-Trade*, Vol. I., pp. 144-5.

of philanthropy, and of devotion to the principles of their faith, as the world has seldom seen.

Pennsylvania and Jersey had set the example, and it was soon followed by the other sections of the Society of Friends scattered over America. The yearly meetings of New England, New York, Maryland, Virginia, Georgia, and the Carolinas, entered similar resolutions in their minute-books, and slavery was everywhere cast out, like another Cain, with the brand of murder on its brow. There were still a few Quakers who had slaves, but these resolutions of their Society quickened the work of emancipation, and by 1780 there was not a single slave in the possession of an acknowledged Quaker. We may say, and that truly, that there is no other instance on record of religion having obtained so decisive a victory over selfishness. It is difficult to point to any church which has used its power for the attainment of an object so truly humane.

While the Friends in Pennsylvania and Jersey were framing their first decisive resolution for ejecting all slave-owners from their communion, the English colonies in America were in a state of violent agitation. The British government had claimed the power of taxing the colonists for imperial purposes, and had, in fact, imposed taxes on many articles imported into the colonies, but the descendants of the puritans, who had overthrown the English monarchy and brought the king to the block, declared that, seeing they had no share in the government, they would not submit to be taxed for its support. In 1775 war broke out between the colonies and the mother country, and raged with various success for eight years: but the Quakers had no liberty to use a carnal weapon, and therefore they stood aloof from the struggle. In 1783 the independence of the United States was fully acknowledged by Great Britain,

and the people of peace gladly saw their brothers sheathe their swords and resume the labours of the plough. When the new republic was proclaimed, it was based on the essential equality and natural liberty of all men; but the Quakers alone saw the applicability of this great truth to the slaves.





Chapter XXX.

THE Quakers had now washed their hands clean of the guilt of slavery. But the Quakers were a speck in Christendom, and every other church and sect took slave-dealers to their bosom, and freely administered to them the holiest rites of religion without a word of censure. To buy and sell human beings, and perpetrate upon them all unheard of horrors, was not thought deserving of the anathemas which were pronounced so freely upon those who could not believe all the clauses of the Athanasian creed. But there were symptoms of a moral awakening on this matter beyond the pale of the Society of Friends. Some enlightened men had raised their voices against the universal wrong, and the number of these protesters was increasing every day. Adam Smith and William Paley, in their respective moral systems, had declared slave-dealing and slave-owning to be a sin: Bishops Warburton and Porteous had denounced the system from the pulpit; Cowper had done the same in his boldest verse; and Granville Sharp had already begun the work of emancipation. The moral sense of the community was gradually being purged of the film which had for so long a period prevented it from knowing good and evil. Still the evil continued to gain strength every year, and to strike its roots deeper into the social system of the New World.

It was already becoming plain that it could not be removed without kingdoms being convulsed.

Having cleansed their own house the Quakers began to counsel others to do the like. They had long ago ceased to be zealous propagandists of their peculiar faith; they now became the earnest apostles of negro-emancipation. They did not call upon others to believe as they believed, but to do as they had done. They thus ceased to be sectarians, for their appeal was to the universal conscience of mankind. It was nobler work; and they exhibited the same courage, devotedness, and perseverance in performing it, which their grandfathers had exhibited in preaching the inward light and the sinless life. They were in many ways fitted for the work. The whole generation of Quakers then living had been educated in an abhorrence of slavery, for it was more than half a century since the Society had entered upon its minutes an energetic condemnation of the system. They, moreover, occupied a position from which they could assail it with advantage. Most of them belonged to the trading classes, and at that period these classes were rapidly rising into importance. Moreover, it was the trading classes who were chiefly implicated in the crime; and when the Quakers attacked it their conduct could not be imputed either to class jealousy or to indifference to the interests of trade. In all lawful ways they were as keen traders as any, and many of them had made rich by their enterprise.

In June 1783, a bill had been brought into the House of Commons to regulate the African trade, and the Quakers seized upon this occasion to bring their views before the legislature, by petitioning it to abolish the slave-trade entirely.

"Your petitioners," said they, "met in this, their annual assembly, having solemnly considered the state of the en-

slaved negroes, conceive themselves engaged, in religious duty, to lay the suffering situation of that unhappy people before you, as a subject loudly calling for the humane interposition of the legislature.

“Your petitioners regret that a nation professing the Christian faith should so far counteract the principles of humanity and justice, as by the cruel treatment of this oppressed race to fill their minds with prejudices against the mild and beneficent doctrine of the gospel.

“Under the countenance of the laws of this country many thousands of these our fellow-creatures, entitled to the natural rights of mankind, are held as personal property in cruel bondage; and your petitioners being informed that a bill for the regulation of the African trade is now before the house, containing a clause which restrains the officers of the African Company from exporting negroes, your petitioners, deeply affected with a consideration of the rapine, oppression, and bloodshed attending this traffic, humbly request that this restriction may be extended to all persons whomsoever, or that the house would grant such other relief in the premises as in its wisdom may seem meet.”

Such was the first petition for the abolition of slavery and the slave-trade, ever presented to the British House of Commons. Here, as elsewhere, the Quakers led the van. Sir Cecil Wray, on presenting the petition, expressed his respect for the Society of Friends, and said he hoped he would see the day when there would not be a slave in the British dominions. In the course of the debate Lord North said that the object which the petition had in view ought to recommend it to every humane heart, that it did credit to the most benevolent Society in the world; but that the session was too far advanced to take the subject into consideration; and, moreover, that the slave-trade, against

which the petition was so justly directed, had become, in a commercial point of view, necessary to almost every nation of Europe.* So it was then thought. To such a height, indeed, had the trade grown, that sagacious statesmen and calculating merchants firmly believed that if it were stopped, the commerce and the mercantile marine of Great Britain would be ruined, grass would grow on the streets of Liverpool and Bristol, and the wealthiest traffickers be reduced to beggary. Such being the state of feeling, the Quakers' petition was ordered to lie upon the table, notwithstanding the handsome things which were said about it. The fate of the Bridgewater petition, which was presented two years afterwards, was the same. "There did not appear," wrote the members for Bridgewater to their constituents, "the least disposition to pay any further attention to it. Everyone almost says that the abolition of the slave-trade must immediately throw the West Indian Islands into convulsions, and soon complete their utter ruin."†

The very year in which the Society of Friends presented their petition, a case was tried in which facts were brought to light which made a profound impression on the public mind. The underwriters of the slaver-ship *Zong* alleged that her captain and officers, during a voyage, had thrown overboard one hundred and thirty-two slaves alive into the sea. In the course of the trial it came out that the slaves on board the *Zong* were very sickly; that sixty had already died, and more were likely to follow; when the captain proposed to his mate to throw a number of them overboard, remarking, "that if they died a natural death the loss would fall upon the owners of the ship, but that if they were thrown into the sea it would fall upon the under-

* Clarkson's History of the Abolition of the Slave-Trade, Vol. I., pp. 119-20.

† Clarkson's Abolition of the Slave-Trade, Vol. I, p. 107.

writers." The diabolical plea was approved of, and a hundred and thirty-two of the most sickly slaves were selected as the victims. Fifty-four of these were immediately consigned to the waves, and forty-two more on the following day. Still the hecatomb was not complete, and the heart of the skipper, accustomed to such horrors, did not relent. Three days afterwards the remaining twenty-six were brought on deck to share the fate of their companions. Sixteen of these were laid hold of and swung overboard, when the remaining ten, with the spirit of heroes, escaped from their murderers by themselves leaping into the sea. So the Atlantic waves closed over these one hundred and thirty-two sickly negroes that the underwriters might, peradventure, pay their price to the owners of the ship; and yet no gallows was erected for the men who did the deed. But the heart of the nation was touched with pity when it thought of the scene on board that ship far out at sea.

The yearly meeting of the Society, in 1783, not only resolved to petition the legislature against the slave-trade, but referred the consideration of the whole matter to the "Meeting for Sufferings"—a committee first appointed when the Quakers were themselves in the furnace of affliction. This committee resolved to publish an address, entitled, "The case of our fellow-creatures, the oppressed Africans, respectfully recommended to the serious consideration of the legislature of Great Britain." Two thousand copies of this pamphlet were printed, and copies of it sent to the king and queen, to all the great officers of state, and to every member of both houses of parliament. Two years afterwards the same committee recommended the quarterly meetings to distribute a work on slavery by Benezet, entitled, "A Caution to Great Britain and her Colonies." The book was accordingly widely circulated among the clergy,

and justices of the peace, and also in several of the great public schools, as it was thought important to leaven the minds of the young with information on the subject.*

Not content with acting through their Society at its usual meetings, a number of Quakers resolved to form themselves into an association to promote the abolition of slavery. One of these was William Dillwyn, a pupil of Benezet, who had learned in his school at Philadelphia the iniquity of the slave system. So some seed always falls on good soil, and brings forth its fifty-fold. The first meeting of the association was held on the 7th of July 1783, when the fearful revelations regarding the ship *Zong* were still fresh in every mind; and, according to their minute, "they assembled to consider what steps they should take for the relief and liberation of the negro slaves in the West Indies, and for the discouragement of the slave-trade on the coast of Africa." They were wise enough to see that the first thing to be done was to enlighten the public mind, and so bring the force of a regenerated opinion to their help. The newspaper press was then rapidly rising into power, and they sought its aid. Before the close of the year they had secured a place in the columns of the *General Evening Post*, *Lloyd's Evening Post*, and the *Norwich, Bath, York, Bristol, Sherborn, Liverpool, Newcastle*, and other provincial papers. To these they sent original contributions, and such extracts, both in prose and verse, from esteemed authors, as they thought would interest and instruct the popular mind. In the following year they extended their operations by printing a treatise, entitled, "Thoughts on the Slavery of the Negroes," which they distributed at their own cost. Such, then, was the first association ever formed for the abolition of slavery, and every

* Clarkson's Abolition of the Slave-Trade, Vol. I., p. 122.

member of it was a Quaker. The broad-brims were still in the fore-front of the battle.

The news of this association having been formed, that it had already done some good work, and that William Dillwyn was an active member of it, had time to reach America to gladden an old faithful heart before it ceased to beat. The long career of Anthony Benezet was now drawing to a close. When the American war ceased, in 1783, the venerable man wrote a letter to Queen Charlotte, in the hope that he might interest her in the suppression of the slave-trade. "I hope," says he in his concluding sentence, "thou wilt kindly excuse the freedom used on this occasion by an ancient man, whose mind, for more than forty years past, has been much separated from the common intercourse of the world, and long painfully exercised in the consideration of the miseries under which so large a part of mankind, equally with us, the objects of redeeming love, are suffering the most unjust and grievous oppression." For the last two years of his life he had been principally occupied in superintending a school for negroes, which he had founded at Philadelphia, and to which it was discovered, after his death, that he had bequeathed his all—the hard savings of fifty years pedagogic toil. After a few days' illness, in the spring of 1784, he rested from his labours. Several thousand Philadelphian citizens followed his remains to the grave, and the procession was closed by a long train of negroes, who had been personally benefitted by his kindness and his toils. A good man was that day laid in the dust.

Up to this time the agitation for abolition had been carried on almost entirely by the Society of Friends. But now the lead was to be taken by others. In 1785 Dr. Peckhard, the vice-chancellor of the University of Oxford, prescribed, as the subject of a Latin prize essay, "Anne

liceat invitos in servitute dare?"* Thomas Clarkson competed for this prize and obtained it, and this circumstance was to alter the current of his life, prevent him becoming a priest of the Church of England, and make him an apostle of abolition. Rightly regarding the question as referring to African slavery, he had, while preparing his essay, purchased Benezet's "Historical Account of Guinea," to obtain information from it, and, from the moment he read it, his mind was haunted with visions of negro suffering, and with the conviction that he was bound to do what he could to bring the sore evil to an end.† Meditating much upon what a young David like him could do against the great Goliath, and with what weapons he could fight, he thought he might at least translate his prize-essay into English, and publish it. At this juncture he was fortunately thrown into the company of some Quakers, who encouraged his design; for, quick of hearing in matters of philanthropy, they had heard of the essay and were most anxious it should be published. Published it accordingly was by an eminent Quaker bookseller named James Phillips; and Clarkson, as much by the new associations he had now formed, as by the sentiments he had given to the world, was gradually led to devote his life to an agitation for the abolition of the slave-trade.

The traffic in negroes had by this time risen to an enormous height, and slave factories had been planted along the whole western coast of Africa, from Cape Verd to the equator, by the English, Dutch, French, and Portuguese traders. To these great droves of slaves were brought down from the interior by slatees, or native slave-merchants, and bartered for articles of European merchandise. Having thus changed hands, like so many head of cattle,

* "Is it right to devote persons to slavery against their will?"

† Clarkson's Abolition of the Slave-Trade, Vol. I., p. 207.

they were kept at the factory till a slaver appeared in the offing. They were then hurried on deck, thrust down into the hold, crowded and crammed there, like herrings in a barrel, to be carried across the Atlantic and sold into perpetual servitude. At the time I speak of, nearly one hundred thousand negroes were thus annually carried away from their native country, and consigned to bondage in the plantations of America. Of these, about 38,000 were taken in British vessels alone. Here was a sore evil under the sun.

But this was not the whole evil. When the abolitionists began to trace the traffic back to its first ramifications, they discovered that the supply of these hundred thousand negroes for exportation kept a large portion of the continent of Africa in a state of constant war. Chiefs made war upon one another merely for the purpose of making captives and selling them. One village made a sudden and unprovoked raid upon another, carried away one-half of its sleeping population, and disposed of them for a few yards of red cloth to the passing slatee. Reprisals were certain, and thus the whole country was a scene of bloody feuds.

The sufferings which were endured by the captives on their voyage across the Atlantic—"the horrors of the middle passage," as it was called—formed another terrible ingredient in this cup of anguish, which the Africans were called upon to drink. A comparatively small vessel would carry away five or six hundred negroes. The space between decks, where they were stowed, was sometimes not more than two and a-half feet. Chained together two and two, they were packed so close that they had scarcely room to sit, much less to stand. The stench became intolerable. No pandemonium which the human imagination has conceived could equal that which was constantly realised between the decks of the slave ship, as, with double-reefed

sails, she rode the storms of the Atlantic. Disease infallibly broke out in its most virulent forms, and, not unfrequently, of five hundred miserable human beings shipped, two hundred had died in agony, and been consigned to the deep before the vessel reached its port. On an average, twelve and a-half per cent. died on the passage; four and a-half per cent. while the ship lay in the harbour, and before its sickly cargo could be sold; and one-third more before they were seasoned; so that out of every hundred healthy negroes carried away from Africa, not more than fifty lived to be useful labourers in America.

Such was the state of matters when Clarkson resolved to organise an association for the abolition of this diabolical trade. He and some like-minded friends accordingly met, formed themselves into an association, and appointed a committee to carry out their views. At the head of the committee the venerable Granville Sharp was placed, and he well deserved the honour. Of the eleven others, nine were Quakers, for the Friends were quite ready to co-operate with men of a different creed and a different church in so holy a cause. Clarkson instantly began to collect evidence in regard to the traffic, and wherever he went he received the hearty co-operation of the members of the Society of Friends. While others were, in general, ignorant or indifferent, if not hostile, they, to a man, sympathised with him, and were ready to give him a helping hand; for they and their fathers before them had been trained in a hatred of slavery in all its forms. It was in 1787 that Clarkson began his labours, under the auspices of the association he had formed, and in little more than a year the cause had arrested the attention of leading men both in France and Germany; it had been brought under the notice of the British Government, and, less or more, of the whole British people. Of the success of the association

Clarkson himself remarks—"No better proof could be offered, than that even bishops condescended to address an obscure committee, consisting principally of Quakers, and that churchmen and dissenters forgot their difference of religious opinion, and joined their hands, all over the kingdom, in its support."*

A leading man in parliament was needed, for parliament only could put down the cruel trade; and William Wilberforce was early enlisted in the cause. So early as 1787 he solemnly resolved to make the abolition of the slave-trade one of the great objects of his life; and in that same year he brought the matter before parliament, and obtained the appointment of a committee to collect evidence. For the next twenty years the war raged with little intermission; for it required a conflict of twenty years to tear down a system so gigantic, and so firmly based on human selfishness. But in 1807 a bill was carried through both houses of parliament declaring the traffic illegal, and punishable by fine and forfeiture. Four years afterwards an act was carried by Lord Brougham, making it felony, and punishable by transportation for fourteen years. But even this was found to be insufficient to check a trade of which the profits were so enormous, and, accordingly, in 1824, a bill was passed declaring it to be piracy, and its punishment death. Other countries followed the noble example which Britain had set.

But though the slave-trade was thus declared to be piracy by the British government, slavery still existed in the British possessions—in Jamaica, in Antigua, in Barbadoes, and the other West Indian Islands subject to the British sway. But the agitation against it now acquired additional strength from the whole force of public opinion

* Clarkson's Abolition of the Slave-Trade, Vol. I., p. 572.

being directed against it alone. The Quakers were still in the front of the movement—ever ready with their purse, or influence, or eloquence, to aid the cause to which their Society was so deeply pledged. In 1833 righteousness prevailed, and slavery was abolished in all the British possessions; and, after an apprenticeship of four years, every slave within the reach of English law was free. Thus had the truth, which was first spoken in the meetings of the Friends, under an illumination truly divine, grown and still grown, till it was able to grapple with the most gigantic evil of the day and overthrow it.

But after all, though the victory appeared great, how little was done. In the course of the contest slavery had indeed been driven from the Northern States of the American Union. It had long ago disappeared from New England and Pennsylvania, where it would undoubtedly have taken root had not the Quakers lifted up their voice against it. It was now driven from all the British possessions, and twenty millions cheerfully paid as the ransom of the slaves who were set free. But, speaking of Christendom alone, it still existed in the Southern States of America, in Cuba, in Brazil, and in other countries besides. Nor had the slave-trade been put down, though it had been declared piratical by almost every civilised country in the world, and though a line of British cruisers were constantly maintained on the African coast to capture vessels engaged in it. On the contrary, it became more prosperous and more cruel than ever. About twenty years ago it was calculated by Sir T. Fowell Buxton that at least one hundred and fifty thousand negroes were annually carried to Brazil, Cuba, and other slave-holding countries, which was fifty thousand more than were ever known to have been taken before Clarkson and Wilberforce began their labours. Moreover, the horrors of the middle passage were doubled by the

trade being made contraband. Larger numbers were stowed into smaller vessels, the death-rate was fearfully increased by the additional torment endured; and sometimes, when a slaver was chased, the officers on board the cruiser in pursuit could see through their glasses hundreds of negroes remorselessly pitched into the sea in their irons to lighten the ship. Thus it would seem that all that had hitherto been done to destroy the great evil had, in some respects, only aggravated it.

But righteousness must in the end prevail, and there is reason to think that the day of doom for slavery, in Christendom at least, is now drawing nigh. The terrific civil war through which the United States have passed, has resulted in the emancipation of every slave on North American soil. The negro bondsman has been redeemed with the blood of hundreds of thousands untimely slain; and the infection of freedom will spread. When the hired labourer has taken the place of the "chattel" in the cotton fields and sugar plantations of Carolina and New Orleans, it will be difficult to maintain slavery in Cuba and Brazil; the whole system will topple to its fall; and when slaves are no longer sought for on shore, slavers will cease to sail the sea. Thus it appears to have been ordained, that the men of war are to finish the work begun by the men of peace.

And so it generally happens. It is humiliating to think how little is effected by argument—how much by violence. Notwithstanding the preaching of the Quakers, it is probable that slavery would have existed in America for centuries to come had not the civil war broken out; and, notwithstanding the preaching of the apostles, it is probable that Paganism might have been found in many parts of Europe at the present day had it not been for the edicts of Constantine and the sword of Charlemagne.



Chapter XXX.

HAVING followed the Quakers thus far in their efforts to emancipate the slave, we must retrace our steps, and see what other work they had on hand during the eighteenth century.

The benevolent legislation of William had left them only one grievance, and that was the payment of church rates and tithes. Now the Quakers believed that one of the great ends for which they had become a peculiar people was that they might bear testimony against a hireling ministry. They would rather die than pay the vicar his dues. For this reason hundreds of them had been cast into prison, and lain there for years, and hundreds more had been ruined by the forcible seizure and sale of their goods. Still they were as inflexible as ever; and there was no probability of their conscientious stubbornness ever being subdued. It was hardly to be expected that the whole property of the kingdom should be disturbed, and the church beggared, on account of the scruples of a small sect of dissenters; but the enormous expenses which were incurred under the existing state of the law to recover a few shillings or a few pence, and the long imprisonment which some Quakers had to endure because they could not yield up their convictions, gave to a matter of justice, in some instances, an appearance of persecution, and made many desire that some

remedy should be found. The legislature, therefore, extended what was called the 40s. Act to £10, in cases of Quakers' tithe. It was now law that all Quakers' tithes and other church rates, amounting to not more than £10, might be determined in a summary manner by two justices of the peace, and levied by their warrant.

It was thought this change in the law would benefit both parties in this unhappy contest—the clergy would recover their dues more easily, and the recusant Quakers would not be ruined by expensive suits, or left in prison till they died. And so it did to a very great extent, and the Quakers were thankful that the fingers of the law could now more dexterously take hold of their goods. But the law was only permissive. The act contained no clause to prevent the clergy from applying to the old and ruinous prosecutions in the exchequer and ecclesiastical courts; and, unhappily, some of them, hating the Quakers as heretics, and irritated at their refusal to acknowledge the sacred obligation of tithes, resorted to the ancient expedients for enforcing payment.

In 1736 the Quakers laid a paper before parliament, in which they stated that, in the course of twenty years, eleven hundred of them had been prosecuted before the exchequer and ecclesiastical courts; that of these three hundred had been committed to prison, and that several of them had died there. They, moreover, stated that the costs were so enormous that in three cases where the sums sued for amounted to £15, they reached up to £800. The grievance was so obvious that a bill was introduced into the House of Commons to redress it. The Quakers were quite willing that their goods should be taken to pay their church-rates, only they were anxious that the thing should be done without an expence which was absolutely ruinous. Unfortunately the church took alarm, and a war of pamph-

lets was begun. The clergy challenged the production of cases of oppression, and the Quakers produced enough to awaken profound pity for them. They told of one poor widow and her son who were imprisoned for eleven months for tithe-wool rated at a penny. They told of another man who lay seven years in prison for a demand of £1, 19s. 6d. They narrated the case of another who was prosecuted for fourpence, as Easter offerings, and the charges of the prosecution amounted to £80. Unable or unwilling to pay this, he was excommunicated, and lay for nineteen months in Bedford jail, when he was set at liberty by an act of grace. In another instance, for a demand of eight shillings, £23, 16s. was wrung out of the unhappy recusant. In short, 1,180 persons had been prosecuted; 302 of these had been sent to prison; nine had died while in durance; the sums sued for were frequently only a few shillings or even pence; yea, Quakers had been excommunicated and imprisoned for a demand of a farthing; and, in many instances, the expenses of the prosecution had been more than fifty times the amount of the original sum demanded.*

With such facts to back it, the bill passed the House of Commons; but it was opposed in the upper house by the whole influence of the episcopal bench, and cast out, on the second reading, by a majority of fifty-four to thirty-five. So the Quakers were left for another century to pay very smartly for their scruples; but the exposure which had been made, and the sympathy which had been awakened, did much to prevent such cases of wanton oppression as had occurred occurring again. In 1836 the well-known act was passed for the commutation of all tithes in England and Wales into a tithe rent-charge. This act, by abolishing the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts, and appointing a

* Gough's History of the Quakers, Vol. IV.

direct and cheap method of recovering all ecclesiastical demands, relieved the Friends from many of their old hardships. Still, they continue to give testimony against a hireling ministry, and about £3,700 is annually taken from them by distraint.*

But again we must retrace our steps. Toward the end of 1745, when England was recovering from its panic, caused by the inroad of Prince Charles and his Highlanders, a young Quakeress, named Risdale, of the humble condition of a servant, felt herself called upon to give a public testimony in church. Such exhibitions were very common in the days of Fox; but, by the strong arm of the law, they had been entirely put down. It is probable this enthusiastic serving woman had been reading the lives of some of the ancient worthies, and fancied she was commissioned to do like them, and play the part of a prophetess. She, accordingly, persuaded her mistress and some other Friends to accompany her to the steeple-house, and, when the sermon was ended, she stood up and said—"Neighbours, I am sent with a message from the high priest of our profession to desire you to turn the eye of your mind inward and examine yourselves, and to come to true repentance and amendment of life." Then turning to the officiating clergyman, she said—"You must come down from your high place, and bow at the footstool of Christ, before you can teach the people the way to the kingdom of heaven." The astonished parson called to the churchwarden to put the intruder out, but the churchwarden was as one amazed, and did nothing; whereupon the parson himself descended from the pulpit, and in wrath thrust her to the door. But this was not all. The poor woman was fined £20 for her

* Extracts from the Minutes and Epistles of the Yearly Meeting. 1861. Extracts from the Minutes and Proceedings of the Yearly Meeting of Friends, held in London, 1866.

misdemeanour; and, not being able to pay it, was thrust into jail.*

The Quakers who had assisted in laying the foundations of Quakerism were now almost all gone. In 1713, Thomas Ellwood, the friend of Milton, had gone to his rest. In 1723, George Whitehead—a man famous in his day—had died; and the next year Richard Claridge, a name well known in Quaker literature, had followed him to the grave. Of the old worthies who still lived were Benjamin Bangs, James Dickenson, Thomas Story, John Fothergill, Evan Bevan, and Samuel Crisp; but, by the middle of the century, all these too had died. They had preserved, with little diminution, the zeal of the founders of their sect. Twelve times did Dickenson visit Ireland; once he travelled over Holland and Germany; and thrice he crossed the ocean and did the work of an evangelist in America. On one of his voyages he was pursued by the French, but he fasted and prayed, and a thick mist, as we are told, came down and wrapped up the ship in which he sailed, so that she escaped from the hand of the spoiler.† Three times also did Fothergill visit the New World, and, indeed, every one of the men I have mentioned; and there were women as worthy of mention—were like St. Paul—“In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils by their own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils among false brethren.”

In 1748, the war which for nine years had been devastating Europe was brought to a close by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle; and the Quakers, who were always anxious to speak a word in season, thought this a favourable opportunity to impress upon the assembled plenipotentiaries the blessings of peace. They therefore resolved to present to each of them a copy of Barclay's Apology, in his own

* Gough's History, Vol. IV., pp. 339-40.

† Ruty's History of the Quakers in Ireland.

tongue, together with a special presentation epistle. A Dutch Quaker, Jan Vander Werf, of Amsterdam, was commissioned to wait upon the negotiators with the gift. They all received it courteously but the French, who, when they learned that the Apology related to religion, said they had no need of such books.*

In 1751 the parliament adopted the Gregorian Calendar enacting that henceforward the year should begin on the 1st of January instead of the 25th of March, and that eleven days should be struck out of the following September. The Society resolved to accept the new almanac, for it would have been folly to have made war against the sun in its circuit through the heavens, but they seized upon the opportunity to impress upon Friends the sin of calling the months and days by the names of heathen gods. They, moreover, had now a new argument against the common nomenclature; for, to speak henceforward of September, October, November, or December was to utter a falsehood, as these were to be no longer the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth, but the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth months of the year. In spite, however, of the logic and arithmetic of the Quakers, the people persist in calling the months by their old names, without imagining they tell a lie or do honour to the Pagan deities.

Though the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle gave peace to Europe, it did not remove the ancient enmity of the English and French, and their animosity had now begun to break out in America. The Indians were making incursions on the English colonists along the Delaware, and the French were accused of exciting them to their bloody work. Under the alarm which was created a militia law was passed. Now the Quakers were still numerous in Pennsylvania,

* Gough's History, Vol. IV., pp. 362-5.

and had a considerable share in its government. But the Quakers deemed it wrong even to defend themselves. If the Indians insisted on scalping them, it was their duty to submit with the best grace they could. They would not, therefore, take arms; nor would they pay any war taxes; nor would they give any countenance to those who did. The rest of the colonists did not quite agree with these pacific principles, and, having English blood in their veins, they were not disposed to sit still while red savages burned their houses, and ravaged their wives, and tomahawked themselves. And their hot anger blazed out against the men who said that this should be done; and they declared that such men should have no place in the legislature, and ought to be compelled to do their duty for the defence of the state.

This feeling reached its height in 1756, when the bodies of three colonists, who had been murdered by the Indians, were brought into Philadelphia in a waggon and exposed to the people to excite their indignation. Still the Quakers held fast by their principles; but they generously raised subscriptions for those who had suffered, and used their ancient influence with the tribes to bring about peace. After a time a treaty was made, but animosities had been kindled which were not easily allayed, and along the frontier instances of outrage continued to occur.*

While these things were occurring in the back woods of America, a cause had arisen in the law-courts of England which threatened to bring the Quakers to grief. A Quakeress had succeeded to considerable property, and the abundance of her good things had generated a lightness of mind inconsistent with the gravity of the sect to which she belonged. She was remonstrated with by the elders and

* Gough's History, Vol. IV. Clarkson's Life of William Penn.

overseers; but it was of no avail, she was as giddy and gay as ever. In these circumstances the Friends thought it necessary to bear what they called "a testimony of their disunity with her sentiments and conduct." This testimony was read by the clerk at the close of one of their meetings, and so the gay Quakeress was cast out of the Society as a reprobate. Full of wrath at this public profanation of her name, the lady preferred an indictment for a libel against the clerk; the matter went to trial, and the jury found the clerk guilty as accused. The Friends were everywhere filled with alarm at the result, for they clearly saw that if this were the law their discipline was at an end. They could not disown an offending brother or sister without being mulcted in damages. They, therefore, moved the Court of King's Bench for a new trial, which was granted; but the irate lady, now somewhat appeased, and, perhaps, fearful of the result of a second trial, intimated to the Friends that if they did not trouble her, she would not trouble them any more. So the matter ended, and the Society had peace.*

Among the most noted Quaker preachers about the middle of the century were Samuel Bownas, Mungo Bewley, John Dobbs, George Rooke, and Samuel Fothergill. On one occasion when Samuel Bownas was praying in the market-place of Jedburgh the constable came and laid hold of him; but, as he was being led along the street toward the gaol, he continued to pray aloud as if nothing had happened, to the wonder of many.† Among the more faithful women were Catherine Peyton and Mary Peisley, who both visited America on a religious mission. But, in some respects, the most eminent of all was John Gough, the author of the "History of the People called Quakers." In four large

* Gough's History, Vol. IV., pp. 534-38.

† Ibid, pp. 397-8.

volumes he has told the story of his sect with sufficient candour, but his minuteness is tedious to most readers, who feel that he drags from their obscurity too many persons who were simply born to die and be forgotten. But there may be a celebrity in a sect which is unknown to the world. In America there were the more celebrated Quakers, Woolman and Benezet; but I have already referred to their labours in connection with the abolition of the slave-trade and slavery.

During the eighteenth century the Quakers had been prosperous as individuals, but, as a sect, they had not increased in numbers. When they first sprung up they multiplied with amazing rapidity, but their recruits came principally from the lower orders of the people. Their powers of propagation had ceased, but a tide of general prosperity had set in upon them, and those, whose fathers had joined the Society as poor weavers or ploughmen, were now opulent tradesmen. So successful in trade had the Quakers been that they began to be reproached for worldly-mindedness. They follow riches, it was bitterly said of them, "with a step as steady as time, and with an appetite as keen as death." Without imputing to the Quakers more avarice than falls to the lot of ordinary men, it is easy to understand why they should devote themselves to business with more than usual energy, and make rich with more than average rapidity. Their asceticism excluded them from every other source of excitement but the pursuit of wealth, which is, perhaps, the most exciting of all. All previous ascetics had denied themselves the pleasure. The Indian Fakeer went naked and lived on charity. The Egyptian anchorite shut himself up in a cave, or perched himself on a pillar, and despised self. The monk took a vow of voluntary poverty. But the Quaker, cut off from all the ordinary amusements and enjoyments of life, was

left free to make money; and he did it with all his might. No ball-room or theatre could divide the thoughts of the young Quaker, or allure him from his counting-house and his ledger. Isolated from other sources of enjoyment, he was left to pursue with singleness of purpose the gains of merchandise. The same accommodating asceticism which almost necessarily led the Quaker to make money, compelled him to keep it. Though he was rich, he could not indulge in luxury or ostentation. He could not build himself a splendid mansion, or start a high-paced equipage, or regale his friends with the rarest vintages, or send his wife to make calls arrayed in satin. The only outlet for his wealth was his benevolence, and all men are not naturally benevolent, and even Quakerism will not always make them so. While, therefore, other men were prodigally spending their money at routs, and race-courses, and balls, the Quakers were religiously hoarding it, and, as a matter of necessity, they were often first in the race for wealth. This money-making spirit, apparently so opposed to asceticism, led some to apply to them the famous couplet of Butler—

“Compound for sins they were inclined to,
By damning those they had no mind to.”

But it must be confessed, I think, the censure was unjust, and that, as their money-making was a result of their religious self-denial, there was nothing unworthy in it. It must be acknowledged that the rules laid down by the Society for the regulation of trade all “lean to virtue’s side;” that many members of the body have made, in matters of merchandise, great sacrifices for conscience-sake; and that others have given the highest examples of disinterested benevolence.

But before this time the Friends had been accused not only of greed, but of cunning. Pope had penned the line—

“The Quaker sly, the Presbyterian sour;”

and pointed poetry is too frequently received as axiomatic truth. But, in reality, there does not appear any more ground for the charge of Quaker-cunning than of presbyterian-acerbity. The whole Quaker-discipline tended to make the members of the Society still in their manners, and wary in their words, and this might be mistaken for slyness, though it is very far removed from it. It is certain there is nothing in the peculiar principles of the Society to encourage cunning, unless in so far as religious pretensions in a body have a tendency to encourage hypocrisy in its members, and hypocrisy and cunning are nearly allied. No doubt there have been sly Quakers, and the sin of the individual is too often unjustly charged upon the sect to which he belongs. But, I think, we may safely conclude that there is not more cunning in the Society of Friends than in any other religious community. I think it must even be confessed that the Quakers have striven more than most to keep their consciences "tender," and conscientiousness is destructive of cunning.

The Quakers were now more distinguishable from the general community by their dress than they originally were. At the first they dressed simply like the more sober portion of the community; but no peculiar cut of garment was authoritatively prescribed, and Fox's leathern breeches were wisely eschewed by his followers. They declined, however, to change their garb with the change of fashion, as they thought this also was vanity, and, therefore, they soon became, in outward appearance, a peculiar people. A Quaker or Quakeress could at all times be easily recognised on the street. Their dress was always of some dingy colour—drab, grey, or snuff-brown. The men wore plain, round hats with broad brims, and, in some cases, with stays and loops; and plain-breasted coats. The women generally wore black hoods, close-fitting caps, stuff gowns, and green

aprons. No jewellery was tolerated, nor lace (so dear to the female heart), nor plaiting of the hair, nor embroidery; and if any wanton Quakeress had indulged in these, she would at once have been exposed to the discipline of the Society. But the Society was not able altogether to resist the encroachments of fashion and the tendency to change. The younger members of the Society had always some anxiety to make themselves smarter than their elders, and even to conform themselves to the ways of the world. Hence there arose a distinction between those who were called "plain" or "consistent" Quakers, and those who were considered not quite so. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the black hoods and green aprons had, in a great measure, been laid aside; but still the distinction in dress between the Friends and the outside world was clear and well marked. And perhaps there was some advantage in this, as wherever a Quaker went he was at once recognised, and allowance made for his peculiar principles and practices. The clergy well know how their clerical garments often save them from being exposed to unpleasant encounters. "Friend George," said a Quaker to Whitefield, "if thou wilt not quarrel with me about my hat, I will not quarrel with thee about thy gown." Let us not quarrel with either the one or the other.

Though the Friends had greatly distinguished themselves during the whole of the eighteenth century by their benevolent exertions to abolish the slave trade, it would appear that they acted from philanthropy as much as from religion. The religious spirit had declined amongst them, and they were less or more affected by the latitudinarian temper of the age.* They cannot boast of many men at this period

* See Journal of John Griffith. Traces of this may also be found in the early life of Mrs. Fry and Joseph J. Gurney, and the glimpses we get there of society and conversation in their father's house.

eminent for their genius or piety. The latter half of the century, however, witnessed the conscientious worth and respectable abilities of Joseph Gurney Bevan, who was one of the greatest luminaries of the sect at this time. Born a Quaker, he had while a youth, in spite of his birth, lively spirits and an inclination to wit and mirth, but this he was soon taught to suppress as inconsistent with the seriousness of life. He soon became clothed with the Quaker spirit. Bred as an apothecary and chemist, he retired from trade without having increased his wealth, because conscience was continually standing in the way of interest. He could not furnish ships of war with drugs; he could not allow any one to take an oath for him to obtain the usual drawbacks; he could not prosecute for debts contracted abroad. William Allan, of whom we shall afterwards hear something, had previously entered his establishment, and now succeeded to his business.

Bevan's Journal, which, unlike most journals, seems to be an honest one, allows us to look in as through a window at a pious Quaker's mind:—

“1791. 9 mo. 14. Disturbed by hearing of the death of a man by boxing, on account of a fear that I saw the tumult in the morning, and was unwilling to interfere.

“15. Learned the man was not killed; saw him, to my great relief.

“18. Morning meeting, roving thought; afternoon, some of it appeared like rest to the mind.

“28. Condemned myself in the evening for recurring to a loose passage, for proof of the Latinity of what I had written on a sacred subject.

“10 mo. 6. Let temper rise in the morning, which occasioned repentance.

“14. A gleam of tenderness in the evening, on considering the situation of a poor family.

“ 16. Quickened in the street, at a constable’s overturning a poor woman’s basket of fruit, which occasioned in my mind something like an intercession for her; not only that she might be cared for as poor, but brought to saving knowledge.

“ 11 mo. 17. Much exercised, with some remission.

“ 12 mo. 7. In the afternoon attended the close of poor Hannah Birkbeck, whereat I apprehended my mind bent more to affection than to grace.

“ 1792. 5 mo. 26. The joint meeting of the Yearly Meetings’ Committee, and Meeting for Sufferings, closed with sweetness.” *

The life of Bevan extended into the nineteenth century, and he was the author of several works of considerable merit; the chief of which are a “Life of Isaac Penington,” and a “Life of the Apostle Paul.” He was justly mourned in his death as a good man.

The early life and labours of Thomas Shillitoe also belong to the eighteenth century, though they extended well into the nineteenth. Born in London in 1754, young Shillitoe was educated in the Church of England, but when he was little more than twenty years of age he forsook the faith of his fathers and joined the Quakers. Through the interest of a Quaker lady, he was now taken from behind the counter in a grocer’s shop, and placed in an eminent Quaker banking establishment in the city. But the raw proselyte soon discovered that his fellow-clerks, notwithstanding their demure looks while at the desk, were as fond of a frolic in the evening as any other young fellows about the town. He was shocked at this, and resolved to leave the bank and learn shoemaking, that he might be able, while he sat solitarily upon his stool, to commune with

* See Extracts from the Letters and other writings of the late Joseph Gurney Bevan, preceded by a short Memoir of his Life. London, 1821.

himself, and, perhaps, think himself like Fox, who had also started life as a cobbler. Through time he learned his craft, and became a master in it, and, being patronized by his sect, began to accumulate money. But so soon as he found himself worth a hundred pounds a year independently of his trade, he determined to give up his shop-keeping that he might devote himself entirely to missionary work. And a most energetic missionary he became, performing most of his journeys through England and Ireland on foot, with his coat slung over his arm in hot weather, and preaching with a stentorian voice and great earnestness wherever he came. He was one of the first pioneers of the temperance cause, being not only a total abstainer and vegetarian himself, but a great enemy of drinking. He made a regular raid upon the public-houses of Ireland, entering them at all hours, and remonstrating with their landlords and their drunken guests. Though entirely ignorant of all the continental languages, he twice made a continental tour, and reached as far as St. Petersburg, where he had an interview with the Czar. To America also he went, as we shall learn at a subsequent part of our history. Like other Quakers, his great ambition was to address crowned heads. In 1793 he managed to attract the notice of George III. in the stable-yard at Windsor, and for twenty minutes together he addressed him, while the monarch stood and respectfully listened. In 1813 he presented a written address to the Prince Regent at Brighton, setting his sins before his face; and eleven years afterwards he obtained a short interview with him in Windsor Park, when he had now come to the throne. Good Quakers tell that the first address had evidently touched the prince's conscience, as, after receiving it, he countermanded a great banquet which had been arranged for the following day; and, on his death-bed, was heard to mutter, "Oh! that Quaker! that Quaker!"

Thomas Shillitoe was a dapper little man, with a somewhat remarkable head and face—a prominent brow, deep set eyes, shaded by shaggy eye-brows, a hooked nose, and a strong under jaw, which bespoke determination. His nervous temperament was dangerously morbid. He heard voices speaking to his inward sense. For weeks together he fancied himself a tea-pot, and was in dread when people came near him lest they should break him. In another fit of hypochondria he would run across London Bridge, lest it should break down under his weight. His imagination was so impressed by a shocking murder which had been committed, that he concealed himself for weeks lest he should be taken for the murderer. The sight of a mouse would make him take to his bed. He often went about “frightened for fear of being frightened,” to use his own description of his own sad state; and yet this man, in other circumstances, could be as dauntless as a hero. It is with such men our asylums are filled, and it is also out of such men that some of our greatest geniuses and benefactors have been formed. A single hairsbreadth to the one side or the other makes all the difference.*

Another eminent Quaker who flourished toward the close of this century was Henry Tuke, whose “Principles of Religion as professed by the Society of Christians usually called Quakers,” is highly esteemed by his sect. It is written in a simple style, and urges the orthodox arguments for the orthodox doctrines. Altogether the century had not been fruitful of great Quakers, though it had seen the commencement of great labours. But there were now growing up in the Society, though as yet unknown, men who were to play a more prominent part in the world, and revive the apostolic zeal of the first days.

* Thomas Shillitoe, the Quaker Missionary and Temperance Pioneer, by William Tallack. 1867.



Chapter XXV.

THE latter part of the eighteenth century gave birth to several individuals who were destined to act a great part in the Society of Friends, and even to form its history during the century following.

The first of these who saw the light was William Allan. He was born on the 29th of August, 1770, and was a Quaker from his birth, as both his father and mother, Job and Margaret Allan, were members of the Society of Friends. He accordingly acquired, from the atmosphere in which he grew up, the ways of speaking and thinking prevalent in the Society; but it is evident he was naturally of a serious turn of mind. When a lad he took a profound interest in the battle of giants going on in the House of Commons in regard to slavery; and as he listened to the brilliant orations of Pitt, Fox, and Wilberforce, he tells us, he could scarcely help feeling that these men belonged to an order of beings superior to himself. His father, Job, was a Spital-fields silk manufacturer, and was anxious that he should succeed him in the business, but his inclinations were all toward chemistry; and this led him to enter the chemical establishment of Joseph Gurney Bevan, of whom we have already heard something. He soon reached to eminence in this walk of science; gave lectures at Guy's Hospital; made the acquaintance of Sir Humphrey Davy, Sir Joseph Banks,

Dr. Babington, and other men of like celebrity; and, in 1807, was unanimously elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. *

Allan's scientific pursuits, and distinguished associates, neither lessened his devotion to his religious Society, nor damped the benevolent instincts of his heart. In Spital-fields and its neighbourhood, in 1797, some thousands of industrious families were reduced to great destitution from the failure of their branch of trade, and the enormous price of provisions consequent on the European war then raging. William Allan, and some of his Quaker friends, holding that a supply of nutritious food was of the first consequence, resolved to open a soup-kitchen, where the starving operatives, without being pauperised, might receive a quart of rich soup for a penny. The experiment succeeded beyond expectation—three thousand quarts were distributed daily, and a mode of charity introduced which has often since been resorted to in pinching times with the greatest advantage. †

A little later than this the efforts of Joseph Lancaster to introduce education among the neglected poor, began to attract attention. This celebrated Quaker commenced his work in a shed on his father's premises; but, even there, he was visited by the Duke of Bedford, Lord Somerville, and other benevolent men, and by their liberality he obtained a building, with rooms capable of accommodating 1,000 scholars. Here the enthusiastic Quaker had gathered together a crowd of children from the streets and from the haunts of poverty, ignorance, and crime, and was training them to habits of subordination and usefulness, as well as giving them a sound education. But though Lancaster was favoured with both royal and ducal patronage, and honoured by frequent interviews with the king, he was

* *Life of William Allan*, Vol. I. † *Ibid*, pp. 33-4.

soon involved in great pecuniary embarrassments. In truth, a good deal of opposition had already been raised by his undertaking, for though the Bible was read and taught in his schools, he refused to give admission to the creeds or catechisms of any particular church, and this excited sectarian jealousy and alarm. Then, as now, men could not be got to unite in a measure for education, apart from their own Articles of Faith.

In 1808, Lancaster, in his extremity, resigned his affairs into the hands of trustees, who undertook to carry on and extend the system of education which he had commenced.

A Quaker named Joseph Fox, a dentist in Lombard Street, with a benevolence and courage rarely equalled, sold out funded property of his own to the amount of £2,000, to meet the most importunate of Lancaster's creditors, against whom writs were already out; and made himself responsible for £4,000 more. Another Quaker, named William Corston, in order that this arrangement might be carried out, accepted of bills drawn upon him by Fox for nearly £4,000; and so Lancaster was saved from bankruptcy, and his school-system from becoming an utter wreck.* After this, who shall say that the Quaker heart could not devise liberal things? William Allan was placed on the committee of six appointed to superintend the working of the plan, and he devoted himself to it with all his heart. It was feared that difficulties might arise, for Lancaster, with all his zeal for good, was a somewhat eccentric and rather irritable man; but by the law of kindness everything was made to go smoothly, for a time at least, and the benefits of his educational system were soon extended far and wide. I think it must be confessed that the Friends had a wonderful instinct for finding out useful

* Life of William Allan, Vol. I., pp. 96-7.

work. It almost deserved to be called a divine illumination,

Sir Samuel Romilly had by this time begun his labours for the reformation of our criminal code; and, in 1808, Allan was present at the formation of a Society, composed chiefly of Quakers, to assist him in his much-needed work. It was called—"A Society for diffusing information on the subject of punishment by death."* It is difficult now to believe that at that time a man might be hanged for stealing property amounting to a few shillings.

In 1810 Allan was made clerk of the Committee of Sufferings, which is the main-spring of the whole Quaker Society; and, in the following year, his monthly meeting appointed him one of their overseers. In reading his diary at this period, his life appears to have been an incessant whirl of work. He had his extensive business to attend to; but it did not prevent him either from prosecuting his scientific researches, or engaging in philanthropic schemes. At one hour we find him engaged in burning diamonds, or fusing platina; then he hurries to a meeting of the Lancaster schools, or of the slavery abolition committee; or he keeps an engagement with Henry Brougham and William Wilberforce. At another time he is preparing a paper to be read before the Royal Society; at another he is attending the monthly or yearly meetings of his religious Society, and taking an active part in their business. As if the work he had already on hand were not enough, he about this time entered into Robert Owen's speculation to buy the cotton mills at New Lanark, as Dale's philanthropic plans regarding the workmen and their families were to be carried out there; and every philanthropic project had a peculiar fascination for him. His very correspondence with all kinds of persons, from royal dukes down to run-away negroes,

* *Life of William Allan*, Vol. I., p. 104.

must have seriously occupied his time. He was never idle; always active, always in earnest. He was a man who gathered up the fragments of time, so that nothing was lost. But we must leave him here, in the midst of his usefulness, and retrace our steps to find a companion for him in some of his future work.

In the year 1773 there was born in the city of Limoges, in France, a second son to Gabriel Marc Antoine De Grellet, and his wife, Susanne de Senamaud. The boy, thus nobly born, was named Etienne, and was trained in the faith of the Church of Rome. But even when under its authority, and in early youth, he had "religious openings," and even visions. On one occasion, he says, "I thought I saw a large company of persons, or rather purified spirits, on one of those floating vessels which they have at Lyons, on the Rhone, occupied by washerwomen. They were washing linen. I wondered to see what beating and pounding there was upon it, but how beautifully white it came out of their hands. I was told that I could not enter God's kingdom until I underwent such an operation—that unless I was thus washed and made white I could have no part in the dear Son of God." In 1789 the French revolution broke out, and soon afterwards the nobility began to emigrate. Young Etienne and his brother fled to Coblenz to join the allies, and were admitted into the king's horse-guards, which consisted almost entirely of the members of the nobility. Both brothers were taken prisoners, and ordered to be shot; but they managed to escape to Holland, and from Holland they sailed to Demerara, and, after a short stay there, proceeded to New York. For some years past young Grellet, like other young Frenchmen, had been a disciple of Voltaire, but he was now favoured with a second vision. "One evening," he says, "as I was walking in the fields alone, my mind being under no kind of religious concern, nor in the least

excited by anything I had heard or thought of, I was suddenly arrested by what seemed to me an awful voice, proclaiming the words—Eternity! Eternity! Eternity! It reached my very soul—my whole man shook—it brought me, like Saul, to the ground.” This proved the turning-point in his history. He happened to have beside him William Penn’s Works, and began to read his “No Cross, no Crown,” with the help of a dictionary, and this again led him to think of going to a Quaker meeting to seek peace for his now troubled soul. As wave follows wave, he tells us, so were his exercises. At length in an inward, silent frame of mind, seeking for the divine presence, he was favoured to find within him, what he had so long, and with so many tears, daily sought for without. Soon after this he heard a voice proclaiming—“Thy sins are forgiven, thy iniquities are pardoned.” His full heart now found vent in a flood of tears, and his happiness was increased when he learned that his brother had been a partaker of the heavenly visitation.

Etienne, or Stephen Grellet, (as we shall henceforward call him,) was now twenty-two years of age; and soon afterwards he removed to Philadelphia, where he supported himself by teaching French, and was admitted as a member of the Society of Friends. “O the depths of my baptisms in those days!” he exclaims. He had long felt an earnest desire to stand up and speak in the meetings of the Society, and at length did so. “For some days after this act of dedication”—as he records his feelings in his autobiography—“my peace flowed as a river, and mine eyes were like fountains of tears of gratitude.”* In all this, it may be said, we see only the excitable Frenchman, but before we have traced Stephen Grellet’s life to a close we shall think better of him.

* Memoirs of Stephen Grellet, Vol. I.

When he was twenty-four years of age he was acknowledged as a minister within the Society, and soon afterwards set out upon a religious mission. He was not long absent, however, when he heard that the yellow fever had broken out with great virulence at Philadelphia, and he felt it to be his duty to return to assist the sick and dying. This resolution taken, "as I was sitting in a room," he says, "with my mind retired before the Lord, I was seized with a violent pain in my back, head, and bones, accompanied with a great shaking; but my mind continued perfectly calm in the Lord's presence. After having remained some time in that state, considering why it was so with me, a secret language was proclaimed—'This is the manner in which those who are seized with the yellow fever are affected; thou must return to the city and attend on the sick; and thus also shall the disease take hold of thee' or words very similar. My spirit bowed in prostration before the Lord, and said, 'Thy will be done.' Then I felt again free from pain. I proceeded immediately to Philadelphia, keeping these things, however, to myself." When he reached the city, so lately full of inhabitants, he found it almost deserted, and the few individuals he met in the streets had a look of unusual seriousness. He instantly began his work of visiting the sick and assisting in burying the dead. He saw some of the plague-stricken wretches expiring in horror, throwing out their arms to take hold of him as a living object which might still connect them with the world, and crying out—"I cannot die! I cannot die!" and others departing joyfully and smilingly. One night after he had laid himself down to rest after a fatiguing and anxious day, "his spirit being," as he tells us, "gathered in the Lord's presence," he felt himself seized with the same kind of pains he had felt in New Jersey; and a voice said to him, "This is what I told thee thou must prepare

for." "My soul," says he, "was as it were swallowed up in the love of God, and perfectly contented in his will, though I did not see the end of this dispensation." He rapidly sunk under the violence of the deadly disease; his extremities became cold; it was thought his death was at hand: his coffin was ordered; and he was even returned among the daily deaths to the board of health as a "French Quaker." He felt himself ready to breathe his last, but encircled with the angelic host in the Heavenly Presence; and then in powerful language it was proclaimed to him, "Thou shalt not die, but live; thy work is not yet done." From that hour he began to recover, and was soon afterwards able to resume his philanthropic work.*

In 1799, Stephen Grellet removed to New York, and began business with his brother. But he was not a man to be bound to his desk and his ledger when duty called. An English Quaker, named Hall, arrived in New York on a religious mission to the Southern States, and it was "borne in upon his mind" that he must stand prepared to accompany him. In fulfilment of this, Hall no sooner saw him than he took him aside and told him he was the identical person he had seen while at sea, prepared of the Lord to be his companion. They accordingly started together, and refreshed the meetings of the Friends in the South by their apostolic presence. They spoke to the poor slaves of the Heavenly Canaan, and, as occasion offered, remonstrated with their masters on their sin. They even penetrated into the territories of the Indians, and spoke to them of the universal Saviour. Once in the midst of the great pine forests of North Carolina Grellet had a peculiarly joyful divine visitation; but, on his return northwards, at Chichester, he was suddenly plunged into the abyss of un-

* Memoirs of Stephen Grellet, Vol. I., pp. 48-52.

belief, and was unable to travel for several days by reason of his doubts and darkness. Gradually he recovered his faith, and discovered afterwards that his temporary infidelity was caused by the black shadow thrown upon his mind by a Quakeress, who had lapsed into scepticism. After an absence of thirteen months, Grellet returned to New York, having travelled about five thousand miles, in many parts through dense forests little trodden by human feet.*

How are we to account for these visions enjoyed by the enthusiastic Frenchman—the angels doing the work of washerwomen on the floats of the Rhone—the voice proclaiming Eternity! three different times—the intimations regarding the plague—the divine visitations in the woods of Carolina? He was too honest a man to cheat us; we must believe what he says, and try to account for it. There can be little doubt we must refer the visions he speaks of to the usual source of such illusions. Of a very excitable temperament, his own thoughts had assumed the guise of sights and sounds, and had deceived him. Our ideas, which are but the marks left in our minds by our sensations, often, from peculiar circumstances, acquire such force as to be mistaken for sensations; and we imagine we see and hear when nothing but our own thoughts are present to us. This is unquestionably the explanation of most spectral appearances; it is the explanation of Grellet's visions, and of many stories of a similar kind to be found in the legends of the saints, which we are too apt to ascribe to pure fable. Two centuries ago the servants of God very generally believed that the powers of darkness assailed them in a bodily shape. They firmly believed that they had carnal contests with the devil. They saw him—they heard him

* *Memoirs of Stephen Grellet, Vol. I., pp. 58-73.*

—they fought with him; and, by opening a Bible or pronouncing a sacred name, they conquered him. Old Martin Luther, in one of the many mental agonies he endured, fancied that the black fiend stood before him ready to devour him, and the stout Reformer hurled his ink-bottle at his head. Bang went the bottle against the wall, leaving its mark there to the present hour, and the devil was gone! Many besides Luther believed they had engaged in a hand-to-hand conflict with Beelzebub, the prince of devils. These were no idle stories trumped up just to deceive the people. They were founded upon a terrible reality. These men, in the solitude of their closets, and perhaps in the darkness of the night, when a deep awe creeps over the soul, had felt a deadly struggle going on within them till their own thoughts assumed a darker and darker hue, and appeared to put on an embodied form, and they believed they actually saw before them the enemy of their souls. So it was with Grellet—only his visions were not generally of so dark a type. But we must return and resume our travels with him.

Next year the indefatigable Quaker started on a mission to the Northern and Eastern States. When he returned, he settled down to business for more than a year, and found time to woo and wed a wife. But again the spirit of wandering came upon him; he traversed the north, passed the St. Lawrence, and stood upon Canadian soil, and not only refreshed the meetings of the Friends by his presence and counsels, but preached to all who would come and listen to him. It often happened, however, that when a crowd had gathered to hear him preach his lips were sealed; he could only sit in silence, and the people went away in disappointment, if not in disgust. They had not yet learned, as he remarks, the precious benefit of silent meetings. O Silence! thou art indeed divine, and in thee there is, beyond all

doubt, most precious benefit. How often in the midst of babblers and prattlers have we longed for thy presence! How often even when a man of apostolic lineage, but of no illumination, was wearying us with his empty din, have we prayed that thou wouldst come and seal his lips and end his talk, that we might be left in God's house to our own holy thoughts! And even thou, Oh Eloquent Speech! whatever be thine advantage, thou art a sad destroyer of our individuality, and even a disturber of our very identity. Thou injectest into our minds another man's thoughts, it may be for hours together, and so interruptest the sweet outflowings of our own fantasies. We are no longer ourselves, for a stranger has taken possession of our very consciousness, and is turning it whithersoever he wills. When thou art in the pulpit and we in the pew we are thy slaves, and if any good be in us, it is thine and not ours—for our very thoughts are not our own. Wilt thou not cease and leave us to ourselves, that we may commune with our own hearts and be still? Verily the Quakers have brought their wisdom from the Orient, for have not the wise men of the east said—"Speech is silver, but silence is golden?"

In 1807 Grellet resolved to visit his beautiful France, and, after a rough voyage and a narrow escape from pirates, which had both been prophetically foreshadowed to his mind, he landed at Marseilles. The once gay lad, the son of the French noble, now stood once more on his native soil, a man of thirty-three, and an American Quaker. The changes which had swept over his mind were as violent and complete as those which had swept over his fatherland. At Congenies he met with a small sect who for one hundred and twenty years had maintained the principles of Quakerism without having heard, till very recently, of the existence of Quakerism in America and England. They testified against war, refused to take an

oath, and knew the preciousness of silent worship and a heaven-anointed ministry. Stephen's heart was greatly gladdened to find this little flock in the midst of the wilderness. At Brives he embraced his mother, after a separation of seventeen years. His father, after having miraculously escaped the edge of the guillotine, had died some years before, partly from the sufferings he had endured during the fury of the French Revolution, and him must Stephen visit in his grave. Grellet was now in the midst of papists, and was a spectacle to them. His very mother had been taught by the priests to regard him as a heretic, and had been paying for masses and prayers to be said for his return to the true fold. He had many opportunities, however, of meeting with priests, monks, and nuns; and when they spoke to him of the traditions of the Fathers and the authority of the Church, he directed their minds to the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. In several places he met with Friends—solitary lights in the midst of the darkness—and managed to have meetings, which were frequently attended by great crowds, attracted by curiosity to see the American Quaker, about whom the strangest reports were spread; for it was even said that Napoleon had brought him from the ends of the earth to overturn the Church. After an absence of nine months he returned to America.

After little more than a year of rest he set out on a long religious tour to the Southern States of the Union. His wife was still in very delicate health, as she had been when he went to France, and he might never see her again, but the "drawings of the Spirit" might not be resisted. Quakers were not numerous in countries where slave-owners were omnipotent; but, in most places, there were a few broad-brims to bear witness to the truth. Grellet's soul was everywhere disquieted within him at

the oppression which he beheld; but, with true Quaker courage, he testified to the slave-owners of the sorest evil under the sun. In some cases, he tells us, his hearers were melted into tears at his words; and, in others, "the balm of divine consolation flowed like oil towards his tribulated ones."*

There is a little incident connected with this journey which is worth recording. Grellet had been living at Greenwich, in the suburbs of New York, and there also was living at the same time Thomas Paine, the author of "The Age of Reason," and "The Rights of Man." Before starting for the South, Grellet heard that Paine was ill, and destitute, and went to see him. He found him in a wretched condition, abandoned by those who had once been loudest in his praise, and took care to provide him a nurse, and supply him with some comforts. After Grellet was gone Paine sent for him. A young Quakeress who was living with the Grellets went in his stead. She repeated her visit, and was always welcomed; and not only carried cordials to the dying man, but spoke to him, in her simple Quaker fashion, of the way of life. He asked her if she had read his "Age of Reason." She said she had begun it, but was so distressed by what she had read, that she had thrown it in the fire. "I wish," said the dying man, "that others had done the same." It is strange to think of this kind-hearted Quakeress ministering by the bed-side of the old apostle of infidelity and democracy, and not only soothing his last moments, but, with unquestioning faith, pointing his thoughts to the true light, which alone could lighten him through the dark valley of the shadow of death.

In 1811 Grellet's restless spirit again impelled him

* Memoirs, Vol I, p. 159.

across the sea to Europe. He says that ever since his return from France, he had been under "a continual pressure of mental exercise" to return to the Old World, where he saw much work was to be done. He sought England this time, and arrived at Liverpool. He instantly began his work of visiting the churches. He went in a pilgrim spirit to Swarthmore, where George Fox had lived, entered the meeting-house he had built, and the plainly furnished room he had provided for itinerant preachers, and saw his great Bible fastened with a chain to the rail of the minister's gallery. From the North of England he passed into Scotland, but he found that Quakers were not numerous north of the Tweed. Everywhere, however, the people came in crowds to hear him preach, or see him sit in silence; and oftentimes, as he tells us, a holy solemnity was over all. At Aberdeen it was different. "I feel myself," he says, "in this place of high religious profession as in a prison-house, encircled with darkness; my way is entirely closed up from having a meeting among the inhabitants, over whom I mourn silently; and I find no place for the rest and relief of my exercised spirit."* From Scotland he crossed to Ireland, and recrossing the channel he was in London in time for the yearly meetings of his Society in May 1812.

The meetings over, he set out once more to traverse the country as a preacher of the truth; but in 1813 he was again in London, and we find him and William Allan now met in the same field of labour. The weavers of Spital-fields were out of work, and, consequently, bordering on starvation. The good Quakers not only furnished them with soup for their families, as had been previously done, but held religious meetings amongst them, and told them of the bread of life. Grellet's mind was now brought under deep

* Memoirs, Vol I, p. 178.

exercise on account of the pick-pockets and prostitutes of London. He managed to gather a great number of them together in the Quaker meeting-house in St. Martin's Lane, and there, amidst many tears, he preached repentance to them, and then sat with them in deep silence, interrupted only by the sobs of the penitent. He thought next of visiting the prisons, where he would find the most desperate criminals brought together as in a focus. After seeing the Compters—prisons since abolished—he proceeded to Newgate. There he found several men who were appointed to die, and spoke to them some words of consolation. He found mere boys who had been convicted of theft, for the first time, mingling with the most inveterate criminals, and learning their ways as in a school for crime, and he at once remonstrated against the impolicy of such promiscuous imprisonment. When he proposed visiting the female department, the jailor advised him not to think of it. He said he would not be responsible for what might happen, and the least he might expect was that his clothes should be torn from his back. But Grellet was not a man thus to be deterred from going where he thought he could do good. When he entered, he found the foulness of the air almost insupportable, and the most shameless effrontery only too visible in the faces of the crowd of depraved women who stood before him. He spoke to them of the love of Christ and the forgiveness of sins, and their proud looks, he tells us, were somewhat brought down, and tears were seen to start in the eyes of some of them. He next went to the room where the sick and diseased women were gathered together, and a shocking mass of misery confronted him. Some were lying on the bare floor, some on a bunch of old straw, with little or no covering; and some children who had been born in the prison were all but naked, though it was then the depth

of winter. Distressed beyond measure at what he had beheld, he hurried to the house of Mrs. Elizabeth Fry and told her what he had seen, and awakened in her womanly heart feelings of pity, which led to her life-long work for the improvement of our prison discipline.*

From England Grellet passed over to France; from France he went to Switzerland; from Switzerland to Italy; and from Italy to Germany. He went not as a tourist seeking pleasure, but as an apostle proclaiming the truth. On his way he crossed the path of the allies, as they were pouring into his native country to hurl Napoleon from the throne, and he seized the opportunity to speak to some of them of the Prince of Peace. When he addressed a meeting he had a marvellous power over his audience. "I have never," said a lieutenant of police to the Prefect, before whom he had reluctantly carried Grellet, "heard any one speak in such a manner before; the whole meeting was melted into tears."† In the summer of 1814 he was again in London.

The Friends had long mourned because of the terrific war which had raged for so many years, and they well might, for it was desolating Europe. In 1812 they had presented to the Prince Regent an address, in which they declared their principles as to the unlawfulness of war, and the deputation who went to court to present it, at the head of which was William Allan, was graciously received by the Prince and Lord Sidmouth. Now, at length, there was a prospect of peace, for the allies had entered Paris. Napoleon had abdicated, and Louis XVIII. had been called to the throne as the representative of the Bourbons. When the Quakers were holding their yearly meetings in May there was some talk of the allied sovereigns visiting England, and Grellet suggested that this would be a favourable

* Grellet's Memoirs, Vol. I., pp. 224-5.

† Ibid, Vol. I., p. 257.

opportunity of impressing upon them that the kingdom of Christ was a kingdom of righteousness and peace. The matter was referred to the Committee of Sufferings. A few days after this the Grand Duchess of Oldenburgh, sister of the Emperor Alexander, and the young Duke of Würtemberg, appeared at one of the Quaker meetings in London, and behaved in a most edifying manner, at which the hearts of the Friends rejoiced greatly.*

In the month of July, the Emperor Alexander of Russia, and King Frederick William of Prussia came to London; they came flushed with conquest, and they were received with feasting, military displays, naval reviews, and the huzzas of the crowd. The Committee for Sufferings instantly employed the pen of Joseph Gurney Bevan to draw up an address to the two illustrious potentates, if peradventure, in the midst of the adulation they were daily receiving, they would listen for a moment to the voice of truth. A deputation, consisting of William Allan, Stephen Grellet, John Wilkinson, and Luke Howard, proceeded to St. James's Palace to present their address to the Majesty of Prussia. When they had waited for some time, they were told that the king had been up all night, and was so hurried, that the only chance they had of seeing him was by standing in the passage through which he had to pass to his carriage. The benevolent broad-brims accordingly did so, and, when Frederick William approached, Grellet stepped forward, presented the address, and said a few words in French. The king replied that he had some members of their Society in his dominions, and they were excellent people, but that war was necessary to the attainment of peace; and with scarcely another word he passed on.† It

* Grellet's Memoirs, Vol. I., p. 313. Allan's Life, Vol. I.

† Life of Allan, Vol. I., pp. 192-3. Grellet's Memoirs, Vol. I., pp. 314-5.

was evident he had treated them with bare civility; but a greater man and monarch than he was to receive them in a widely different manner.

Three days after this was Sunday, and the Czar Alexander, accompanied by his sister the Grand Duchess of Oldenburg, the young Duke of Oldenburgh, the Duke of Würtemberg, Count Lieven, and others, under the guidance of William Allan, suddenly appeared at a Quaker meeting, which caused no little flutter among the Friends. Worship, however, proceeded as usual. There was a season of silence; then three Friends rose in succession, and spoke as they were inspired; and, finally, there was a prayer. "I think," says Allan, "I may say Friends were evidently owned in this their strait, and that nothing could have answered better if it had been ever so well contrived." The imperial party conformed themselves in all things to the Quaker worship, and the Czar, when on his way to his carriage, shook hands with all the Friends who were near him; a condescension of which the good men were, no doubt, proud to their dying day, notwithstanding their ideas of human equality, and the sinfulness of hat-honour.

On the Tuesday following, Stephen Grellet, William Allan, and John Wilkinson went by appointment to the Pulteney Hotel to present their address to the Czar—the man of whom Napoleon had said, "If I were not Napoleon, I would be Alexander," and who yet seemed to be half a Quaker. He received the Friends with the greatest kindness, taking them by the hand as if they were brothers. They put the address into his hands, and then presented him with some books, which he merely glanced at, as he appeared anxious to engage at once in conversation. The Ruler of Muscovy, tall and handsome, stood in the centre of the room, and the humble Quakers stood around him. He asked them about their religious opinions, their wor-

ship, their ministry, and many things beside. As William Allan explained to him the principles of the Society, he frequently said, "these are my sentiments also." "Worship," said he, "must be spiritual to be acceptable, and outward forms are but of secondary importance." "I pray myself," he continued, "every day, not in a form of words, but according to the impression I have of my wants at the time. I once used a form of words, but abandoned it as frequently inapplicable to the state of my feelings." The Quakers spoke to him of war, of slavery, of what the British and Foreign School Society was doing, and of what he might do in his great kingdom. When Grellet ventured to speak to him of his responsibility as the absolute ruler of so great a country, tears sprang into his eyes, and, taking the Quaker's hand in both his, he said, "these words of yours will long remain graven on my heart." The interview lasted for an hour, and the emperor assured the deputation that he agreed with them in most of their opinions, and that though, from his peculiar position, his practice must be somewhat different, he was united with them in the spiritual worship of Christ.*

The Quakers had almost made a convert of Peter the Great, and now Alexander declared that he was in reality one with them. Nor is there any reason to think that this was merely imperial politeness and Muscovite hypocrisy. Alexander was undoubtedly a man of profound religious convictions. All his proclamations spoke of the great God, the ruler of the universe; and his armies, when marching on France, were animated by him with the religious enthusiasm of the crusaders. There was one act of his life which, of itself, was enough to evince his piety. When the senate

* Grellet's Memoirs, Vol. I., pp. 313-16. Life of William Allan, Vol. I., pp. 194-201.

of St. Petersburg voted him a monument, he directed that on its summit there should be placed, not a statue of himself, as was proposed, but a statue of Religion, holding out her hands and blessing the people. Yet such are the strange contradictions of human nature—this man, though deeply religious, was not always moral; but morality was not then thought to be a necessary virtue of kings.

Fairly interested in the Quakers, the Czar had expressed a desire to see one of their houses, but this was quite impossible amid the whirl of London life. Arrangements were, however, made for him to visit a Quaker at Brighton, but there the crowd was so great that the design was abandoned. As the cortege, however, proceeded towards Dover the Emperor caught a glimpse of a Quaker and his wife standing at their gate to witness the passing pageant. The horses were pulled up, the Czar and his sister alighted, and begged to be allowed to see the interior of the house. They were accordingly shewn through the principal apartments, and accepted of the refreshments which were offered them in the parlour. At parting the Duchess "kissed the Quaker's wife," and the emperor ventured no further than to kiss her hand.*

* Life of William Allan, Vol. I., pp. 204-5.





Chapter XX.

WE have seen Stephen Grellet, after he had witnessed the wretchedness and degradation of the female prisoners in Newgate, going to Mrs. Elizabeth Fry and relating to her the sickening tale. The life and labours of this remarkable woman are worthy of being remembered for ever.

Elizabeth Gurney, or Fry, was born at Norwich on the 21st of May, 1780. She was the third daughter of John Gurney, of Earlham, in Norfolk, and of his wife, Catherine Bell. The ancestor of her father had joined the Quakers in the days of Fox, and her mother was a great-granddaughter of Robert Barclay, the Apologist, so that she was of the very purest Quaker blood. Mr. Gurney, of Earlham, was, however, by no means a strict professor of the Quaker faith, and in his house there was sometimes music, and even dancing; and in these amusements none of the sisters took greater delight than Betsy. How, in truth, could the girls, in the joyousness of their young hearts, refrain from sometimes bursting into song, when all the birds were singing around them, without knowing they did anything wrong, or skipping on the floor with their fairy feet, as they might any evening in spring see the lambs bounding on the lea. But we are more scandalised to hear that Miss Elizabeth sometimes went to the meeting in pink boots,

laced with scarlet, and might even be seen scampering over the country on horseback, arrayed in a scarlet riding-habit. We are still more concerned to learn that when she grew up to budding womanhood, she went to London during the season, and attended balls and other fashionable places of folly and amusement.* Alas! Elizabeth; it would appear that in thy early youth thou hadst, like other young women, a vain, joyful, little heart within thee; and that pink boots, and scarlet riding-habits, and balls and concerts found a place in thy affections, and were tolerated in a Quaker family.

These vanities, however, were soon laid aside, not all at once, but gradually and with some internal struggles; and before the happy young girl had escaped from her teens she had given up music and dancing, thrown away her finery, and arrayed herself in the close-cap and handkerchief of the Friends. At the age of twenty she was married to Joseph Fry, and removed with him to St. Mildred's Court, London, where his business was carried on. Almost all her husband's relatives were strict Quakers, and the young wife, who had been the plainest in her father's family, found herself comparatively gay amid her new connexions. Her first great trial in house-keeping was during the fortnight of the yearly meeting in May. According to custom, she must then keep open house for the Friends who had assembled from every part of the kingdom; and every day from sixty to eighty guests sat down at her bountiful board, which groaned with joints of roasted meat and colossal plum-puddings; for Friends are happily not called by their asceticism to renounce the pleasures of the table. Her company included both the strictest and most orthodox in garb, and some who could scarcely be recognised

* Memoirs of Elizabeth Fry, by her Daughter, Mrs. Francis Cresswell.

as belonging to the Society. Among the ladies there were still a few who tenaciously adhered to the plain closely-fitting cap, with the black hood, and almost all wore drab-coloured camlet gowns, with long-peaked waists and voluminous folds, contrasting strangely with the fashions of the day.*

Elizabeth Fry was blessed in her marriage, and in course of years eleven olive plants surrounded her table. The death of her father, to whom she was tenderly attached, in 1809, made a deep impression on her mind; and at his funeral, after her uncle had addressed those present at the grave, she could not resist the impulse to speak, and falling down on her knees, she exclaimed—"Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are all Thy ways, Thou King of saints: we give Thee thanks." Having uttered these words she rose up, and all was calm within her. In about a year and a-half afterwards she was publicly acknowledged by the Society of Friends as one of their ministers.†

Few people can reconcile themselves to the idea of women being public ministers of religion. They say that home life and home duties is their proper sphere, and that they may find abundant opportunities of doing good in imbuing the minds of their children with the love of virtue and piety. They think it is destructive of female delicacy for a woman to stand up in a promiscuous assembly and harangue. The Quakers, however, have ever thought differently, and from the very first they have encouraged their women to speak in their churches. The Methodists have copied their example. With such instances as that of Mrs. Fry before us, it is impossible to censure very strongly a system which developed her talents, and prepared the way for her useful-

* Memoirs of Elizabeth Fry, by her Daughter.

† Ibid.

ness; and it must be acknowledged that Quaker women have not been found to be more immodest, or even more masculine, than the rest of the sisterhood, though they preach and take a part in managing the affairs of their Society. Is it possible that the Quakers have in this, as in other respects, anticipated the age? It is certain that at this moment a host of women—honest women, too—are clamorous to break down the barriers which shut them out from public employment, and jostle the men in all the three professions of law, physic, and divinity. Are we wrong in our traditions? Have they come from the East? Are they the last shred of the opinion that women should be shut up in a seraglio, and allowed to look out upon the world only through the wires of their cage, or the meshes of their veil? Should we not remember that in science and religion there is neither male nor female, as there is neither bond nor free? All this may be, but I am afraid that after all we shall think that the proper place for the woman is the hearth rather than the altar.

In February, 1813, Mrs. Fry heard from Stephen Grellet and William Foster of the miserable condition of the women in Newgate, and she lost no time in gathering together a quantity of clothing, and hastening to the grim prison with it.* Anna Buxton was her sole companion. All the female prisoners were then confined in the part of the quadrangle now known as the untried side. There, in four rooms, nearly three hundred women, with their numerous children, were huddled together—the tried, and the untried, those committed for trivial offences, and those convicted of the most atrocious crimes. When a visitor appeared in the prison they assailed him with the most clamorous importunities for money, and then they flew to a tap which was

* See Grellet's Memoirs, and Mrs. Fry's Memoirs. Mrs. Fry's Biographer does not specially mention Grellet.

kept in the prison, and purchased spirits with what they had obtained. Having no regular employment, they spent their time in drinking, swearing, fighting, fortune-telling, card-playing, and the most shameless talk. Everything was filthy and disgusting. Even the governor visited this portion of the prison with reluctance, and when Mrs. Fry would not be dissuaded from going amongst these abandoned outcasts of society, he advised her to leave her watch and her purse with him. "I thank thee," said Mrs. Fry, confident in the power of loving-kindness; "I am not afraid; I do not think I shall lose anything."* When she was shut in, with Anna Buxton at her side, the women gazed at them with amazement. "You seem unhappy," said the Quakeress, in her soft, gentle voice. "You are in want of clothes; would you be pleased if some one would come and relieve your misery?" "Nobody cares for us," said one of the women, somewhat sulkily. "I am come," said Mrs. Fry, "with a wish to serve you, and, I think, if you second my endeavours, I may be of use to you." More also she said to them of the love of Christ, and the forgiveness of sins. Anna Buxton knelt down and prayed; Mrs. Fry did the same; the wretched women knelt down around them, and, as the voice of tender, pitying supplication went up to heaven, weeping was heard, and the sacrifice of a broken heart offered to God.† Before the ladies left the prison they distributed the clothing they had brought, and promised that they would return. It was nearly three years, however, before the promise was redeemed, but then it was redeemed with usury.

We have already had a glimpse of the prisons of England in the days of George Fox; but since his days John Howard had lived—the great prison reformer—and had made his

* Timpson's Life of Mrs. Fry, pp. 32-3. † Memoirs by Daughter, p. 84.

name a synonyme for philanthropy. But many of his reforms had never been carried out; acts of parliament had been allowed to go asleep; and most of the jails were nearly as bad as ever. Of 518 prisons in the United Kingdom to which 107,000 persons were committed in one year, there were only 23 in which the inmates were classified according to law; 59 had no separation between male and female prisoners; 136 had only one division for that purpose; and 68 had only two. In 445 no work of any description was provided, so that the prisoners were left to idleness and vice. Besides, many of the jails were notoriously unhealthy, and no agency was provided for the moral and religious discipline of those whom crime had placed in them.* Such was the state of matters when Mrs. Fry began her reform—such was the Augean stable she had to cleanse.

It was not till about Christmas, 1816, that Mrs. Fry was able to revisit Newgate; but, then, she systematically began her work of reform. On this occasion, at her own request, she was left alone with the women for some hours. She read to them the parable of the Lord of the vineyard, spoke to them of Jesus the Saviour, and proposed, if she had their hearty approbation, to establish a school, to be taught by one of themselves, for the education of their children. The women promised everything that was asked, and before Mrs. Fry's next visit had chosen as school-mistress a young woman named Mary Connor, who had been committed for stealing a watch. The sheriffs of London and the governor of the prison gave their ready concurrence to the experiment, though they considered it Utopian and hopeless, and allowed an unoccupied cell to be fitted up as a school-room. These arrangements being made, Mrs.

* Report of the Society for the Improvement of Prison Discipline. Timpson's Life of Mrs. Fry, p. 34.

Fry and a young Quaker friend, Mary Sanderson, proceeded to the prison to see the school opened. When they entered, the railing was crowded with half-naked women, struggling with one another for the front situations with the utmost violence, and begging most clamorously. Mrs. Fry's companion afterwards wrote to Sir T. F. Buxton, "that she felt as if she were going into a den of wild beasts, and could not help shuddering as the door closed upon her and she found herself locked in with such a herd of novel and desperate companions."* Notwithstanding these unpromising appearances, the school was opened for all under twenty-five years of age, and the work begun.

Mrs. Fry's plans began to enlarge themselves with her success, and she now conceived it possible to improve the worst criminals by introducing order and industry amongst them. Acting on this idea, in the spring of 1817, eleven members of the Society of Friends and the wife of a clergyman formed themselves into "An Association for the Improvement of the Female Prisoners in Newgate." The object they had in view was "to provide for the clothing, the instruction, and the employment of the women; to introduce them to a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and to form in them, as much as possible, those habits of order, sobriety, and industry, which might render them docile and peaceable whilst in prison, and respectable when they left it." The consent of the prison authorities was obtained, a matron was appointed, work was procured, rules were laid down, (to which the women promised a willing obedience,) and in a short month the improvement was so marked that the magistrates were amazed, and adopted the whole plan as part of the system of Newgate.

A great deal of the success of the project, however,

* Memoirs of Mrs. Fry, p. 115.

undoubtedly resulted from the daily visits and constant superintendence of the good Quaker ladies, who had devoted themselves to this benevolent work. Some of these frequently spent a whole day in the gloomy prison-house, carrying their dinner with them in a basket. Among the most unwearied was Elizabeth Pryor, who, though less known than Mrs. Fry, emulated her in every labour of love, and did almost as much for the reformation of our prison discipline. Her record is on high. The news of this spread, the example became infectious, and the most illustrious ladies in the land were smitten with a desire to visit jails, and do something for their inmates. Newgate itself, notwithstanding its sad associations and dreary corridors, became a kind of show-place, and noblemen and clergymen came to visit it, and see the change which had been wrought by the gentle omnipotence of woman's love; and they certainly beheld the thieves and harlots, formerly so shameless and so wild, like the maniac out of whom the whole legion of devils had been cast, employed, clothed, and in their right mind.

Mrs. Fry had able coadjutors in her own family circle. One of her sisters was married to Mr. Buxton, (afterwards Sir Thomas Fowel Buxton,) and another to Samuel Hoare, and both these benevolent men had even before this turned their attention to our criminal population, and had been making exertions to save juvenile depredators—our city Arabs, as they are now called—from their career toward the gallows, and to reclaim, when possible, more hardened offenders. Her brother, Joseph John Gurney, who was now, like herself, a minister of the Society of Friends, was equally earnest in the same work. Accompanied by him, she set out in the autumn of 1818 to visit Scotland, partly to minister to the Quaker meetings scattered over the country, but much more to inspect, and, if possible, reform the prisons. Many of these the travellers found in a state

of extreme filthiness; but they were surprised beyond measure to find in many not a single prisoner, which they attributed to the almost universal religious education of the people—a matter in which Scotland was more pre-eminent then than it is now.* In every case she left behind her hints for the improvement of the buildings and the prison discipline, which were very generally attended to.

The criminal code of England was at this time most sanguinary. Theft, to no great amount, was punishable by death. Forgery, or the uttering of forged notes, was enough to bring a man to the scaffold. It was calculated that if the law, as it stood, was in every case carried into effect, twelve hundred executions would have taken place every year. The Old Bailey alone would have furnished a hundred. But a law so rigorous could not be executed; it was evaded in a hundred ways. The very police connived at the escape of criminals, who, they knew, might pay with their lives for a paltry fraud. The juries, if they could, by any apparent flaw in the evidence, soothe their consciences, brought in a verdict of "Not Guilty;" they would rather do violence to their convictions than have the guilt of blood resting on their head. The prosecutors frequently accepted a plea of guilty on "the minor count," and the criminal escaped with banishment for life. If all these failed, there was still a chance of a reprieve from the crown. But, notwithstanding all these different doors of escape, executions were painfully frequent, and shop-lifters, sheep-stealers, forgers, and utterers of base money were not unfrequently to be seen dangling on a gibbet. The consequence of this was that felons condemned to die regarded themselves as martyrs, murdered by the state, and the public, in some respects, looked upon them in that light too.

* Life of Joseph John Gurney, Vol. I. Memoirs of Elizabeth Fry.

For the last ten years Sir Samuel Romilly had been striving to ameliorate the criminal code, and we have seen William Allan and other Quakers banding themselves together to promote the same object. Mrs. Fry's contact with the female prisoners, in Newgate and elsewhere, had strongly convinced her that the law was unnecessarily harsh, and that human life was held too cheap. "I feel life so strong within me," said a poor woman to her the day before her execution, "that I cannot believe that this time to-morrow I am to be dead." She accordingly, on several occasions, exerted herself to obtain a pardon for the unhappy women who were doomed to die; and, in the case of a woman named Skelton, who had been condemned for uttering some forged notes at the instigation of a man whom she loved, she urged the matter with such importunity that it led to unpleasant words between Lord Sidmouth, the prime minister, the directors of the Bank of England, and herself.* The woman was hanged. But the work begun by Sir Samuel Romilly, who died untimely in 1818, was taken up by Sir James Macintosh and Mr. Buxton, and the criminal law was gradually deprived of its blood-thirstiness and ferocity.

It was on the very day on which she left the Home Office, deeply wounded by what had passed in the case of Skelton, that Mrs. Fry proceeded, in the company of the Countess Harcourt, to the Mansion-House, by command of Queen Charlotte, to be there introduced to her Majesty. A great number of children from different schools were assembled in the Egyptian Hall in order to be examined, and, when the examination was concluded, the Queen advanced to the Quakeress and addressed her with the utmost frankness and cordiality. The vast company witnessed the spectacle, and a murmur of applause ran through the crowd, which

* *Memoirs of Elizabeth Fry*, pp. 143-4.

immediately afterwards burst into a rapturous clapping of hands. "It was royalty," says Mrs. Fry's daughter and biographer, "offering its meed of approval at the shrine of mercy and good works."*

The same loving-kindness which prompted Mrs. Fry to visit Newgate led her to take an interest in the convicts who were sentenced to transportation. In company with a party of these she went to the ship which was to bear them across the sea, then lying in the Thames till its cargo of crime was complete. She found that no provision whatever was made for their employment or superintendence during the voyage. They were to be left very much to the care of the rough sailors, and were to spend their time just as they pleased. She instantly set about procuring remnants of cotton cloth to be made by them into patch-work quilts, and these, she arranged, were to be sold in New South Wales, and the price given to the makers on their landing in the colony. She also began to agitate in high quarters to have a responsible matron in every female convict vessel to superintend the women, and keep them at work. Her constant coadjutor in this work was Mrs. Elizabeth Pryor. These two devoted Quaker women might often be seen by the Thames watermen proceeding to Gravesend, to visit the convict ships lying there; gathering the off-scourings of the streets of London around them on the deck, and reading to them, in their silver tones, some chapter of Holy Scripture; or kneeling down with them, and earnestly praying the Great Judge for repentance and pardon. There were not unfrequently sorrowful partings between these two pure-minded women and the harlots and thieves, whose hearts had been melted by the power of their love.

* Memoir, p. 146.

“The British Ladies’ Society for the Reformation of Female Prisoners” now began to enter upon this field of usefulness. The members of the society visited the vessels, supplied the convicts with many little comforts, and even made arrangements for their reception and superintendence at the antipodes. Mrs. Pryor having entered upon the work, visited every convict ship, save one, which sailed from England, till her death in 1841.*

Mrs. Fry’s work as a prison reformer was life-long. All her spare time was devoted to it. She visited Ireland, she revisited Scotland, she travelled to France, Holland, Germany, Denmark, and everywhere she carried the lamp of Christian love into the dark prison-houses and hospitals. Her influence was felt everywhere: nowhere more than in the heart of the great Russian empire, where prisons were modelled after her advice. Kings and queens invited her to their tables: the highest in rank and intellect did obeisance to her virtue. To her and her Quaker coadjutors we undoubtedly owe the thorough reform of our prisons and our prison discipline. They began the movement which has led to such results. Our jails are now patterns of healthfulness, cleanliness, and order. They are well ventilated, well warmed, well drained. The prisoners are separated, but not kept solitary; they are employed, but not over-tasked. They have their chaplains and medical attendants, their turnkeys and matrons to minister to both their physical and spiritual wants, and maintain them in the most perfect health. The question now is, whether this system of coddling and sympathising with our worst criminals has not been carried too far: whether the tide of generous feeling awakened by the generous deeds of the two Elizabeths has not led many to waste upon worthless

* Memoirs of Mrs. Fry, p. 201.

vagabonds compassion which had far better have been bestowed upon the honest and industrious poor? It has been said there is now a premium upon crime; that to excite pity you must become a criminal: that the struggles and sufferings of the labouring poor are too commonplace to excite the sympathy of the age, which delights in horrors and tragedies, and takes the greatest villains under its special care. The reproach is not altogether unjust. Our criminals are certainly better housed, better fed, and in every way better cared for than many among our labouring population, which is neither expedient nor right: but, instead of plunging our prisoners back into their former filth and wretchedness, it would surely be better to ameliorate and elevate the condition of the poor. And the task, though Herculean, is not altogether hopeless. In this field there is still work for some philanthropist to do, and it must be done patiently and quietly, away from the excitement of prison horrors; but in the doing of it, it will be found that in the silent endurance and unmurmuring submission of the neglected and needy there is the very highest tragic interest.





Chapter XVI.

IHAVE already narrated how the young Quaker, Joseph Lancaster, originated the school-system which is still called by his name. It consisted chiefly in the employment of monitors, so that the children assisted one another; in teaching masses simultaneously, so that one teacher and one set of lessons educated hundreds; and in using the Bible as a text-book, but no catechism, so that religion and morality were taught, while all sectarianism was excluded. By this means education was made cheap, and brought within the reach of the lowest. And there was great need for something being done; for, while Scotland had her parish-schools, which placed a good education within the power of the children of the labouring-man, no such institution existed in England; and the working-classes were in woeful ignorance, and it was already plain to thoughtful men that their degradation might become an element of danger to society and the State. There might be Goths not without, but within the gate.

Lancaster was eccentric and extravagant, and as we have seen, got involved in pecuniary difficulties, and some benevolent members of his Society, to save his enterprise from shipwreck, stepped forward and took his liabilities upon their own head, and henceforward his schools were carried on by trustees. For a while this plan worked tolerably well,

but at length Lancaster became recalcitrant and unmanageable, and it was found necessary to break off from him altogether. The British and Foreign School Society was thereupon instituted to diffuse education among the poor on Lancaster's system. It consisted of all classes of people, from royal dukes downwards; but the members of the Society of Friends were among the most zealous. William Allan and Joseph Fox were especially so. The Duke of Kent, the father of our Queen, corresponded with Allan on the subject, and adopting the Quaker style, addressed him, "Dear Friend Allan;" and when Fox died in 1816, he declared, in a letter of condolence, that he "felt his loss most deeply, both as a private friend and a public philanthropist." *

With such patronage to shine upon it, and such energy to carry it on, the Lancasterian system quickly spread. Schools, based on the model, sprang up in every part of England and even Scotland. In 1815 there were five schools on the Lancasterian plan in Paris, placed under the protection of the Prefect of the Seine, and there was the prospect of other twelve being soon established. In North America the system had taken firm root; and in Calcutta there was a large school for the half-caste natives of Hindustan. About the same time both the negro king of the northern part of Hayti and the mulatto president of the republic, which had been established in the southern portion of the island, begged that teachers might be sent to them from England, to introduce the system among their people. †

The yearly meeting of 1816 appointed William Allan to visit the little Quaker communities at Pymont, Minden,

* Life of William Allan, Vol. I., p. 266.

† Life of Allan, Vol. I., pp. 253, 299, 311.

and other places in Germany and France. He was accompanied by his wife, Mrs. Fry, Mrs. Robson, Cornelius Hanbury, and Francis Martin. In passing through Belgium and Holland they visited the prisons, hospitals, and schools, anxious both to gain information and to do good. At Minden and Pymont they saw their friends, a little flock scattered in the wilderness, and comforted them by their presence and their words. Proceeding southwards, they reached Geneva, and there Allan had to endure the agony of seeing his wife sicken and die. She was quietly laid, in Quaker fashion, in the cemetery of Sacconet. Before the end came, Mrs. Fry, Mrs. Robson, and Martin had pursued their journey toward the south of France; and now, when the last rites of love were rendered, Allan, accompanied by Hanbury, began his sorrowful journey home.*

While these things were going on in England, Stephen Grellet had resumed his wandering life in America. After little more than a year of rest, he found himself compelled, by a divine impulse, to visit the island of Hayti. He went, and everywhere preached to the negroes, who, with their grinning faces, gathered around him. At Port-au-Prince he was kindly received by the mulatto president of the republic, who begged him to preach in the Romish cathedral. When Grellet suggested that his doing so might give offence, the president replied—"Your meetings are meetings for divine worship and for this very purpose the church was built." As Grellet still hesitated, the

* Not long afterwards we find an entry in his journal which is characteristic both of the man and of the religious feeling of the society to which he belonged. "Tenth Month, 22d.—Several friends called on me, and evinced tender sympathy, particularly dear Joseph Foster and Rebecca Christy; the latter was sweetly engaged in supplication, and afterwards had to pour in the oil and wine of consolation, in a very remarkable manner, exhorting me to give up to the pointings of duty, even though the sacrifice might be as bitter as death."

bishop called on him, and told him that neither he nor any one else would object to him holding a meeting in the cathedral church. There, accordingly, the Quaker proclaimed to a vast assemblage his simple Christianity, which, in some of its aspects, is the most perfect counterpart of Popery. He had some meetings afterwards, which were conducted in silence, and with such signal success that he thought the negroes were beginning to understand the nature of silent worship. A severe fever compelled him to shorten his visit, and return to New York.*

He was scarcely at home two years when he began to turn his eyes anxiously and restlessly towards Europe. "The weight of the service which the Lord calls for me from Europe," he says, "becomes heavier and heavier: my whole mind is at seasons absorbed by it." † His business was greatly prospering, but he resolved to retire from it. His wife and family were dear to him, but he determined to abandon them. Yea, he tells us his faithful wife, "sweetly encouraged him" to go. His last pilgrimage through Europe had occupied four years. He now, under the "divine drawings," went forth again, and he knew not when he might return—if ever. In July 1818 he was in London, in the house of William Allan. He had long had a presentiment that he was to be the companion of his pilgrimage, and he had communicated to him his secret intimations; and in consequence of this, as he informs us, Allan "passed through deep baptisms." "On the evening of the 20th," writes Grellet, "in company with his mother and daughter, and dear Rebecca Christy, we had a season of most solemn silence. It was felt to be precious, and was broken by dear William, prostrated on his knees,

* Memoirs of Stephen Grellet, Vol. I., pp. 329-50.

† *Ibid.*, Vol. I., p. 352.

offering up himself and his all to the Lord, to go with me wherever the Blessed Master may be pleased to send us, and to drink whatever cup He may prepare for us in the course of that service, be it even unto death."*

It was toward Russia and the north of Europe that the eyes of the two Quakers were turned, for they remembered the words and the tears of the Czar, and how he attended their ministry, and how he kissed their sister's hand; and they thought that in his great empire, a wide and effectual door was opened to them. First of all, they sailed for Norway, where they found among its mountains a few people who had been tinged with their principles while prisoners of war in England, and they comforted them. From Norway they proceeded to Sweden, and, having visited the prisons and other public institutions in the towns which lay on their route, they at length found themselves in Stockholm, the capital city. There, by virtue of the letters of introduction which they brought, and also by the odour of their good name which was now pretty widely diffused, they were waited upon by ministers of state, ambassadors, nobles, and men eminent both for their good words and their good works. As was their wont, wherever they went, they visited the schools, the prisons, and the hospitals.†

From the first the Quakers have been a wandering people. Supporting no missionary establishments, they have themselves been missionaries. But the first Quakers went forth to communicate some divine revelation which they had received—it might be to the Sultan or to the Pope—to the inhabitants of Jerusalem or the inquisitors of Malta. These revelations were always neither more nor

* *Memoirs of Stephen Grellet*, Vol. I., pp. 350-7.

† *Life of Allan*, Vol. I.; *Memoirs of Grellet*, Vol. I.

less than some article of their faith—the universal light or the sinless life—and, in their new-born ardour, they expected to proselytize the world. The Quakers who now traversed Europe did not thus compass sea and land in the hope of making proselytes. Though they tenaciously adhered to their traditionary customs and belief they were not zealous in urging them on others. That was not their mission. They went forth as apostles of Christianity in its benevolent aspects. They were travelling philanthropists. They declared everywhere that their object was simply to do good—to introduce education among the masses of the people, to soften the rigours of imprisonment, to counsel universal toleration, as far as possible to benefit all. This proclamation of their intentions attracted all good men of every party and church to them.

The Quakers had by this time fairly established their reputation as the most benevolent religious sect in the world. They had toiled for a century to abolish slavery and the slave-trade; Mrs. Fry's reputation as a prison-reformer was already spread over Europe; William Allan and Joseph Lancaster were scarcely less famous as zealous educationists, and their Society received the reflected lustre of their renown. To be a Quaker was to be a philanthropist; and the world readily pardoned the absurdities of dress and manners for the sake of the warm heart which beat beneath the drab.

At Stockholm the Quakers had an interview with the king. They spoke of the institutions they had visited, and of the improvements which might be effected. The king declared he was most anxious to do good, but often found himself more fettered by forms and old institutions than they could believe. He referred to the principles of the Friends, and more especially to their opinions on war and self-defence, remarking he understood they might parry a

blow, but not return it. For more than an hour the conversation went on. When the Friends rose to leave, the monarch took them warmly by the hand, and, when Allan uttered a prayer that the Lord would bless him, he presented first his one cheek and then his other to be kissed. So the Quakers kissed the king and retired. This was Bernadotte, who, from a private soldier, became a marshal of France, and then, as a French marshal, was elected to fill the Swedish throne.*

Their mission accomplished in Stockholm, the two Friends crossed the Gulf of Bothnia and arrived in Finland. From thence they proceeded—visiting the public institutions and great men on their way—toward St. Petersburg, which they reached just as the winter was setting in. They found a few members of their sect in the stately capital of the Czar, for the Quakers are an ubiquitous people, and with these, on the first days, they had their silent worship. Among those who came to these meetings was Daniel Wheeler, whom the Emperor had invited into his kingdom to superintend some engineering works in the neighbourhood of his capital, and who has given to the world some interesting reminiscences of the Russian Court.

But it was not this which had brought them so far. One of their first visits was to Prince Alexander Galitzin, the Emperor's prime minister. They explained to him that "their motive for visiting the country was a sense of religious duty, laid upon them by the Great Parent of the human family, and a strong desire to promote the general welfare of mankind."† They begged permission to visit the schools, prisons, hospitals, and other public institutions.

* Life of Allan, Vol. I. ; Memoirs of Grellet, Vol. I.

† Life of Allan, Vol. I., p. 424.

The prince at once granted all that they asked, and said that he had a letter from the Emperor, who was in the provinces, requesting him to treat them as his friends, and detain them till his return.

The Friends were soon at work visiting the prisons. They found that considerable reforms had recently been made, for the labours of Mrs. Fry were already known on the banks of the Neva; but much still remained to be done. In many cases, the men and the women were huddled together, and often in the same room were to be seen the most hardened wretches and persons committed for some trifling offence, such as being without a passport, or, perhaps, simply on suspicion. Thus was the contagion of crime communicated; and prisons, instead of being reformatories, were schools of vice. On account of these things they had their "deep mental conflicts," and their "painful exercises," and their "much heaviness," but, at other times, they had their seasons of joy and rejoicing. Thus they rejoiced when with their own eyes they beheld the Lancasterian system of education in full operation in the city. Their joy, however, was somewhat damped when they discovered that among the books used in these schools was a book of sentences, consisting chiefly of translations from French writers, and abounding in objectionable sentiments. They instantly set to work, and formed a lesson-book, made up of sentences extracted entirely from the Bible, which the Emperor afterwards introduced into all the schools of Muscovy, and which was subsequently adopted by the British and Foreign School Society.* Thus, "whatsoever their hand found to do," they did with all their might.

From visiting prisons, hospitals, and schools, the Friends frequently went to visit princesses, ambassadors, and other

* Grellet's Memoirs, Vol. I., pp. 401-2.

high dignitaries of state. One of the most interesting of these visits was to Michael, the Metropolitan of the Greek Church. He received them arrayed in his rich pontifical garments, and enquired at them regarding their religious principles and practices; and, in the end, remarked that the main difference between them seemed to be that the Quakers took everything in a spiritual sense, while the Eastern Church believed that ceremonies were necessary, though religion did not consist in these.

The Czar was now returned to St. Petersburg, and it was not long till he sent for the Quakers, who had been doing their best to mitigate the sins and the sorrows of his capital city. He received them in a small cabinet, made them sit down beside him, spoke of them as "old friends," and referred to their interview in London, and his visit to their meeting. The Quakers told His Majesty what they had been doing, and what both of good and bad they had seen in the prisons and other public institutions. "The state of prisons," said Allan, "was too much alike in all countries; mankind had for ages been proceeding on a system which had vengeance for its object rather than reform; they went upon the principle of retaliation. It was generally acknowledged that this plan had failed, and it was now high time to try another, more consonant with the Christian religion, and better adapted to human nature."* They, moreover, told him what great things had been done by Mrs. Fry in Newgate, and how the work of prison reform, which had been begun by Walter Venning in St. Petersburg, might be more fully carried out. Passing from prisons to schools the Quakers told the Czar how they had discovered that sentiments of a demoralizing tendency had crept into some of the school-books, and of how, during their stay in his

* Life of Allan, Vol. I., p. 467.

city, they had prepared a book of Scripture-lessons, which might be more advantageously employed. The Czar expressed himself pleased with all that had been done, and showed himself anxious to follow out their views. The interview had now lasted for two hours, and, when the Quakers were ready to retire, the Emperor proposed that before they went they should spend a short time together in religious retirement and secret prayer. "We were disposed to do so," says Grellet, "for we felt the Lord's presence and power very near; we continued for a short time in solemn silence: our spirits were contrited together. After a while, feeling my mind clothed with the spirit of prayer and supplication, I bowed before the Divine Majesty on my knees; the Emperor kneeled by my side: we had a humbling and grateful sense that the Lord condescended graciously to hear our prayers."* A goodly spectacle this, most truly, and such as the world has seldom seen, the Emperor and the two Quakers on their knees in the stately palace of St. Petersburg!

About three weeks afterwards, Alexander again sent for Allan and Grellet. They went with the consciousness that "the canopy of heavenly love was over them." He told them he had already carried out some of their reforms, released some prisoners whom they thought unjustly confined, and was so delighted with their Scripture-lessons that he was resolved to have them introduced into all the schools in his dominions. He spoke to them of his own personal history, told "how early he had been favoured with the touches of the divine love, though he knew not whence they came;" "that he remembered crying when he was obliged to repeat forms of prayer, but that he and his brother Constantine, with whom he slept, used to pray

* Grellet's Memoirs, Vol. I., p. 411; Life of Allan, Vol. I., p. 468.

extempore, and had comfort in it; that, as he grew up, these early impressions were very much dissipated, as the Empress Catherine did not foster them, and he was placed under the care of a French 'philosophe,' who cared for none of these things; that it was not till 1812 that he began to read his Bible, when he found it bore witness to the previous testimonies of the Holy Spirit in his heart, and then he knew what they were, and whence they came." This was precisely the Quaker creed in regard to the relation of the inward light to the outward word, and it must have greatly gladdened the two honest Quaker hearts to hear this imperial testimony to its truth. It was now getting near ten o'clock, and the Czar said he should like, as before, to spend a little time in silence with them. "This was a solemn moment," says Allan; "the evidence of the divine overshadowing was clear, strong, and indisputable, and the Emperor, I am sure, felt it to be so: it was like sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. After some time, Stephen spoke most acceptably, and the Emperor, I doubt not, will long remember his communication. I believed it right for me to offer up a supplication, but, so awful did it appear, that I had great difficulty in giving way; at last, however, I rose, turned round, and knelt down, the Emperor came to the sofa and knelt down by me, and now strength was given me beyond what I had ever felt before, and the precious power accompanied the words. When it was finished, I paused a little, and then rose, he rose soon afterwards, and we sat a few minutes in silence."* At parting, the Emperor was much affected—he was bathed in tears—and, taking Allan's hand, he raised it to his lips and kissed it.

A strange story, though true—the conqueror of Napo-

* Life of Allan, Vol. II., p. 15.

leon, the most powerful potentate in the world, opening up to two strangers—men of a different language and a different religion—the secret history of his heart, kneeling down with them in prayer, doing them obeisance by kissing their hand! Was it that power of goodness, which is above all churches, and superior to all rank and all race, which had brought the American and the English Quakers into such close brotherhood with the Russian Autocrat?

Before leaving St. Petersburg, the Quakers went, by invitation, to visit the Empress Elizabeth, whom they had not hitherto seen. Alas, there was a skeleton in a closet in the proud palace on the banks of the Neva, as well as in many humbler homes! Alexander was not a faithful husband, and his wife lived in a different part of the palace. Perhaps, under a sense of the slights which had been put upon her, she told the Quakers how she frequently envied the lot of the milk-maids who went about St. Petersburg, that she might live in privacy and religious retirement. It is pleasing, however, to tell that this amiable princess, who wished she were a milk-maid as many a milk-maid wishes she were a princess, was reconciled to her husband before his death. He expired in her arms, and, in the first outburst of her grief, she wrote to her mother, "I have lost all: the angel is no more! Dead, he smiles upon me as he was wont to do while living!"*

After a residence of four months in the city of the Great Peter, the two Friends started for Moscow. Furnished with letters from Prince Galitzin, in which they were recommended to all governors of provinces as persons well known to the Emperor, they found an easy entrance into every institution which they wished to visit, and were even courted by the nobility and high officials, both spiritual

* Wheeler's Memoirs.

and civil. After seeing the ancient capital of Muscovy, which was again rising from its ashes, they proceeded still southwards, traversing some of those great steppes for which this part of Russia is distinguished. On the banks of the Dnieper, they came in contact with a tribe, called Malakans, or Spiritual Christians, who appeared to hold religious opinions almost identical with their own, and with them the two wanderers gladly fraternized. Not far from thence they met the colonies of German Menonites, who had found there a refuge and a home, and their rustic bishop left his plough in the field, and came and made arrangements for a religious meeting with them. They penetrated the Crimea, and visited spots since made famous by the marching of great armies, and the bloody struggles of Great Britain and France with the Muscovite. They stood at Kherson by the tomb of John Howard, the philanthropist, for there in the midst of his work he was struck down by fever and died. A simple pyramid of stone marked his grave, on one side of which was inscribed his name, and, underneath it, some stranger had chiselled the appropriate words, "Propter alios vixit." The Friends might well stand by the mound where the good Howard slept, "with their spirits retired within them," and think how the Lord had called them to walk in his steps. At Odessa they bade farewell to the Russian empire, but the wanderers had left the mark of their footprints behind them, and they have not been effaced to this day. They afterwards sent to the Emperor a report of what had most attracted their notice as requiring reform.*

After crossing the Black Sea the travellers entered the Bosphorus, and soon Constantinople, with its marble mosques and towering minarets, burst upon their view.

* Life of Allan, Vol. II. ; Grellet's Memoirs, Vol. I.

It was the Great Ramazan, and the countless coloured lamps, which were suspended from the minarets at night, gave to the crescent city a peculiar splendour. But the plague was also there, and threw a gloom over it. They were introduced to pachas and head dragomen, and explained to them their mission—it was simply to do good—which the Turks could not very clearly comprehend. They were, however, freely allowed to visit the prisons, hospitals, and schools, but they never gained access to the Grand Sultan, as Mary Fisher had nearly two centuries before.

Leaving Constantinople, they visited Smyrna, saw its prisons and lazar-houses, drank coffee and sherbet with the Bey Effendi, and when they found that he knew something of the Spirit's illumination, they expounded that way more perfectly to him in the midst of a circle of friends. From Smyrna they sailed to Scio, and then skirting the sunny islands of the Archipelago, they set foot upon the classic soil of Athens, wandered amid its ruined temples, and stood on Mar's Hill, where Paul, eighteen hundred years before, had proclaimed to its sneering philosophers the unknown God. Like the first apostles of Christianity, who visited this famous land, the Quakers "departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;" but in the city where St. Paul was "pressed in spirit, and testified that Jesus was Christ," they had little opportunity of doing so, only they had an interesting interview with the primate of the Greek Church. They, therefore, proceeded to Patras, and from thence to Zante, one of the Ionian Islands, where Allan was seized with fever, and for some time was seriously ill. After his partial recovery, they sailed to Corfu: and here the joint-labours of the two Friends came to a close. Allan felt it to be his duty to return home by Malta, and Grellett had a strong impression given him that he must see

Naples and Rome before his work was done. We shall follow him in his course.

Grellet set foot in Italy at Barletta, and there his Quaker garb instantly attracted attention, and brought priests and monks and all kinds of people about him to inquire what he was, and what was the religion he professed. He preached the Quaker gospel to them. When he was ready to start for Naples, he was offered an escort of soldiers to protect him from the banditti who infested the road; but he declined it, as it was contrary to his principles to trust to an arm of flesh. He had previously refused to take his passage to Italy in a frigate, as he deemed it improper for a man of peace to be sailing in a man-of-war. All this made people marvel what manner of man he was. On the way he heard of numerous robberies, and saw several brigands swinging in gibbets by the way-side; but this suggested to his mind only two thoughts—that the Lord protected those who put their trust in Him, and that hangings and quarterings did harm rather than good, as brigands were as plentiful as ever.

Sir Thomas Maitland, the commandant of the British forces in the Mediterranean, had furnished him with a letter of introduction to the Chevalier de Medici, the Prime-Minister of his Neapolitan Majesty, which he had forwarded, and now, by appointment, he went to wait upon the minister. In the ante-chamber the crowd of suitors there waiting were startled by the apparition of a man in drab clothing, and with his hat on his head; but he was almost immediately ushered into the cabinet of the chevalier, who received him most courteously, asked many questions about his travels, and the principles of his society, and readily agreed to give him orders for admittance to all the prisons and other public institutions in the city, only requesting he would communicate to him any evils he might see, and

his opinions as to how they might best be remedied. On the very next day Grellet began to visit the dungeons of Naples, which have always been proverbial for their horrors, and he saw enough to sicken and distress him.

There was a scene in a large foundling hospital which he visited, too remarkable to be omitted. As he was proceeding along one of the corridors, he happened to pass the door of the chapel, and looking in he saw several nuns and a number of girls on their knees before a madonna, gorgeously arrayed. They were singing a hymn to the virgin; but at the noise of footsteps, some of them turned round and laughed. The soul of Grellet was sorrowful when he beheld their levity and idolatry. One of the priests requested him to step into the chapel, but he excused himself on the ground, that he might not uncover his head, and that he did not wish to give any offence. They assured him that no offence would be felt, as he kept on his hat from religious considerations, and as they themselves kept on their cowls. Thereupon, the Quaker said to the chief-priest he would gladly go into their chapel if he would be allowed to speak to the nuns and young women what the Lord might communicate to him, and if he would act as his interpreter. The request was a bold one, but it was granted, and the Quaker, with his attendant priests and nuns, entered the consecrated place. When the hymn was done, he opened his mouth and told the girls how his heart had been grieved by their levity, while they pretended to be engaged in devotion, but that there was some excuse for it, as the image before them was but a piece of wood, carved by man's device, and that all acceptable worship must be offered to God alone; he exhorted them, instead of looking at candles uselessly burning at noon-day, to turn their eyes inward upon Christ, the true light, who

lighteth every man that cometh into the world, and so they would be saved.*

His work done at Naples, he proceeded to Rome. Pius VII., at that time, occupied the Pontifical throne. He had lived in troublous times. He had given to the coronation of Napoleon the religious sanction of the holy oil, and soon afterwards he found himself Napoleon's prisoner, and the States of the Church incorporated with the French empire. Then came the change, and he was restored to his dignities and dominions, amid the gratitude, the tears, and the blessings of the Catholic world. He was now well-stricken in years, and had learned wisdom from adversity.

Grellet was no sooner in the Papal city than he hurried to the Quirinal to present the letters he had received from Sir Thomas Maitland and the Chevalier Medici to the Cardinal Consalvi, the Pope's prime minister. Consalvi requested him to call at his own palace next morning. The Quaker accordingly called on the cardinal, and was kindly received. Who the Quakers were was a mystery to the Italians, and therefore Consalvi asked Grellet particularly about the principles of his sect. In giving the information desired, Grellet did not hesitate to state some truths not generally agreeable to Roman ears. Notwithstanding this the cardinal parted with him in a very friendly manner, and promised to send him orders for admittance to the different institutions which he wished to visit.

Notwithstanding the friendship he had received from men in power, and the ready entrance which he obtained to every public institution, Grellet's mind was often oppressed by indescribable suffering while he remained in Rome. These painful thoughts reappeared in the night-time, and in his dreams he felt as if he were among lions

* Grellet's Memoirs, Vol. II., pp. 53-5.

and serpents, and treading upon scorpions. Albeit he was thus distressed, he resolved to make an effort to get admission to the Inquisition, and thus to thrust himself into the very lions' den. The necessary orders were, with some difficulty, procured, and he entered the buildings near the Church of St. Peter, where so many heretics, like himself, had bid farewell to liberty and life. He saw the underground cellars in which the Inquisition had sat and questioned, and tortured and condemned their victims. He saw the cells in which the unhappy captives were confined, and had pointed out the one in which Molinos had lain. He was conducted to the public library, and then, after some hesitation, led into the secret one, where, ranged on shelves, he saw the legion of books which the Inquisition had condemned. From this he was taken to the secretary's room, and permitted to inspect the records of this dark and deadly court, whose buildings he had explored. There he found, registered with business-like accuracy, the name and crime of every one who had suffered, the tortures he endured, the secrets he let out, the death which he died. Everything, however, convinced Grellet that the prisons of the Inquisition had not been used for many years. He came out of its dreary portals thankful he was safe.*

This was a considerable feat for a Quaker to perform, but he now hinted to Cardinal Consalvi that he would not stand acquitted in the Divine sight unless he attempted to see the Pope. The cardinal undertook to arrange a private interview; and, according to appointment, he proceeded to the Vatican. After being led through several apartments, he arrived at a private cabinet, and the Holy Father's valet, arrayed like a cardinal, opened the door, and an-

* Grellet's Memoirs, Vol. II., pp. 71-3.

nounced, "The Quaker is come." "Let him come in," said his Holiness. Upon this the priest who was to act as interpreter led him in; but just as he was entering, some one behind deftly whipped off his hat, and before he had time to look around, the door was closed. Well, there he was, with his hat off, in the presence of the Pope; but there was no help for it, for the door was closed. The spare old man, with a serious mild countenance, rose to receive his Quaker visitor, but he appeared feeble, and immediately resumed his seat. He told Grellet he had read the reports he had made to Consalvi regarding the prisons and other public establishments, and said that he was resolved to make several changes, as he believed that Christian tenderness was more likely to effect reformation than harshness. He said he was glad that Grellet was convinced of the change which had taken place in Rome in regard to the Inquisition, and that he was anxious to bring about a similar change in Spain and Portugal, but that popes were not so powerful as was supposed. He even assented to the proposition that God alone is Lord of the conscience, and that the weapons of the Christian should not be carnal, but spiritual. Encouraged by this, Grellet spoke of the sin of burning Bibles, and of the licentiousness of many monks, and of the spiritual anointing which alone could make a man a minister; to all which the Pope also politely agreed. Finally, he felt, as he tells us, the love of Christ flowing in his heart towards the good old man, and so he became more special and searching in his address. He alluded to his sufferings under Napoleon, his deliverance from all his enemies, the prolongation of his days, and suggested that if now, in his old age, he would declare that Jesus Christ alone was Head of the Church, his sun would set in brightness, and his portion in eternity would be with the sanctified ones amid the

joys of salvation. The Holy Pontiff had hung his head while the Quaker spoke, and now he courteously rose, and addressing Grellet, expressed a desire that "the Lord would bless and protect him wherever he went." It was the Pope's blessing; but what could the old man think of his plain-spoken friend in drab? *

When Grellet returned to the outer apartment, his hat was restored to him. The valet made many apologies (and, no doubt, some secret grimaces), remarking that he understood the same plan was resorted to when Friends were admitted into the presence of the King of England. His mission in the City of the Seven Hills was now accomplished, and he felt at liberty to depart.

Turning his face to the north, our benevolent broadbrim now travelled to Florence, Bologna, Venice, and Verona; crossed the Tyrolese Alps; visited the cities of Bavaria and Würtemberg; inspected their prisons, and had conferences with their kings; passed into Switzerland, and, to his great joy, met with William Allan at Geneva, lingering by the grave of his wife. They were reunited, however, only to part again, for Allan started direct for London, and Grellet travelled into France, and lingered at places where he thought he could do good; revived the recollections of the land of his birth; saw his mother, now more than eighty years of age, but with "a mind clear and green in the Divine Life;" and finally reached England, after an absence of nearly two years.

No more remarkable and surprising journey was ever made since apostolic days—if even then. These two members of an obscure sect had made the circuit of Europe, and had found that above all churches and creeds there was a serene region where all men might meet and love

* Grellet's Memoirs, Vol. II., pp. 78-80.

one another. They had visited the Lutherans of Norway and Sweden, and as men of peace, had kissed the cheek of the martial Bernadotte; they had prayed on their bended knees, by the side of the Czar, in his capital, and in their plain drab had received the blessing of the mitred metropolitan of the Eastern Church. They had talked with pachas and beys in the city of Constantine regarding the true light of the world; they had spoken to the slippery Greeks in Athens, Corinth, and Scio, of honesty and truth, as Christian virtues, which they evidently knew not; and, finally, in the city of Romulus and Hildebrand, one of them, had stood before the Pope in his palace, had proclaimed the rights of conscience, and the unction of the Spirit, and hinted that the Holy Father should abdicate his pretended headship of the Church, and so die in peace.

What was the secret of their success—of their friendly reception everywhere by all Churches and by all men? The first cause is to be found in the very vulgar fact that they carried with them excellent letters of introduction, which, at this peculiar stage of the world's civilization, have a very magic power. Another cause lies in the circumstance that they belonged to no Church which was feared or hated by the other Churches. Had they belonged to any of the great Protestant communities, they would have been received with suspicion, both in St. Petersburg and Rome. But they were neither Lutherans nor Calvinists; were neither of the Church of England nor of any other State Church; they were simply Friends, holding a somewhat mystic creed, and repudiating almost all forms of worship together; and metropolitans, patriarchs, and popes at once perceived that they had nothing to fear from the encroachments of such a religion. But, undoubtedly, the chief cause of their friendly welcome everywhere was, that they came not to preach sectarianism, but to do good; it was to

visit the captive in his cell, the sick man in his hospital, the madman in his asylum, the little child in his class-room; and to give the benefit of their large experience in the management of all such institutions. Their mission was one of mercy and universal good-will: and, therefore, they were received in all love and honour as the apostles of a gospel which is known and received in all the ends of the earth.





Chapter XVII.

IN 1822 there was to be a Congress of Sovereigns at Verona, to arrange the affairs of Spain, and otherwise to unravel the tangled threads of European politics. It instantly occurred to the Friends that this was an opportunity not to be let slip, to bring the subject of slavery before the assembled powers. For, though the slave-trade had been abolished on paper by almost every civilized country, it nevertheless flourished more vigorously than ever, and every person saw that it must be treated as piracy if it was to be put down. This thought had especially entered into the secret heart of William Allan; for was not his friend, the Czar Alexander, to be there; and had he not gained his confidence, and knelt and prayed by his side in his imperial palace at St. Petersburg? What might not be done through a potentate so mighty, and, at the same time, apparently, so well disposed!*

In September, 1822, Allan was on the road to Vienna, where he knew the Czar, on his way to Verona, was to remain some time on a visit to his brother of Austria. As he went on his way, he met, on the western bank of the Rhine, not far from Strasburg, a people called the "Inspirées," who, like the Quakers, believed in the immediate

* Life of William Allan, Vol. II., p. 240.

influence of the Holy Spirit, in the unlawfulness of war and oaths, and that the sacraments formed no part of Christianity; but who differed from them in singing hymns and offering up stated prayers in their worship. He attended one of their meetings, and rejoiced in the measure of illumination they had received. Pursuing his journey, he reached Vienna toward the end of the month.*

It was not long till the Czar sent for him, and received him as kindly as ever. "I have nothing to do all the evening," said Alexander, "but to hear what you have got to say. But shall we not pray first?" Allan said he would rather speak first, and then pray afterwards. The Emperor agreed, and Allan, after unburdening his mind in regard to the Menonite colonies and the Lancaster schools in the Russian empire, approached the slave-trade. He showed the Emperor the picture of a slaver which had recently been captured, and of the thumbscrews which had been found on board, and urged upon him to use his influence with the potentates in the Congress to get the trade declared piracy. Alexander declared that he thoroughly sympathized with his sentiments, and would do what he could. Other subjects were then talked of, among which were the Greek insurrection, now burst out, and Austrian intolerance. "During the whole of the conversation," says Allan, "there was such a sweetness to be felt, that all fear was taken away, and we conversed with the familiarity of old friends and acquaintances." It was now drawing towards ten o'clock, and the Emperor, taking hold of the Quaker's hand, said, "Have you anything for me? I am

* Life of Allan, Vol. II., pp. 247-56.

The Quakers have always shown an extreme solicitude to find out people like themselves, and to fraternize with them. Even, in Hindustan, they have discovered a sect called Sands, who, they think, are virtually Quakers.—See Gurney's Peculiarities of the Society of Friends, pp. 10-11. Ed. 1825.

now ready to hear what you may have to communicate." "After a short silence," says Allan, "I addressed him in the fresh flowing of Gospel love." . . . "We were both contrited with the sweet feeling of Divine goodness; and, on my remarking that this made me forget for the moment the difference in our relative situations, he put his arm affectionately around me." Here let the curtain drop.

When the curtain dropped, the Emperor was seen with his arms encircling the Quaker most lovingly; when it rises again, the two are seen, a few days afterwards, sitting together in the palace at Vienna, chatting about the slave-trade and the approaching Congress. "Will you not take some tea with me?" said the Emperor. "I shall be happy," said the Quaker. Whereupon the Emperor rings a little silver hand-bell, and servants appear bearing in the refreshing beverage; but the Quaker, on tasting his cup, discovers it is sweetened with sugar, and sugar he has vowed not to taste, for it is the produce of slave labour, and, therefore, he communicates his scruples to the Emperor, who orders a cup to be brought into which the saccharine element has not entered. Again the conversation flows on, and the Czar begins to unbosom himself of his religious experiences, his temptations, his trials, his continual warfare. At length all talk ceases, and, in Quaker style, the two sit in deep silence, and then together they kneel down upon the floor and pray. When they rise, and have their little season of silence again, the Emperor kisses the Quaker, and so they part.* A very Quaker with Quakers does this Emperor appear.

Vienna, and especially the courts of the palace, were bustling with princes, plenipotentiaries, and diplomatists—great men and little men—lords and flunkeys, grandees

* Life of Allan, Vol. II., pp. 257-62.

with the bluest blood of Castile, and scullions, who had been taken from the dunghill, and set among princes, all on their way to the Congress, and discussing what was likely to be done there. Allan had interviews with several of these, for, in such a circle, his broad brim and breastless coat were quite as conspicuous as a marshal's uniform, or a courtier's velvet and lace and fine linen. Almost everybody knew him, and he knew everybody. More especially, he had much talk with Prince Esterhazy and the Duke of Wellington, the British Plenipotentiary to the Congress, and they advised him to proceed to Verona, that he might be able to give any information which might be required in regard to the slave-trade. To Verona, therefore, he went. When there, however, he learned there were insuperable difficulties in the way of getting the powers to bind themselves to treat slave-traders as pirates; and, in the chief object of his mission, therefore, he failed.

While at Verona, however, he had two interviews with the Emperor. In the parting one, he spoke of the persecutions to which the Waldenses were subjected, and stated that the Duke of Wellington had received instructions to remonstrate with the King of Sardinia.* This led to the general subject of toleration. The Czar thought that if sectaries attacked the religion of the state, the magistrate must interfere; but the Quaker expounded to him the more excellent way of his sect as to perfect freedom in matters of faith. At length the conversation ceased, and the Emperor proposed they should pray. But Allan suggested silence. "We then," says he, "had a precious tender time of silent waiting upon the Lord, and were favoured

* This conversation was the cause of the Czar taking a profound interest in this mountain people, and afterwards founding an hospital among them at La Tour.—See Grellet's Memoirs, Vol. II., pp. 359-60.

with a sweet holy feeling; at length I felt it right to kneel down and offer up thanksgiving, and to supplicate for continued preservation. The Emperor knelt by me. The power of the Holy Spirit accompanied the words." When they had risen from their knees, after a little pause the Czar said, "Now, I want you to tell me a little how you do in silent worship, for I find that, without some words, or something to fix my mind upon, I am apt to wander; I find it difficult to fix my thoughts; how is it with you?" Allan confessed that he had often to struggle with the same tendency, but that the only way was to keep a watch over the thoughts, and, so often as they wandered, to bring them back again. The Quaker rose to leave, and the Czar embraced and kissed him thrice over. "Oh!" said he, when and where shall we meet again?"* They never more met in this world; perchance, they have now met in the better one.

Two years after this Thomas Shillitoe was in St. Petersburg, and was twice received by the Emperor. They talked together of their religious experiences; they sat in silence; they knelt down side by side and prayed. And then the proud Autocrat kissed the old cobbler, and so they bid each other adieu. A year afterwards the Czar was dead. A devout man truly, and half a Quaker, though the Czar of Muscovy and the head of the Greek Church.

* Life of Allan, Vol. II., pp. 284-7.



Chapter XVIII.

WE must now return from our pleasant tour to the Continent, where we have seen beggars riding on horseback, and Quakers drinking tea with kings, and enter the thorny track of religious controversy: for though the Friends had no creed, and were all under a Divine illumination, they began to quarrel among themselves about forms of faith. From the very first, it was a fundamental article of belief among them that the Scriptures were not the primary rule of faith and manners. The same Spirit which dictated the Holy Scriptures to the prophets and apostles spoke in every man's heart; and it was from these whisperings of the Spirit within us that we could learn the truth in its greatest purity. George Fox received his religion by an immediate revelation of the Spirit, though he afterwards discovered it in his Bible. This identity, however, was to be expected, as he and his followers argued, for it was the same Spirit which spoke in him which spoke in the holy men of old who wrote the Scriptures. The Quakers, therefore, while holding that they had the highest revelation of God in their own hearts, read their Bible and revered it.

It will readily be seen that this doctrine of the superior-

ity of the inward light might easily be wrested by a rigid logician to his own destruction. For it might be argued that if we receive religious truth by immediate revelation, there is no need of any other revelation, or, at any rate, any other pretended revelation must be subjected to the test of this, and rejected or received only in so far as it agrees with it. If the two oracles agreed in their responses, it was well; but if in any point they differed, it seemed to follow as a necessary consequence that the book revelation must be subordinated to the heart one. Thoughts like these had naturally sprung up in many Quakers' minds—for man is a reasoning animal, and is fond of driving principles to their results. In the beginning of the eighteenth century several Quakers, both in England and America, had the courage to say what they thought. They maintained not merely the superiority of the inward light, but on its authority they presumed to judge, and judging, to reject and condemn portions of the written Word. One female theologian, in especial, brought great grief to the sect by declaring that no part of Scripture could be received which was inconsistent with the moral perfections of God, as mirrored in the human mind; and hence she rejected the narrative of the extirpation of the Canaanites by Divine command, and all other Scripture of a similar kind which shocked her moral sense or her humane instincts. Another fair divine declared that she had no revelation of miracles being performed, and though she did not deny their possibility, she seemed to doubt it.* It was apparently the philosophy of Hume which had disguised itself as an angel of light, and crept into her mind.

But it was in America that these opinions grew to their

* Rathbone's Narrative of Events that have taken place in Ireland among the Society called Quakers.

greatest height. There, indeed, they seemed to have come down by tradition, for George Keith tells us how his spirit was vexed by those who maintained that the revelation given in their own heart was to be preferred to the sacred writings, and even seemed to deny the reality of Christ's life by referring the Gospel narrative to what occurs in every Christian's experience. It is a history, said they, of the Christ within, miraculously begotten from above, tempted of the devil, earnest to do good, persecuted, put to death, but triumphant over death. It is probable that Keith, in some measure, misrepresented the opinions of his adversaries; but it is, at the same time, certain that many of the early American Quakers held strong views in regard to the superiority of the inner to the outer revelation; and in truth, by doing so, only carried out the principles of Barclay and Fox. These opinions thus early manifested appear to have lingered among the American Friends till the beginning of the nineteenth century, when they received such a development as resulted in the disruption of the society.

Elias Hicks, an eloquent and influential minister, was the leader of the party, which, aiming at a high spirituality, subordinated the Bible to the oracle in the heart. So early as 1805 he had begun to advocate these views, but somewhat timidly, perhaps, because his ideas were not yet fully matured and systematised. In 1808 he spoke more boldly, depreciating the authority of Holy Scripture, undervaluing, if not denying, the redemption of Christ, and questioning the observance, in any shape, of the first day of the week, as this seemed to imply that it was a day more holy than others.* Stephen Grellet was scandalised by his way of talking, and took him to task. The remonstrances of Ste-

* Grellet's Memoirs, Vol. I., pp. 142-3.

phen, however, appear to have done no good, for he went on preaching his principles more earnestly than ever; and the Friends in great multitudes were convinced, if indeed they did not hold the same opinions from the beginning.

Quakerism had flourished much more vigorously in America than in England. The Quakers in England at present do not exceed 14,000. In America they are estimated at 150,000. In England there is only one yearly meeting, where the representatives of the Society from the whole island assemble. In America there are eight yearly meetings, each with its own province, and possessed of its own absolute jurisdiction, though in communication with all the rest, and with the parent meeting at London. This large body was nearly equally divided in regard to the preaching of Hicks—some holding that he was the truest exponent of primitive Quakerism, others that he was no better than an apostle of natural religion, that he had denied the faith, and was almost worse than an infidel. By and by these disputes found their way into the monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings, and wrangling and bad blood broke in upon their silence, and even entered into their devotions. While the controversy was at its hottest, in 1826, the active, ubiquitous English Quaker, Thomas Shillitoe, whose acquaintance we have already made, arrived in America, and was claimed by the Hicksites as an adherent. It is certain that he preached in the meeting-house at Long Island, where Hicks habitually ministered; and when he was done, Hicks rose up and declared that his doctrines were identical with his own. In like manner, in an address which he issued to the Seneca Indians, he declared the Scriptures were not the only means of salvation, or sole rule of conduct. But other utterances which he gave at other times were of a different stamp, and he never left the orthodox Friends.

The controversy turned, in a considerable measure, upon the condition of the heathen. It was an ancient and radical principle of the sect that an evangelical and saving light was given by God to every man who came into the world, and that he, by following the guidance of this light might, without any other help, come to heaven. Robert Barclay, the apologist, elaborately developed this principle, and besides referring to heathen philosophers who possessed this divine light, and were saved by it, he quoted the case of Hai Eben Yokdan. According to the story, this man was thrown into the sea on the day of his birth, and carried by the waves to an uninhabited island, where he was suckled by a roe, and grew up to manhood—a perfect child of nature. Here, without any intercourse with a single human being, he reached, as was affirmed, to a deep knowledge of religious truth, as taught in the Koran; and when discovered, after fifty years of solitude, he could explain all the tenets of the Moslem faith. “Without converse of man, living in an island alone,” says Barclay, “he attained to such a profound knowledge of God as to have immediate converse with him, and to affirm that the best and most certain knowledge of God is not that which is attained by premises premised and conclusions deduced, but that which is enjoyed by the conjunction of the mind of man with the supreme intellect, after the mind is purified from its corruptions, and is separated from all bodily images, and is gathered into a profound stillness.” The states of abstraction here referred to in which the highest knowledge of God was attained were produced, as the story went, by Hai Eben Yokdan shutting his eyes, closing his ears, and performing rapid gyrations, till all outward sense was lost; in other words, till he was perfectly dizzy. All this the simple-minded but amiable apologist fully believed, and took for actual history, but, as might have been seen

by even the most credulous, it was simply an Arabian tale. The fact, however, that he gave it a place in his system of theology shows very clearly his opinion as to the universality of the divine and saving light. Hicks maintained that this universal light was nothing but our innate ideas of right and wrong—the law written on the heart—and that by attending to these, any man, whether heathen or Christian, might be saved. It was a favourite maxim of his, that what was known of God was manifested only in man.

It will be seen there was ground here for very fierce religious controversy, and the controversy, once wakened, raged for several years. It was debated not merely which opinions were true and which false, but which were in accordance with the ancient principles of the sect. At length, in 1827, the explosion came—the society burst in twain. First of all, in the yearly meeting at Philadelphia, the capital of Quakerism, whose very name speaks of brotherly love, the division began, and the Hicksites formed themselves into a separate meeting. The schism spread to New York and the other yearly meetings, till in five out of the eight there was a complete rupture. The Hicksites declared that one half of the whole body had gone with them, but their opponents would not admit more than a third.

The creed of the Hicksites or Liberal Quakers (as they called themselves) is simple and consistent. Christ, they say, is the light of the world, and every man born into the world receives a portion of this light, which he is bound to follow as his supreme guide in matters of religion. The teaching of the Bible must therefore be subordinated to it, and judged by it. But farther, as this heavenly light within them is itself the Christ, the Son of God, the Redeemer, they own no other Saviour, and need none. To

the Christ in their own bosom—the Christ who reveals himself there in holy affections and heavenly thoughts—and not to the Christ who died on Calvary they look for salvation. The atonement, as a work outside themselves has no meaning and no merit for them. As representing their own soul's passion and victory over death it is very precious. The letter of the Scripture killeth, it is the Spirit which giveth life. As they recognise no holy places, so they acknowledge no sacred days, for all these things, they declare, are but the beggarly elements of an old and dead religion. These, they say, were the sentiments of Fox, and Barclay, and Penn, and they are theirs, and so they are the true representatives of primitive Quakerism.

The only obscurity in this Confession of Faith is in regard to what is meant by the "Christ within" or the "Divine Light," for these two things are declared to be identical. The eminent American historian Bancroft, in his lively sketch of the Quakers, declares that Fox's inner light was essentially the same as the intuitions and *a priori* conceptions of Emmanuel Kant. As the professor at Königsberg, he tells us, derived all philosophy from the voice of the soul, and made the oracle within the categorical rule of all practical morality, so the founder of the Quakers drew religion from the same source. He based his theology upon consciousness. Schiller, Chateaubriand, Coleridge, Lamartine, Wordsworth, are all, he asserts, disciples in the same school; and Cousin, the great apostle of Ecclecticism, constantly speaks of reason as the inner light, and sometimes seems to borrow the language of Barclay in expounding his philosophy.* It must be acknowledged that the anxiety of some of the early Quakers to get support for

* History of the United States.

their new theology from the old philosophy gives some ground for this interpretation of their creed. Penn declared that the "Eternal Word," the "Divine Light," the "Holy Spirit," was no other than the "Divine Mind" of Anaxagoras, the "Good Spirit" of Socrates, the "God in man" of Hieron, the "Eternal principle of Faith" of Plato, the "Root of the Soul" of Plotinus, the "Inner Guide" of Plutarch, so that these heathen philosophers knew and were partakers of the Gospel Logos.* He identified their light with the divine light—the Christ; and now, with equal reason, Hicks and Bancroft have identified the divine light with the intuitions and *a priori* conceptions of modern philosophy. It is certain, I think, notwithstanding these quotations, that the old Quakers meant something more than intuition when they spoke of the light of life, but it is equally certain the modern Quakers, of the American liberal school, do not. We need scarcely hesitate to accept the historian as an interpreter of their principles, and believe that they regard Reason as sovereign and supreme, and venerate most the Bible which lies open in their hearts.

* See the close of his Advice to Children. Elisha Bates, in his Doctrines of Friends, which is regarded as a good exposition of modern Quaker orthodoxy, uses similar language. "Pythagoras," says he, "calls this divine principle, the 'Great Light and Salt of Ages;'" Anaxagoras called it "The Divine Mind;" Socrates called it "A good Spirit;" Timeus styled it "An unbegotten Principle and Author of all Light;" Hieron, Pythagoras, Epictetus, and Seneca say it is "God in Man, or God within;" Plato calls it the "Eternal, Ineffable, and Perfect Principle of Truth—the Light and Spirit of God;" Plotin calls it "The Root of the Soul—the Divine Principle in Man;" Philo, "The Divine Power—the Infallible Immortal Law in the Minds of Men;" and Plutarch denominates it "The Law and Living Rule of the Mind, the Interior Guide of the Soul, and Everlasting Foundation of Virtue." Of the operation of this divine principle in the mind Plato gives this striking testimony—"The Light and Spirit of God are as wings to the soul, or as that which raises it up into a sensible communion with God," &c.—P. 204.

The news of the disruption in the American Society soon reached England, and its merits were everywhere keenly canvassed by Friends. There were, as a matter of course, varieties of view, but the Quakers in England were steadied by the presence of the Established Church, as Dissenters always are; and when the subject was brought before the yearly meeting, in 1829, the doctrines of Hicks were condemned as anti-Christian, and his followers disowned. But the matter did not end here. The opinions which had been embraced by so large a portion of the American Quakers had the effect of driving many of the English ones in the opposite direction. They had seen the results which had flowed from refusing to acknowledge the Scriptures as the primary rule of faith, and from attaching too spiritual a meaning to their contents, and therefore they began to bethink themselves if it would not be wise to accept the Bible as the surest standard of orthodoxy, and to construe it more literally than they had hitherto done.

In 1835 a book appeared, entitled "A Beacon to the Society of Friends," written by Isaac Crewdson of Manchester, a man greatly beloved and honoured in the Society. It consisted, in a great measure, of a commentary on various passages in the sermons of Hicks, and while it condemned his heresies, it hinted that such heresies were sure to come of the principles prevalent in the Society. It spoke doubtingly of the doctrine of the inner and universal light. While it warned the Friends against the errors of Hicks, it recommended the adoption of water baptism, the Lord's Supper, and other usages abandoned by Quakers, but clearly taught in Scripture, if the Scripture was to be received according to its literal meaning. It even questioned the sovereign virtues of silence; and cast ridicule upon some of the favourite Quaker phrases, such as "crea-

turely exertions," "sinking down into oneself," "centreing down," "digging deep," "dwelling deep," "turning inward." Such a book, coming from such a quarter, instantly attracted attention; and whilst it was being read by Friends, with very various feelings, it was seized upon by outside scoffers to turn Quakerism into a subject for laughter.

The Friends were in dismay; for they seemed to have escaped Scylla only to be dashed on Charybdis. The Hicksites had set the inward light above the Scriptures, and now the Beaconites set the Scriptures above the inward light. The former had wandered into the inner mazes of mysticism, the latter had sought relief from their perplexities by lapsing into dogmatism. The yearly meeting of 1835 appointed a committee to correspond with the quarterly meeting for Lancashire to deal with Crewdson, and, if possible, heal him of his heresy. The most prominent member of this committee was Joseph John Gurney of Earlham, of whom we have already heard a little. He was born at Earlham Hall, near Norwich, in 1788, and his Quaker biographer, eschewing all pride of ancestry, delights himself in telling, as is told of all our aristocracy, that the Gurneys came over with William the Conqueror. It is much more to our purpose to know that he was the brother of Mrs. Fry, and brother-in-law of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton and Samuel Hoare—a very wonderful family of love. Though a Quaker by birth, he was not much of a Quaker in his early youth; he found pleasure in music and dancing, and other such sinful amusements, which were suffered in his father's house. All the world knows that the Gurneys, notwithstanding their Norman blood and Quaker faith, have been bankers from ancient times, and made rich by money-changing; and Joseph John was, in due season, initiated in the way of discounting bills, and making advances on good security. And the work pros-

pered in his hand, and he made rich too; but he could make a good use of his wealth, and one rejoices to find him, on one occasion, when he had made up his balance-sheet and found himself prosperous, handing over £500 to his sister, Elizabeth Fry—"to oil her wheels," as he expressed it.* Nor was this the only £500 he spent in such a way.

Gurney had gradually become a stricter Quaker. He had naturally strong religious convictions, as well as a benevolent heart, and, in the year 1818, when he was thirty years of age, he was acknowledged as a minister within the Society. In all the philanthropic movements then in progress he took an active interest, more especially in his sister's efforts to reform prison discipline; and, being no bigot, he numbered among his intimate friends many of the great and good men of all churches—Wilberforce, Chalmers, Brougham, Sir James Mackintosh, and others of a like stature. He was the principal means of converting Mrs. Opie, the novelist, to Quakerism, when she had reached middle life, and felt it no easy matter to assume the Quaker dress, and "*thee*" and "*thou*" her old acquaintances. In 1824 he published his "Distinguishing Views and Practices of the Society of Friends," which speedily acquired a wide popularity, and has ever since been regarded as a book of high authority in the Society.†

One of the points which Gurney, in this work, sets himself most earnestly to prove is the immediate and perceptible influence of the Divine Spirit on the human soul. Now, it is most true that the object of every thought and

* Memoirs of Joseph John Gurney, Vol. I., p. 152.

† The first title of this book was "Observations on the Religious Peculiarities of the Society of Friends." So it stands even in the fifth edition, which is before me.

feeling which rises up in the soul is perceptible, or, in other words, is revealed to us in consciousness. We have thoughts and feelings, whether divine or human, only in so far as we are conscious of their objects. All this is certain. But, when the Spirit stirs up holy thoughts and affections within us, do we necessarily perceive it to be the Spirit? Do we *distinguish* between the inspirations of the Holy Ghost and our own human thoughts? We suspect that this is the Quaker creed, though, it is certain, that most men cannot make this discrimination, though all are said to have a divine illumination; and Gurney does not help us by distinctly telling us how he knows which of his ideas are inspired, and which are merely suggested by the ordinary laws of mental association. "How are we to distinguish between the divine influence and the working of our own imagination?" said the Duchess de Broglie, the daughter of Madame de Staël, to William Allan, at Copet. Here was the rub. The clever daughter of the celebrated mother had hit the nail on the head. Allan could only answer that it was here the difficulty lay, but that, if we resigned ourselves to God's will, and sought for instruction in prayer, sufficient evidence would be given us.* But is such evidence ever given, and, if so, to whom? Most men have never had it, and so they must have had divine thoughts without knowing them to be so: they have "entertained angels unawares." The few who declare they have it, have never yet explained in what it consists, and how they manage to distinguish between thoughts which are purely their own and those which spring from a higher source; how they know when to be silent, and when to speak, as they never speak but when they are inspired? Here is the mystery and the marvel. We seem to get

* Life of Allan, Vol. II., p. 302.

a crucible, in which divine and human thoughts may be separated, in a letter of Gurney to his brother-in-law, Fowell Buxton. "My only course," he says, "is to go to my Lord with the question—'Is it of myself, or is it of Thee?'—or, in other words, 'Is it wrong, or is it right?'—the two questions being perfectly equivalent."* If whatever is right is of God, and whatever is wrong is of ourselves, then the whole mystery is explained. And, certainly, in one sense, whatever is just or true is divine.

Under the guidance of this good man, but somewhat mystical divine, the Committee attempted to reclaim Crewdson and his friends from their errors. But their efforts were vain: Crewdson and his followers seceded from the Society of Friends. At first, they formed themselves into a separate meeting, and had their own worship; but, as they found there was little to separate them from the Church of England, or some of the dissenting churches which crowd the land, they, after a time, attached themselves to these, as their different fancies led them. Those who sympathized with them in other parts of the country did the same. Thus, they melted away; and now no religious sect exists as a memorial of the Crewdsonite controversy and secession. There can be no doubt, however, that the controversy led the Friends to pay greater deference than they had hitherto done to the Sacred Volume, and its effects are seen at this day.

Having smitten the Crewdsonites, Gurney was anxious to smite the Hicksites, which he could only do in America, as there were no Hicksites at home. He, therefore, brought the matter before the May Meeting in 1837, begging a "certificate of unity" to travel to America on a religious mission. After some discussion his request was granted,

* Life of Gurney, Vol. II., p. 73.

and he cheerfully sacrificed a third of his income, and crossed the sea to preach the orthodox Quaker theology in the New World.* He traversed a great part of the North American continent; saw the slaves in their rice-fields, and the Indians in their woods, as well as the citizens of all the great cities in their stores and warehouses. He attended the meetings of the Society wherever he could, and preached in the midst of their congregations when the Spirit moved him. He was introduced to the President, Martin van Buren, the ex-President, John Quincy Adams, to Henry Clay, Dr. Channing, Moses Stuart, and other American celebrities. He met Stephen Grellet, that grand old Quaker, who had so often traversed both Europe and America "doing good;" and was still as zealous in his work as ever, though the Hicksite secession had entered deep into his soul, and the infirmities of age were coming upon him. He spoke to the Hicksites who came to his meetings, but their light was different from his, and they refused to be diverted from following it. In many cases they withstood him to his face.† Moreover, a Quaker, named Wilbur, also rose up to oppose him, but he was disowned by orthodox and heterodox alike. Three hundred left the Society with him, and formed a sect distinct both from the old Quakers and the new. After a sojourn of three years, in which he no doubt sowed some good seed, but in which he did not crush the heresy, Gurney returned home. The Quakers in America are, to this day, a divided as well as a peculiar people.

* Gurney's Memoirs, Vol. II., pp. 77-9.

† Gurney's Journal is provokingly general and obscure in regard to these matters. Everything is glossed over, and, instead of plain facts, we get only lamentations and moans, on account of unpleasant things which had occurred—but what they precisely were we are not told.



Chapter XXX.

WHILE the din of the Hicksite controversy was still ringing in America, the spirit of restlessness came again upon Stephen Grellet, and he must recross the ocean. Perhaps, he felt that polemics were not a wholesome atmosphere for his soul to dwell in. After entering in his diary, in March, 1831, his resolution to cross the Atlantic once more, he adds—"My beloved wife, on this occasion, as on all preceding ones, which have not been few since we became united together by the endearing tie of the marriage covenant, freely, and with Christian cheerfulness, resigns me to the Lord's service. She is uniformly a great encourager to me to act the part of a faithful servant of the best of Masters; her soul travails with mine in such a manner that she had been deeply sensible of the nature of the service that the Great Master called me to, before I had disclosed to her or to any man the secret exercises of my heart." *

A doubting philosopher would, probably, remark upon this passage, that Stephen's wife could have no difficulty in divining his thoughts, as, from past experience, she knew his tendencies; and one, without being a philosopher at all, might at least think that she must have been made of different flesh and blood from most wives to give up her

* Memoirs, Vol. II., pp. 228-9.

husband for years with such happy contentment. However this may be, everything must yield to the heavenly impulse, and so Grellet, now approaching threescore years, a time when most men think of putting off their harness, left his wife and daughter behind him, and sailed for Liverpool. He was comforted when he reached London by meeting friend Allan, who took him to his house, and kindly entertained him for many days.

Allan's liberal heart was ever devising liberal things, and, shortly before this, he had taken a farm at Lindfield, and established there, what he called, "Colonies at Home." It was an experiment intended to prove that many, who would otherwise inevitably be paupers, might be made to support themselves by having assigned to them small allotments of land upon moderate terms, and being directed in the cultivation of them. The Friends visited the "Home" colony together, and saw a happy and apparently thriving community—boys and old men and maidens all busy at work.* Allan afterwards frequently urged the success of this experiment on the rulers and potentates of the earth; but, though such a scheme still floats in many benevolent visionary brains, it has never been realized on such a scale, and in such a way, as to prove that it could save the land from the sore burden of pauperism.†

Grellet's "impressions" led him to remain a whole year in England, visiting the Quaker meetings, and watering

* Life of Allan, Vol. III. ; Memoirs of Grellet, Vol. II.

† I have had occasion to note the many philanthropic projects started by the Quakers. Some of them deserve to be called discoveries. Their inventive illumination went beyond the region of pure benevolence. It is remarkable that the first public railway in the world—that betwixt Stockton and Darlington—was almost entirely the property of Quakers, and is called the "Quaker Line" to this day. The sagacious Edward Pease was the first patron of Stephenson.—See Smiles' Life of George Stephenson.

them. On one of his journeys he learned how Hannah Field, a sister Quaker from America, had, during a recent visit, prophesied to two Friends that they would be attacked by highwaymen on their return from a meeting they had attended, which happened as it had been foretold, and Grellet saw in this a new proof of the reality of the Spirit's work in illuminating the mind. On another occasion, he was thrown from his carriage and severely hurt, but, even while the wheels were passing over his body, he heard a voice distinctly saying to him, "Thou shalt not die but live," and visions of Spain, and what the Lord had in store for him there, rose before his swimming brain. He was sufficiently recovered to attend the yearly meeting of the Society in May, in which he declares, in his peculiar diction, "there was a living spirit of travail present;" and with joy he saw Friend Allan get a commission to proceed with him to the Continent on a Gospel tour.*

"So they being sent forth," as they believed, "by the Holy Ghost," departed unto Holland. They went as the preachers of the gospel of universal goodwill—worthy successors of Barnabas and Saul. They travelled through Holland, Hanover, Prussia, Saxony, Bohemia, Austria, Hungary, Bavaria, Würtemberg, Switzerland, Piedmont, France, and Spain—a more extensive tour than any they had previously made. As was their custom, they visited the hospitals, prisons, and schools, spoke to their inmates of the Good Physician and the Great Deliverer, and advised those in authority to make what changes appeared to be needful. But their time was also greatly occupied in visiting princes and potentates, for their fame as philanthropists everywhere went before them, and prepared a way for them. Very often, therefore, they left a prison to

* Memoirs, Vol. II.

go to a palace, and the rulers of the land, whatever their creed, gladly received from them suggestions for the reform of their public institutions. Even in Spain they were admitted to an audience of the king and queen; and, as there was no clever chamberlain at the door, as in Rome, to whisk off their hats as they entered, they appeared covered in the royal presence. A little princess, two years and a half old, stared at them so much, that they came to the conclusion that it was their hats which had excited her amazement, and said so. When the conversation verged upon religion, Grellet lifted his hat and preached his gospel to their most Catholic Majesties. He likened the king to Nebuchadnezzar who had been driven from his throne and restored again. "Who is this King Nebuchadnezzar?" said Ferdinand, not being very deeply read in Hebrew history. The Queen knew her Bible better, and explained to her consort who and what his royal brother was to whom reference had been made. This matter being made plain, the Quaker proceeded to exhort them to grant a universal toleration, and to signalise the concluding years of their reign by deeds of clemency. The royal pair took it all in good part, and afterwards granted orders for their admission into the prisons and hospitals throughout the kingdom, and that they should, on no account, be molested because of their religion, and that the very hats on their heads should be untouched, as these had received a kind of consecration by having appeared in the king's presence. As this order was in some places printed in the newspapers, it brought crowds about them to see the men whose religion consisted in keeping their hats on their heads. On leaving Spain, they forwarded to the king a memorandum of their observations while in the kingdom, in which they ventured to make suggestions, not only in regard to schools, prisons, and hospitals, but in regard to several things connected with

the government. After an absence of nearly a year, they found themselves once more in England.*

But Grellet's work was not yet done. Accompanied by George Stacey he started on a tour to visit the meetings in the central and northern counties of England: from England he passed into Scotland, and from Scotland crossed the Channel to Ireland. He was in London again in time to attend the May meeting in 1834. There was more excitement than usual at this Quaker convocation. The Hicksite heresy had already created a reaction, though Crewdson's "Beacon" had not yet appeared, and many were inclined to expose the weaknesses of the Quaker faith and practice. Allan, Gurney, and Mrs. Fry were all there, and Grellet was inspired to speak. "I went," says Allan, "with dear Stephen Grellet, to Downshire House during the yearly meeting, as it was the last meeting for worship he was likely to attend, when Stephen had an opportunity clearly to relieve his mind, and his communication was very remarkable, rising brighter and brighter towards the close: Elizabeth Fry followed in supplication, and there was a very solemn feeling over the meeting."† Soon afterwards, Grellet set sail from Liverpool. Some of his friends accompanied him to the dock, and gazed after the ship as she was slowly towed down the river, thinking of the kind old man who was on board, and sorrowing most of all that they should see his face no more. He reached his adopted country after an absence of nearly three years, during which he had travelled upwards of twenty-eight thousand miles in his benevolent enterprise.

Three years afterwards, Gurney, laden with the spoils of the Crewdsonites, followed Grellet across the sea, that he

* *Memoirs of Grellet*, Vol. II. ; *Life of Allan*, Vol. III.

† *Life of Allan*, Vol. III., p. 173.

might smite the Hicksites with the edge of the sword, but the tale of his adventures is already told. In 1840, William Allan, Samuel Gurney, Josiah Forster, and Mrs. Fry started upon a missionary expedition to the Continental kingdoms. As usual, they were well received by the great and honourable of the earth. On this occasion they frequently gathered together in the large room of the hotel where they were residing a number of the most influential persons whose presence they could command, and explained to them the object of their mission. Mrs. Fry, who was the centre of interest, would speak of her labours in the prisons of London; Samuel Gurney would urge upon all to give a helping hand for the abolition of slavery; Allan would speak of schools and his home-colonies; and, before the meeting was closed, they would all sit in silence and worship in Quaker fashion, or one of the band, under a spiritual impulse, would kneel down and pray. Thus was their work done.*

While these magnates of the Society of Friends were visiting the cities and courts of Europe, a devoted Quakeress, named Hanna Kilham, had penetrated into Africa, contentedly dwelt in a kraal, and patiently taught the children of the Foolahs. She died at her work. Another Quaker had visited the savages of the South-Sea Islands; others had gone to Australia; and many American Friends pushed their way into the woods, and visited the Red Indians in their wigwams.† Quakers from America were constantly crossing the sea to visit Europe, and, in return, English Quakers were voyaging to America to illumine the new hemisphere with their old-world light. It has sometimes

* Memoirs of Mrs. Fry; Life of Allan, Vol. III.

† Memoirs of Grellet, Vol. II., p. 248; Article in Encyclopaedia Britannica on Quakerism.

been said that the Friends have never engaged in any missionary enterprise. But these are the truest of all missionary enterprises, and the best. Great churches employ missionaries to do their work, as great men employ almoners to dispense their charity, but the Quakers, like the first Apostles, have themselves taken their staff in their hand, and gone forth as preachers of their universal gospel of peace and goodwill. This was the kind of missionary enterprise which Edward Irving advocated before the London Missionary Society, and the members thereof marvelled, and were wroth when they heard him.*

William Allan's benevolent schemes and long missionary journeys were now ended. On the 30th of December, 1843, he peacefully died. He was one of the excellent of the earth. Gifted by nature with a good intellect, and a strong tendency to philosophical research, he soon became eminent as a chemist, and was the friend and colleague of the highest scientific men of the age. It was not without a struggle that he so often left his laboratory to go forth on missions of love and religion. But his benevolent instincts were still stronger than his scientific tendencies, and, as conscience, above all things, was strong within him, he resolved to live for others, and not for self. His mind was, in Quaker phrase, particularly "tender" in regard to duty; and, when he believed anything to be his duty, he always did it. Considering that the charge of an extensive business was upon his head, it is marvellous he was able to do so much. There must have been something courtly, in the best sense of the term, about the man; for great potentates, as we have seen, delighted in his society, and listened patiently to his advice. Not only the Czar of Muscovy, but the King of Würtemberg, and princes innumerable,

* Life of Edward Irving, by Mrs. Oliphant.

made the honest Quaker their friend. Partaking of the general smoothness of his sect, it is difficult to find any very salient points in his character, unless it be his conscientiousness and benevolence. But are not these two endowments, richly given, enough for any one man? Men, like him, are undoubtedly the salt of the earth—they save society from putrescence.

Two years afterwards, Mrs. Fry, who had lent so strong an interest to the Quaker cap and gown, and almost made them classical, followed him to the grave. She was certainly a very remarkable woman. Roman Catholic countries can point to saintly women who have rivalled her in works of mercy, but Protestant countries have none such. Here she stands alone, or almost alone. The world no doubt is full of women with hearts as kind and pure, and many of these have done as much in their own homes as ever she did in Newgate—waiting ungrudgingly for long years upon a sick sister, or bedridden mother, and, perhaps, struggling with poverty beside, with no motive-power but love to keep them at their task. Their names are written in heaven. But, as she overstepped the narrow circle of home-life, and effected a great public reform, she is richly deserving of public honour. For thirty years she devoted herself to the improvement of our prisons, and, even before her work was half done, was well entitled to be hailed by Sir James Macintosh as the “Female Howard.” The good she accomplished was fully recognized. When she travelled on the Continent, kings and princes sought for her advice, and did homage to her virtues. Frederick William IV. of Prussia, when in London in 1842, accompanied her to Newgate, sat by her side while she read the Scriptures to the prisoners, and knelt down beside her when she prayed with them. From the prison, His Majesty went with the Quakeress to her residence five miles out of London, and

had presented to him her children and her children's children, between thirty and forty in number.

In childhood she is said to have been very timid, and somewhat self-willed. In after life, her timidity appeared only in her gentle, tender, womanly ways, for none was more courageous; and her self-will only made her firmly persistent in following any object upon which her heart was set. Pitifulness was, perhaps, the most prominent feature in her character, and, with this, there was combined that Christ-like charity which "could have compassion on the ignorant and on them that were out of the way." Most people would have shrunk with horror from many of the women whom she almost took to her bosom—as sisters—though erring. She had a quick eye for discovering distress, for her eye was in the constant employ of her loving heart. Walking one morning in Lombard Street, she met a decently-clad woman, and, at a glance, perceived that something was grievously wrong with her. She did not hesitate to salute her. "Thou appearest to be in trouble," said she, with her soft voice; "tell me, I beseech thee, the cause of thy sorrow; perhaps, I can assist thee and afford thee relief." The woman was on her way to the Thames to throw herself in, when she was thus met by her saviour. Mrs. Fry had very strong home affections, and never neglected her family duties, which is not unfrequently done, to take a part in public life.

She was rather above the middle height, and of a pleasing, though not of a beautiful countenance. With her hair plainly combed down upon her brow, her quiet eyes, her rather long nose, her firm little mouth, her Quaker cap, you might not admire her, but you would at least be interested in her. Her manners were sedate, but always free and unembarrassed; in her perfect composure, through which there shone a sister's love, lay the secret of her power over the

most abandoned; and her voice, every one declares, was of surpassing sweetness. To hear her read the Bible was to listen to wondrous music.

Several of her children, some of them by marriage, others through conviction, left the Society of Friends, and attached themselves to other religious communities; but still she was ever the centre of a peculiar happy family group—her children and her children's children rose up and called her blessed. Her last two years were spent in very feeble health, but she was surrounded by opulence and affection; and, when it was known she was dead, the whole nation mourned her loss, and reared a refuge for the penitent as the most fitting monument to her memory.

Fifteen months more, and her brother, Joseph John Gurney, was also in the grave. After his return from America he had three different times visited the Continent on religious and benevolent missions; and, like others of his Society, he was one whom kings delighted to honour. Christian VIII. of Denmark and Louis Philip of France had received him with kindness, had listened to his lectures, and joined in his worship. While he was yet under three-score years, he was seized with an illness, apparently slight, but which soon deepened into death. More than any other man of the time he had influenced the Quaker theology, and preserved the Society in the mean between the Hicksites and Crewdsonites. No man can meddle with polemics without incurring odium, as no man can touch pitch without being defiled. He was blamed by some for maintaining that the influences of the Spirit were *perceptible*, and vituperated by others for having destroyed altogether the spirituality of the Quaker faith. I am afraid it is impossible for any man to hold the scales evenly poised with the inner revelation in the one, and the outer in the other. This will ever be the difficulty in the Quaker creed. But there were

others, who pretended a more philosophical spirit, who mourned these disputes altogether, and declared it was a return to the house of bondage, from which they imagined their sect had been set free—a substitution of the beggarly elements for Christian perfection. Gurney, who was not naturally a polemic, but a good, charitable man, was greatly grieved by the bitterness which had been evoked, and one of the last acts of his life was to write out a confession of his faith to be transmitted to America.

Though belonging to a small religious sect, a circumstance which generally narrows a man's religious views, Gurney was possessed of a catholic heart, and delighted to see around him in the noble park of Earlham the good and the wise of all churches. As "he went about doing good" during his life, he was mourned by all classes of people at his death. In almost every pulpit in Norwich a funeral sermon was preached for the man who contemned all pulpits, and, even in the cathedral, the bishop pronounced a high eulogium on the Quaker. Around his grave there were gathered men of every religious faith—Churchmen, Independents, Baptists, Methodists—to show their reverence for the dead. For a time the Friends, according to their custom, stood and gazed into the grave in deep silence, and then a voice was heard, saying—"O, death! where is thy sting? O, grave! where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law, but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Thus, one after another, the Friends, who had shed lustre upon their Society in England and everywhere, had passed away, and they had not left their equals behind them. During their time there had been such a revivification of Quakerism as had never been known before. There was all the pristine zeal with more than the pristine wisdom,

and Quakerism had almost become a synonym for benevolence.

Shortly before Gurney's death, the Oregon boundary question had been settled, and war between Great Britain and America prevented. Gurney mentions the fact with joy in his journal.* In the same year, the May Meeting recorded in their minutes their belief that the peaceful principles of the Evangel were spreading among all Christian peoples. "We hail," said they, "as a symptom of this enlightened view, many instances of later years in which disputes between nations have been settled by arbitration, and not by a recourse to the anti-christian practice of war."† But this pleasing dream was soon rudely disturbed by the revolutionary spirit which swept over Europe in 1848, making many thrones to topple, and deluging the streets of Paris with civic blood. But this feverish time also passed away, and again the nations had rest.

There had long existed, both in this country and in America, a not very numerous, but still influential party, who earnestly advocated the principles of peace—of "peace at any price," as those who scoffed at them said. This party embraced many who were not Quakers, but the Quakers were to a man members of it. Prominent among these was Joseph Sturge. Now this Joseph had already become known for his active benevolence, and more especially for his earnest advocacy of Immediate Negro Emancipation, not only within his own religious Society, but by all lovers of good men. He had gone to the West Indies, upon his own charges, expressly for the purpose of collecting information regarding the working of the apprenticeship system, and the fitness of the negro for freedom; and he

* Life; Vol. II., p. 496.

† Extracts from the Minutes and Epistles of the Yearly Meeting, &c., 1861.

had rejoiced with the joy of a man who gathers in the harvest, when, in the month of August 1838, he saw, partly through his labours, every slave in the British possessions become free.* He had again crossed the sea, and visited the Friends in America, for he had become convinced that they were not so faithful as they might be in lifting up their voices against the "evil thing" which was in the very midst of their land. It was in the year 1841 he was traversing the United States, and as he had come, not only as the advocate of negro emancipation but of universal peace and good will, the members of the American Peace Society, in Boston, held a meeting, while he was in their city, to hear what he had got to say. What he said was simply this, that he believed good would arise if a convention could be held of the friends of peace, of different nations, to deliberate upon the best method of adjusting international disputes.† The meeting received the suggestion with approbation, and resolved to correspond with the English Peace Society as to the practicability of holding a convention in London. A convention was accordingly held in London in the following year, in which speeches were made by benevolent men gathered from the different corners of the earth, but for a season at least, little fruit of their speaking was seen.

Years passed on and still there was peace; and 1848 came, and though the political earthquakes which then shook Europe showed there were passions in the human breast which could be appeased only by blood, to some men it seemed a fitting season to revive the peace agitation, by reason of the new strength which, popular as opposed to

* "Joseph Sturge" said Lord Brougham, "won the game off his own bat." *Memoirs of Joseph Sturge*, p. 180.

† *Memoirs of Joseph Sturge*, p. 351.

royal principles, had obtained—for war had been pronounced “the last argument of kings,” in forgetfulness that it had been quite as frequently the last argument of peoples. Accordingly a Peace Congress assembled at Brussels in September, and toward the end of the same year, Mr. Cobden brought the matter before the British House of Commons. The Quakers meanwhile agitated the question with such resolution and energy, that Mr. Cobden wrote to Sturge,—“I always say that there is more real pluck in the ranks of the Quakers than in all our regiments of red-coats.”

In 1849 the Peace Congress met in Paris, and in 1850 it held its sittings at Frankfort. While the philanthropists who had assembled there were talking of peace, war had broken out between Denmark and the Duchies of Schleswig-Holstein. Dr. Bodenstedt of Berlin, brought the matter before the Congress, but he was interrupted in his statement by the president, as one of the standing orders of the Congress was, that speakers must “avoid digressions to present political events.” But what the Congress could not do, individual members of it might, and it occurred to Joseph Sturge, Elihu Burrit, and Frederick Wheeler, that now was the time to put their principles into practice. They resolved to present themselves before the hostile authorities of Denmark and the Duchies, and pray them to submit their differences to arbitration. In the simple capacity of peace-makers they found access to the ministers of both governments, and made such progress in arranging the preliminaries of arbitration, that the Chevalier Bunsen, the Prussian ambassador in London, is said to have declared that he had more hopes from this pacific embassy than from all that had hitherto been done by the professional diplomatists of Europe.* But the Great Powers interfered, and

* *Memoirs of Joseph Sturge*, p. 454.

took the matter out of the hands of both Denmark and the Duchies, and the Protocol of London was signed. We have recently seen the old quarrel revived, the Protocol of London torn to shreds, the Duchies disjoined for ever from Denmark, Prussia and Austria quarrelling about the spoil, and the terrific battle of Königsgrätz ending the strife. Men may now speculate whether it would have been different if the negotiations inaugurated by the Quakers had been carried out.

In 1851, the Great International Exhibition was held in London, and people of all countries and kindreds there displayed the products of their soil, and the works of their hands, and the whole world was gathered to see the world's show. Many wise men, besides the Quakers, thought that a new era was begun, and that henceforward the contest of the nations would be in arts and not in arms. For nearly forty years the general peace of Europe had been undisturbed, and after what they had heard and seen, they thought it could never be disturbed again. In the same year, the Peace Congress assembled in London, and never before had it been so numerously attended: and men of highest note, from the Old World and the New, not only counselled peace but proclaimed the advent of a millennium of national brotherhood and good will. In less than three years this pleasing imagination was dispelled. The Czar Nicholas was mustering his legions to pour them down upon the Ottoman Empire; and England and France were banding themselves together to repel the invasion, for they had resolved that no Muscovite would reign in the city of Constantine.

While all England was ringing with the din of warlike preparation, it occurred to some of the members of the Society of Friends that they might peradventure preserve peace by a mission to the Emperor Nicholas at St. Peters-

burgh. They called to their remembrance how the great Peter had worshipped in their meetings and conversed with the leaders of their sect. They bethought them of how the Czar Alexander had knelt down and prayed with Allan and Grellet, of how he had opened up to them the history of his inner life, in the full confidence of friendship, and kissed them like brothers. Might not Nicholas, who held in his hand the issues of peace and war, be moved by their entreaties, and allow the sword to remain in the scabbard? What the remonstrances of diplomacy and the menaces of force had failed to effect, might be accomplished by the persuasions of humanity and religion; the heart of the proud autocrat which had been hardened by the one, might be softened by the other. In January 1854 the matter was brought before the Committee of Sufferings, which adopted the suggestion, and resolved to despatch a deputation to St. Petersburg, to present an address to the emperor.*

The Quakers who went on this errand were Joseph Sturge, Robert Charleton, and Henry Pease. On the 20th of January they started on their mission. The country

* The following is the Minute of the Meeting—

“ At a Meeting, representing the religious Society of Friends, held in London the 17th of 1st month 1854.

“ This Meeting has been introduced into much religious concern in contemplating the apparent probability of war between some of the nations of Europe. Deeply impressed with the enormous amount of evil that invariably attends the prosecution of war, and with the utter inconsistency of all war with the spirit of Christianity and the precepts of its divine Founder, as set forth in the New Testament, this Meeting has concluded, under a strong feeling of religious duty, to present an address to Nicholas, Emperor of Russia, on this momentous question, and it also concludes to appoint Joseph Sturge, Robert Charleton, and Henry Pease, to be the bearers of the address, and, if the opportunity for so doing be afforded, to present the same in person.

“ In committing this service to our dear brethren, we crave for them, in the prosecution of it, the help and guidance of that wisdom which is from above, and we commend them, as well as the cause entrusted to them, to the blessing of Almighty God.”

was at this time filled with a warlike fury, and the three Quakers were followed by a perfect storm of laughter and ridicule. They were spoken of as modern Quixots, as men fond of notoriety, as simply ambitious of speaking to an Emperor, as foolishly and vainly imagining that they could manage things better than the ablest diplomatists of Europe. Notwithstanding this abuse, they quietly went on their way, and passing through Berlin, Königsberg, and Riga, in the depth of winter, they reached St. Petersburg on the 2d of February. Arrived in the imperial city, they first of all sought an interview with Count Nesselrode, the Chancellor of the Empire. The Count received them with the politeness of his country and station, told them the Emperor was apprised of their coming, and would grant them an audience, and carried his courtesy still farther by requesting his private secretary to accompany them to the most remarkable sights of the city.

A few days afterwards, they were admitted to a private interview with the Czar. They found no person with him but Baron Nicolay, who acted as interpreter, for His Majesty spoke French. Joseph Sturge read the address, which had been prepared by the Society.

“ May it please the Emperor.

“ We, the undersigned, members of a meeting representing the religious Society of Friends (commonly called Quakers) in Great Britain, venture to approach the Imperial presence, under a deep conviction of religious duty, and in the constraining love of Christ our Saviour.

“ We are moreover encouraged so to do, by the many proofs of condescension and Christian kindness manifested by thy late illustrious brother, the Emperor Alexander, as well as by thy honoured mother, to some of our brethren in religious profession.

“ It is well known, that apart from all political consideration, we have as a Christian Church, uniformly upheld a testimony against war, on the simple ground that it is utterly condemned by the precepts of Christianity, as well as altogether incompatible with the spirit of its divine Founder, who is emphatically styled the ‘ Prince of Peace.’ This conviction we have repeatedly pressed upon our own rulers, and often in the language of bold, but respectful, remonstrance, have we urged upon them the maintenance of peace, as the true policy, as well as manifest duty, of a Christian government.

“ And now, O Great Prince, permit us to express the sorrow which fills our hearts, as Christians and men, in contemplating the probability of war in any portion of the Continent of Europe. Deeply to be deplored would it be, were that peace, which to a very large extent has happily prevailed so many years, exchanged for the unspeakable horrors of war, with all its attendant moral evil, and physical suffering.

“ It is not our business, nor do we presume to offer any opinion upon the question now at issue between the Imperial Government of Russia and that of any other country; but estimating the exalted position in which divine Providence has placed thee, and the solemn responsibilities devolving upon thee, not only as an earthly potentate, but also as a believer in that Gospel which proclaims ‘ peace on earth ’ and ‘ good will toward men,’ we implore Him by whom ‘ kings reign and princes decree justice ’ so to influence thy heart and to direct thy counsels at this momentous crisis, that thou mayest practically exhibit to the nations, and even to those who do not profess the “ like precious faith,” the efficacy of the Gospel of Christ, and the universal application of His command, ‘ Love your enemies, bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you;

and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.'

"The more fully the Christian is persuaded of the justice of his own cause, the greater his magnanimity in the exercise of forbearance. May the Lord make thee the honoured instrument of exemplifying this true nobility; thereby securing to thyself and to thy vast dominions that true glory and those rich blessings which could never result from the most successful appeal to arms.

"Thus, O mighty Prince, may the miseries and devastation of war be averted; and in that solemn day, when 'every one of us shall give an account of himself to God,' may the benediction of the Redeemer apply to thee. 'Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God,' and mayest thou be permitted, through a Saviour's love, to exchange an earthly for a heavenly crown,—'a crown of glory which fadeth not away.'"

When the address was read and presented, the Czar begged the Quakers to be seated upon a sofa, while he himself sat down upon a chair beside them, and at once entered into conversation. He told them that Russia had received its religion from the Greeks, and, in gratitude, had ever claimed the right to protect the Greek Church, and that even now Turkey would have acknowledged this right, had she not been persuaded by others that he meant conquest, and the ruin of the Ottoman Empire—a thing which he utterly disclaimed. He declared he had the highest respect for England and her Queen, and that on account of that respect he had warned her of dangers likely to arise in the East, but that his prudent foresight had been construed into a designing policy, and an ambitious desire of aggrandisement. He finally protested his abhorrence of war, but

that he must protect the honour of his country.* In reply, the Quakers avoided the political aspects of the question, but urged the humane and religious considerations which were opposed to all war. When they rose to leave, Sturge said, that though they should probably never see his face again, they were anxious to tell him there were those in England who desired his temporal and spiritual welfare as sincerely as his own subjects. Touched by the simple earnestness of the man, and feeling, no doubt, the fearful responsibility which lay upon him, the Czar was affected to tears, and when he shook hands with the ambassadors of peace and good-will, he turned away his head to conceal his emotion. "My wife," said he, "also wishes to see you." The arrival of the strange embassy had caused a commotion in the palace, and the ladies were curious to see the men who had come so far on such an errand. "I have just seen the Emperor," said the Empress, when they were ushered into her presence, "the tears were in his eyes."† This fierce, proud autocrat, who was defying all Europe, had his softer moods it would appear, and had been moved to tenderness by the Quaker's words.

The interview took place on a Thursday, and on the Monday following, the deputation were to leave St. Petersburg: but on Sunday the Baron Nicolay called upon them to beg them to delay their journey for a day, as the Emperor wished to give an official reply to the Society of Friends, and as his widowed daughter, moreover, the

* The substance of what the Czar said in reply to their address was immediately afterwards committed to writing by the Quakers, and submitted to the revision of Baron Nicolay, who testified to its accuracy. The document is given at length in Sturge's *Memoirs*, pp. 477-8. In the Appendix to the same very interesting memoirs of a very remarkable man, the official reply of the Czar to the Society of Friends, will be found.

† *Memoirs of Joseph Sturge*, p. 476. See also Kinglake's *History of the Crimean War*, Vol. I.

Duchess of Leuchtenberg, wished to see them. The Friends readily complied; but when they went, by appointment, to wait upon the Grand Duchess, they perceived that the Imperial countenance was changed toward them. They were received with merely formal politeness. They accounted for the change by the fact that the mail had arrived from England, bringing news of the opening of the Parliament, and the warlike speeches which had been made in the House of Commons.* Their mission was now done, and they hastened to depart, and the Czar, courteous to the last, sent a Government courier to accompany them, and see that everything was done to contribute to the comfort and rapidity of their journey.

What followed all the world knows. For two years the Crimea witnessed one of the fiercest struggles ever waged, and more than a hundred thousand brave men, gathered from Britain, France, Italy, Turkey, and Russia, now lie buried around the heights of Sebastopol. The Quaker mission failed, as it scarcely could but fail, for the Czar had already advanced too far to recede. His troops had crossed the Pruth, and his fleet had burned the Turkish navy at Sinope. At the same time, it is certain that his mind at this period was torn by contending passions, and fluctuating violently, and, it is not improbable, that words of peace from England and France, like unto those which the Quakers had spoken, might even yet have stayed his arm although it was lifted to strike. But the misfortune is that nations cannot speak such words to one another.

When the representatives of the Great Powers, at the close of the war in 1856, met in Paris to settle the terms of peace, Joseph Sturge, accompanied by two Friends, proceeded thither, resolved to make an effort to get a clause

* Memoirs of Joseph Sturge, p. 480.

inserted in the treaty binding the contracting governments, in the event of any future dispute, to refer it to arbitration. They prepared a memorial on the subject, and presented it to the plenipotentiaries. They waited upon Lord Clarendon, and urged the matter on his attention. He said it would be difficult to get the parties to the treaty to bind themselves to such a course of conduct. "Still," said his lordship, "I will do what I can to bring the matter before the Congress." He redeemed his promise, and a resolution was unanimously passed recognizing the duty of having recourse to arbitration, in the event of any international dispute, though not binding the contracting parties to have recourse to it.* Even this was a great victory on the side of humanity, and the Quakers might well be proud of the triumph of their principle, and the part they had played in achieving it.

But Sturge had yet another benevolent thought in his heart—he was bent on assuaging the horrors of the war which he had been unable to prevent. He had heard that hundreds of the poor fishermen of Finland had been beggared, by the destruction of their boats and everything, by some of the British cruisers which had come into their waters, and that now famine was amongst them. Accompanied by a Friend, he started for the scene, and travelled over many a league of a dreary country, the abode of fogs and snow, that he might see with his own eyes the misery of which he had heard others speak, and learn how he

* The following is the important protocol, which can scarcely remain for ever a dead letter :—

“The plenipotentiaries do not hesitate to express, in the name of their Governments, the wish that States between which any serious misunderstandings may arise, should, before appealing to arms, have recourse, as far as circumstances might allow, to the good offices of a friendly power. The plenipotentiaries hope that the Governments not represented at the Congress will unite in the sentiment which has inspired the wish recorded in the present protocol.”

could best stretch out a helping hand. On his return, he and his brother opened a subscription for the suffering Fins by placing their own names at the head of it for £1000. Others followed the noble example, and £9000 was soon raised, almost, though not exclusively, among the Society of Friends. To them was left its distribution; and, by their discreet generosity, they so won back the hearts of the people to England and the English, that Whittier, the American poet, has entitled a touching poem on the event, "The Conquest of Finland." The name of Joseph Sturge is written on the roll of great Quakers; and his statue, reared at Birmingham after his death in 1859 by his fellow-citizens, is a fitting tribute to a man who was a benefactor to his race.

At the commencement of the Crimean War, Stephen Grellet was still living, the greatest ornament of the American Society, but his days were now numbered. He was well stricken in years, and many of the infirmities of age had come upon him; but, so late as 1851, when the people were crowding to the Great Exhibition, the ancient spirit of wandering descended upon him, and he confesses he would fain have crept or limped to London too, though he could no longer run.* It was the old war-horse pricking up his ears at the sound of the bugle. When a deputation of English Quakers came to America in 1853, to place in the hands of the President an address upon slavery and the slave-trade, and to agitate the American mind upon the subject, Grellet was still ready to welcome them, and bid them "God-speed" in their work. Two years longer he lived, though in very poor health, and then, in the winter of 1855, when the English soldiers were dying in hundreds in the trenches before Sebastopol, he died in peace,

* Memoirs, Vol. II., p. 481.

having reached the venerable age of fourscore years and two.

That the Gallic blood and the Quaker character are not destructive of one another, is shown by the fact that a species of Quakerism is native to France, and that Anthony Benezet and Stephen Grellet were Frenchmen. But one should scarcely have expected a Quaker like Etienne Grellet to have come of the pre-revolution French noblesse; and yet he was, every inch of him, a Frenchman and a noble, as well as a Quaker. He had the excitable temperament and the courtly manners of his country and his order. It was his excitable temperament which made him see visions and hear voices in his youth—these softened into “impressions” in his latter years—and, though clothed in drab, every one saw that he was born to live in kings’ houses. He was a great orator. All who heard him speak felt it; and it is impossible to read his Journal—so full of the imagery of the East, and so tinged with his own elevated piety—without knowing that the man who was master of such language must have captivated many. Then, what a great heart he had; and what a pleasant old face, beaming upon the whole world in tender love. Take him all in all, the world has seldom seen such a man; and, since the days of George Fox, there had arisen no greater Quaker.





Chapter XX.

GRELLET and his English compeers were true representatives of the ancient Quakerism; but, notwithstanding the strength which they gave to their sect, its peculiarities were beginning to give way under the pressure of modern ideas. The Quakers had aimed at being a distinct people, but that was no longer possible. The marriage-law of the Society was felt to be a grievance—no Quaker could marry out of his Society without being expelled; no Quaker could allow a clergyman or magistrate to marry him without subjecting himself to the censures of his Society. Now, it so happened that Quakers, having their eyes wide open, sometimes saw women who were beautiful to look upon though they did not dress in drab or gray; and, sometimes even, when their furtive glances were returned, such a commotion was raised in their heart that love became stronger than religion, and they resolved to abandon the Friends that they might get a wife after their own heart. So the Society lost some of its members who were otherwise good and true. Thus, two evils resulted from this restrictive policy—the Friends were hampered in their affections, and the Society was bereft of those who refused to be so confined in their choice of a mate. The quarterly meeting for Yorkshire was the first

to feel that allowance must be made for human frailty, and that, under certain restrictions, the Friends might wed with the daughters of the land. It proposed to the yearly meeting in May, 1856, that marriage should be allowed betwixt a member of the Society and one who was not in the Society, but who "professed with it;" and even betwixt two persons neither of whom were members of the Society, but who "both professed with it."

This phraseology, being somewhat obscure to the outside world, must be made plain. The children of Quakers are Quakers by birth, but there has always been a considerable number of persons, who, from being educated in Quaker schools, or reared in Quaker families, have a sympathy with Quaker ways, and attend their meetings. These, though not acknowledged members of the Society are said to "profess with it;" and even these a young Quaker might not look upon with thoughts of marriage in his heart without committing a sin. It was proposed to give them this liberty, and even a little more. The proposal was regarded as very bold, and even revolutionary, and was debated three several years, and then referred to a conference of three hundred sages of the Society, who met in London, in November, 1858, and by whom, after much talk and some wrath, it was finally allowed. So the marriage-law of the Quakers was altered, and Friends allowed to look upon a maid, though she was not a Quakeress, provided only she sometimes came to their meetings, and had some sympathy with Quaker ways—a thing to be easily supposed, if her heart was set upon a Quaker husband.*

But other matters besides this were brought before the conference. Some of the younger members of the Society,

* Article "Quakerism," in *Encyc. Brit.* Extracts from Minutes and Epistles of Yearly Meeting, 1861.

led away by the fashions of the world, had, for a long season, murmured against the tailor and millinery laws of the Society. They no longer saw that religion could consist in the cut of a coat, or the shape of a bonnet. They said that George Fox had not prescribed any peculiar apparel; that all the first fathers of the sect were ignorant of this conceit; that all they required was simplicity of attire. They explained that the present Quaker garb had arisen from their grandfathers refusing to follow the fashions, but that nevertheless changes had crept surreptitiously into the dress-making of the Society; and, as there were no great *artistes* belonging to their body, there had grown up a costume which was "singularly formal, stiff, bald, and ungraceful." It had neither the sanction of authority, antiquity, or taste, and therefore, they were resolved to change their clothes; and, indeed, some of them had done so already, and were undistinguishable from the crowd.

These revolutionary Quakers also brought before the conference the grammatical grievance of the second person singular in their forms of speech. They argued that piety did not depend upon the proper conjugation of verbs. Assuming the tone of antiquarians, they said that, in the time of Fox, a poor man was addressed "thou," and a rich man "you," and was thus multiplied and magnified in his own eyes, and that their founder was right to repudiate such invidious distinctions;* but that now all such distinctions had been laid aside, though the "you" had triumphed instead of the more grammatical "thou," and that, therefore,

* I am doubtful of the correctness of this antiquarian argument. I find no foundation for the alleged fact in the dramatists or novelists of the period, and Fox specially mentions, in his Journal, that people were startled, and even, in some cases, frightened by his forms of speech. They thought he was mad. He assigns a totally different reason for his grammatical innovations.

there was no longer any need for them to separate themselves from the world in their forms of address. They went still farther, and maintained that it was no longer flattery and a lie to call a man Mr., or a woman Mrs.; that it was not half so bad as to call a person Friend, who was in reality no friend at all. They, therefore, sought to be emancipated from the bondage of their peculiar dialect.

From ancient times the monthly meetings of the Society have been required to answer a series of searching queries regarding the character and conduct of members within their bounds. The fourth of these demanded whether Friends "were faithful in maintaining plainness of speech, behaviour, and apparel." The conference was asked if there ought not to be some modification of this question? It was contended that its terms had acquired a false value; that no costume had ever been prescribed by the Society; and that the customs of address against which it protested had become obsolete. The conference adopted this conclusion, the annual meeting afterwards ratified its decision, and the Friends are no longer questioned about the cut or colour of their garments, or the grammatical structure of their sentences. The great smoothing-iron which is passing over society, and removing all creases, and making all men alike, had touched them too.

This decision led many to say that Quakerism was defunct. External Quakerism was certainly gone; but surely this sect, which has existed for centuries, and made such a noise in the world, consists in something more than "thou" and "thee," and a snuff-brown coat and a broad-brimmed hat? There is its mystic theology, and its benevolent spirit. Its mysticism will always find disciples, even in the heart of practical England and America; and the world may well wish that, though the Friends should cease to engage much attention as a religious sect, they may ever

remain banded together as a benevolent Society—blessing and blessed. Thus far I have traced the history of the Friends; it only remains for me to explain the present organization and condition of their Society.

Though they do not recognize any priesthood, or any ordained ministry, they have their ministers, their elders, and their overseers. When any Friend has given good proof that he has a gift for the ministry, he is recognized as a minister of the gospel by the Society; but those who are thus recognized receive no pay, as a hireling ministry has always been the aversion of the Society. In certain cases, however, when travelling on a religious mission, their expenses are paid. Next in honour to the ministers come the elders, who are appointed that they may “tenderly encourage and help young ministers, and advise others, as they, in the wisdom of God, see occasion.” Overseers, both male and female, come next among the office-bearers of the Society, and they are charged, as their name implies, with the oversight of the conduct of all Friends within the district where their function lies.* We have already seen that women may be recognized as ministers of the Society of Friends, and at present, and for a long time past, a great majority of the ministers belong to the female sex, which seems to be most open to spiritual influences.

On “first day,” as they call Sunday, all the Quakers within a convenient distance meet together for worship. The men and women occupy separate divisions of the place where they meet. The men walk in with their hats on, for, their meeting-house being made of stone and mortar, is not holy. There is no pulpit, and no preacher specially appointed to address the people and conduct their devotions; but, as there may be several preachers inspired to speak,

* Extracts from the Minutes and Epistles of the Yearly Meeting, &c., 1861.

there is a long gallery, where the ministers, male and female, sit, facing the audience, and each in front of his or her own sex. There also the elders sit, or in a lower gallery together with the overseers. There are no liturgical forms, no singing of Psalms, no reading of Holy Writ, but the congregation sit "retired within themselves," in solemn silence, till some one feels a divine *afflatus*, and rises up to speak. There may be several speakers, or there may be none. There may be many prayers, or there may be none. There are said to be some meetings where no word is spoken for years together, unless it be, perhaps, by some itinerant preacher.*

Many even of the Quakers themselves declare that the experiment of an untrained and unpaid ministry has not succeeded, and that the rhapsodies which are heard in Quaker meeting-houses are very inferior to the confessedly human compositions which are heard in the Established Churches. Sensible Quakers are deterred from speaking because they cannot clearly discriminate between the Spirit's operations and their own good thoughts, and know that they are in danger of being put down by some "weighty Friend," as speaking in their own strength. It is the most excitable, and not the most able, who venture upon the task of preaching to the meeting, and hence it is that the men generally sit and hear, while the women speak.† Alas! the inspiration of every Quaker preacher is not like that of Stephen Grellet or Mrs. Fry; in too many cases, it seems to lose its beauty and its power in percolating through uneducated brains.

Connected with most meetings for worship there is a

* Article "Quakerism," in Encyc. Brit.

† The great majority of the Quaker preachers at present are women. Hence, at the yearly meeting in 1865, the death of seven ministers are reported—all females

preparative meeting, one of the duties of which is to choose representatives to the monthly meeting.

The monthly meetings embrace several preparative meetings, and they are, in some respects, the radical meetings of the Society. In them is vested the property of the Society, and to them it belongs to determine who should be admitted within its pale, and who should be disowned. They receive funds for the support of the poor, and appropriate to each particular meeting what seemeth meet to them. They also gather in the funds for schools, and for the national stock, and hand these over to the quarterly meetings. In them, moreover, the Quakers take one another in wedlock, for better or worse; and, finally, by them a register of all marriages, births, and burials is kept.

The quarterly meetings comprehend all the monthly meetings in one or two counties. At them are produced the answers to the standing queries addressed to the monthly meetings regarding the conduct of all members. In Spring they choose their representatives to the yearly meeting, and through these forward the contributions which they have gathered to the Meeting for Sufferings in London, which acts as a kind of exchequer to the Society.

In the month of May, and in the City of London, the Yearly Meeting is convoked. It consists of representatives from the Yearly Meeting in Ireland, as well as from all the Quarterly Meetings of Great Britain. A thousand or twelve hundred Quakers, male and female, are gathered together at this high time,* and the Meeting lasts for about ten days. It has no president, for that would be an interference with the presidency of Christ, but it appoints a clerk, who really acts as president as well as secretary. No private members

* Only about 130 of these, however, are representatives, with a right to vote.

are allowed to take notes of the proceedings.* During the sittings, epistles are read from the Friends in Ireland, and from the orthodox Meetings in America, and committees are appointed to prepare answers to them. Every matter of general interest to the Society is disposed of. There is a kind of committee, consisting of ministers and elders, which meets previous to the General Meeting, and is called the Morning Meeting, which, among other things, revises the manuscripts of books connected with the doctrines of the Society; for, notwithstanding their spiritual illumination and their freedom from creeds, a strict censorship is exercised over the religious publications of the Friends. When Stephen Grellet visited the library of the Inquisition and beheld the shelves groaning with proscribed books, did he not think of the Morning Meeting and the many Quaker MSS. which had perished as an untimely birth? There is also another standing committee, consisting of ministers alone, called the Meeting for Sufferings, for it arose in troublous times, and was designed to afford aid to the distressed. Into its hands a great deal of the effective power of the Society has passed, and it may almost be regarded as the executive branch of the Quaker government.

There is but one Yearly Meeting for Great Britain and Ireland; but in America there are eight Yearly Meetings of orthodox Quakers, besides five of the Hicksites. One should imagine that the history of the Society of Friends might be best read in the minutes of these great representative Yearly Meetings, as the history of the Church of Scotland can be best traced in the proceedings of its General Assembly. But it is not so: and therefore I have been obliged to seek for the truest history of the Quakers in the

* Extracts from the Minutes and Epistles of the Yearly Meeting, &c., 1861.

sayings and doings of their great representative men, from George Fox to Stephen Grellet.

The women have their own monthly, quarterly and yearly meetings, simultaneously with the men, with an almost co-ordinate jurisdiction over the members of their own sex. On certain occasions the men and the women meet together, which is quaintly and significantly called "opening the shutters."*

William Howitt tells us that those who are supposed to live more habitually than others under the influence of the spirit, are called weighty Friends, who, as it so happens, are generally men also of weighty purses; and that a practice has arisen of deciding matters not so much by the number of votes as by the weight of the voters; and that hence the government of the Society has passed into the hands of a sanctimonious wealthy oligarchy. Rather a bitter thing for a Friend to say of Friends: but it may be true, for it so happens in other religious communities too.

At stated periods, the monthly meetings report to the quarterly meetings as to the position of the Society within their bounds. The following are some of the questions which must be answered.

1. Are your meetings for worship regularly held? Do Friends attend them duly, and at the time appointed?

2. Are Friends preserved in love one towards another; and do they avoid and discourage tale-bearing and detraction?

3. Are Friends frequent in reading the Holy Scriptures; and do those who have children, servants, and others under their care, encourage them in the practice of this religious duty?

* "In the subsequent meeting," says Joseph John Gurney, "leave to open the shutters (to unite men and women in a closing opportunity) was refused."—*Life*: Vol. II., pp. 117-8.

4. Are Friends careful to maintain a religious life and conversation, consistent with our Christian profession? and do those who have children or others under their care, endeavour, by example and precept, to train them up in accordance therewith?

5. Are Friends faithful in bearing our Christian testimony against all ecclesiastical demands?

6. Are Friends faithful in maintaining our Christian testimony against all war?*

When a Friend wishes to travel over England on a religious mission, he must get a certificate from his monthly meeting; if he designs crossing to Ireland he must have the certificate of his quarterly meeting; if he purposes going abroad, nothing less than the testimony of the yearly meeting will speed him on his way.† These ministerial tours are still frequent, for the Friends have not lost their old missionary spirit.

In many respects their polity resembles the polity of the Church of Scotland, which has its Kirk-Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assemblies, but it is much more inquisitorial, and interferes more with the freedom of personal thought and action. The Quakers are certainly not left to the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and their religious opinions are as carefully watched as if they were stereotyped in a creed.

The Society of Friends, with praiseworthy charity, support all their own poor; but, as almost the whole body is respectable and even wealthy, the burden is not very heavy. They pay scrupulous attention to the education of their children; and, in strict families, the natural instincts of boyhood and girlhood for merriment are carefully sup-

* Extracts from the Minutes and Epistles of the Yearly Meeting, &c., 1861.

† Ibid.

pressed, and the smooth, prim, quiet Quaker of the future is formed by times. Their public schools at Ackworth and other places are models of economy and good management, and the education given is thoroughly sensible and good. They make it their boast that there is no religious community in which there is so little crime, and when, some years ago, a Friend was convicted of murder and hanged, the whole Society was in dismay, but they had some comfort in the reflection that he had been disowned some years before the crime was committed. We have seen that their peculiar customs have of late been breaking down. The second person singular has, by many at least, been abandoned, and the Quaker coat and knee-breeches are now more rarely seen on the streets. Many who are not of them lament this, for the "thou" and the "thee" gave a piquancy to conversation; and one liked to meet in the crowd with a cut of coat different from any body's else. Other kinds of asceticism have already disappeared, without the sanction of the Society. George Fox and the first Quakers put their ban upon pictures and statuary as savouring of vanity, but now, pictures are frequently to be found adorning the walls of Quaker houses—a likeness of Grellet gives additional interest to his biography—a statue of Sturge has been reared at Birmingham, no Quaker forbidding it, and several Friends have risen to eminence as engravers and photographers, though no great artist has yet emerged from the sect. The Society, from first to last, has borne testimony against music and dancing as sinful amusements;* but notwithstanding this, music is carefully cultivated in many Quaker families, and Howitt assures us it is by no means a rare sight to see in the houses of grave Friends, young people engaged in the dance.†

* Extracts from the Minutes and Epistles of the Yearly Meeting, 1861.

† Article, "Quakerism."—Encyc. Brit.

They still continue to protest against slavery, capital punishments, and war. Of all these objects, the last is undoubtedly the sublimest and the best—though the most unattainable. But if the Friends, by their continual protests, should lead the nations to abhor war more than they do, to strip the military life of its false glory, and refer their quarrels more frequently to arbitration, they will have done great service to humanity. There are already symptoms of such a state of feeling arising in Europe. The protocol recommending arbitration, inserted in the Treaty of Paris, was itself a gigantic step in this direction, though unfortunately it has not since been always acted on. The Society cannot at present boast of any great Quaker, but it can justly speak of a Quaker who is a great orator—John Bright—who, on this and other questions, has made his voice so heard in the councils of his country, that the echo of it will not soon die away.

The Quakers are declining in numbers, both in England and America. It has been remarked that as they become wealthy and get an entrance into fashionable life, they show a strong tendency to abandon the Society. But besides this, the spirit of the present age is unfriendly to mysticism and quite fatal to peculiarities not founded on utility. It is said that the Quakers in England were once as one in a hundred and thirty of the population, whereas they are at present only as one in eleven hundred. It is probable they may still continue to decrease, but the world must ever confess its debt of gratitude to them, and acknowledge that they are “a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”