

darken the serenity of his quiet, which made him often say, "*that suggestions of this nature were such a disease to faith, as the toothache is to the body, for though it is not mortal it is very troublesome.*"

Upon his return from the continent, Mr. Boyle sought the residence of his sister, and it is said that he often thanked God that he had done so, otherwise he would have gone into the army, and would have been obliged to form associations that were unsuited to his tastes; whereas, this visit was the means, under God, of confirming him the more in those habits of personal religion to which he had consecrated his future life.

By his father's death in 1643, the manor of Stalbridge, and some property in Ireland, came into his possession, and when he was about twenty years of age Stalbridge became his home. Here it was that he devoted himself, with an enthusiastic eagerness, to useful studies in natural and experimental philosophy. He was the discoverer of *the elasticity of the air*, and he invented the common air-pump, and was the first to introduce the thermometer into this country. Many other elaborate enquiries were satisfactorily pursued, and "he may be said to have led the way to that mighty genius, the great Sir Isaac Newton." He appears to have derived much pleasure from an association of scientific men, and so general was the esteem in which he was held, that eventually he was chosen to be the President of the Royal Society, although he had declined being "a Fellow" of it. In *Evelyn's Diary* there is the following characteristic notice of this circumstance:—

Nor. 30, 1680.—"The anniversary election at the Royal Society brought me to London, where was chosen President that excellent person and great philosopher, Mr. Robert Boyle, who, indeed, ought to have been the very first, but neither his infirmity nor his modesty could now any longer excuse him."

In 1662, Mr. Boyle, who had promoted the translation of the Holy Scriptures into several languages, and had contributed largely to various missionary enterprises, was also appointed the first governor of "the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the heathen natives in New England, and other parts." About this time he was warmly solicited by the Lord Chancellor of England to receive holy orders. He, however, reflected that, in the situation of life he was in, whatever he wrote respecting religion would have so much greater weight in coming from a layman, but Bishop Burnet tell us that he was much influenced, in declining the Ministry of the Church, by not feeling within himself, as he thought, any motion which he could safely regard as a call from the Holy Ghost to undertake it, and that he accordingly preferred to pursue his philosophical studies in such a manner as might be most effectual for the promotion of true religion. And yet so great was his fondness for the Scriptures, that "he could readily quote many passages in Hebrew, and had committed to memory a still larger portion of the Greek Testament." "I esteem no labour lost," he said, "that illustrates and endears to me that Divine book." Having received a grant of forfeited impropriations in Ireland, which was obtained without his knowledge, he employed the whole of the proceeds in charitable undertakings. A favourite scheme was the publication of the Bible in Welsh, and the distribution of an edition of the Irish Bible through the Highlands of Scotland.