

abandoned altogether. Thus Hunter grew up, spending his time, merely in country amusements, until there was no provision for maintaining him longer in idleness. So destitute was he of all literary acquirements, that he could only look for employment of his hands, rather than his head. He was accordingly apprenticed to his brother-in-law, a carpenter, in Glasgow, with whom he learned to make chairs and tables; and this, probably, might have been for life Hunter's employment, but for the failure of his master, when John was thrown out of work. He then applied to his elder brother, Dr. William Hunter, already settled in London, and distinguished as a lecturer and anatomical demonstrator. John offered his services as an assistant in the dissecting-room, adding, that if his proposal should not be accepted, he meant to enlist in the army. Fortunately for science, his letter was answered in the way he wished: he came to London, began by dissecting an arm, and so succeeded, that Dr. Hunter foretold he would become an excellent anatomist. This was verified; but he never entirely overcame the disadvantages entailed upon him by neglect in his early years. He attained little acquaintance with the literature of his own profession, and he continued to the end of his life an awkward writer. "If these," says Mr. Craik, "were heavy penalties, however, which he had to pay for what was not so much his fault as that of others, the eminence to which he attained in spite of them is only the more demonstrative of his extraordinary natural powers, and his determined perseverance."

CXXVIII.

EDMUND BURKE AT BALLITORE AND DUBLIN.

This renowned orator and statesman was born in Dublin, on the 1st of January, 1730, or, as the register of Trinity College, Dublin, states, 1728. His father, Richard Burke, or Bourke, a Protestant, and of good family, was an attorney in large practice. His mother was a Miss Nagle, a Roman Catholic lady, and great-niece of Miss Ellen Nagle, who married Sylvanus Spenser, the eldest son of the poet; the name of Edmund may possibly, therefore, have been adopted from the author of the *Faerie Queene* by the subject of the present memoir.

During his boyhood, Burke's health was very delicate, even to the risk of consumption. His first instructor was his mother, a woman of strong mind, cultivated understanding, and fervent piety. Many years of his childhood were passed among his maternal relatives in the south of Ireland, especially with his grandfather at Castletown Roche, in a locality teeming with the romance of history; for here, at Kileolman Castle, Spenser wrote his *Faerie Queene*; and here lived Essex and Raleigh. It is but natural to suppose that here, upon the beautiful banks of the Blackwater, England's future orator imbibed in the poetry of the *Faerie Queene* that taste for ornate and eastern imagery which gave such splendour to his eloquence; and here, amid the memories hanging around the ruins of Kileolman, he thirsted for the historic knowledge which he afterwards threw with such power and prophetic force into his reasoning and his language. "He was an ardent admirer of the epic poet: 'Whoever relishes and reads Spenser as he ought to be read,' said Burke in afterlife, 'will have strong hold of the English language;'" and there are many coincidences of expression between Burke and Spenser.

Young Burke learned the rudiments of Latin from a schoolmaster in the village of Glanworth, near Castletown Roche. This teacher, O'Halloran, afterwards boasted that "No matter how great Master Edmund was, he was the first who had ever put a Latin grammar into his hands." In his twelfth year he was sent with his brothers, Garrett and Richard, to the classical school of Ballitore, in the county of Kildare, then kept by Abraham Shackleton, a member of the Society of Friends, and a man of high classical attainments. The master liked his pupil, and the pupil became fond of his master; and during the two years that Burke remained at Ballitore, he studied diligently, and laid the foundation of a sound classical education. Burke was ever grateful to his excellent tutor.

In the House of Commons he paid a noble tribute to the memory of Abraham Shackleton, declaring that he was an honour to his sect, though that sect was one of the purest. He ever considered it as one of the greatest blessings of his life that he had been placed at the good Quaker's academy, and readily acknowledged it was to Abraham Shackleton that he owed the education that made him worth anything. A member of the Society of Friends had always peculiar claims on his sympathy and regard. Burke's bosom friend at Ballitore was Richard Shackleton, the schoolmaster's son: they read together, walked together, and composed their first verses together; unlike most schoolboy ties, which seldom endure the first rough contact with the world, the friend-

ship of Burke and Shackleton remained fresh, pure, and ardent, until the close of their existence. (1)

Burke entered Trinity College, Dublin, in the spring of 1743. He became, in 1746, a scholar of the house, which is similar to being a scholar of Christchurch, Oxford. Oliver Goldsmith, who was at Trinity with Burke, states that he did not distinguish himself in his academical exercises; and Dr. Leland, another of his contemporaries, supports Goldsmith's statement. But Burke undoubtedly acquired at Ballitore a good knowledge of the ordinary classics; and, says Mr. Macknight, his miscellaneous reading gave him more extensive views than could be acquired from the usual text-books of a college. Burke, says the same biographer, seems never to have thought of applying himself systematically to one branch of study, or seriously laboured to acquire gold medals, prize-books, and worldly distinctions. But the longer he remained at college, the more desultory his course of study became: he took up violently with natural philosophy—his *furor mathematicus*; then he worked at logic—his *furor logicus*; to this succeeded his *furor historicus*, which subsided into his old complaint, *furor poeticus*, the most dangerous and difficult to cure of all these forms of madness.

Of Burke's favourite authors, many accounts have been given. His letters show that of the Roman historians Sallust was his delight. He preferred Cicero's Orations to his Epistles; and his frequent quotation of Virgil, Horace, and Ovid, shows how deeply his mind was imbued with their classic imagery. There are few indications of his application to Greek literature. Of modern authors he took most pleasure in Milton, whom he delighted to illustrate at his Debating Society: yet, he greeted Ossian's song of the Son of Fingal with more applause than he bestowed on Shakspeare. (1) He loved Horace and Lucretius; and defended against Johnson the paradox that though Homer was a greater poet than Virgil, yet the *Æneid* was a greater poem than the *Iliad*.

While at college, Burke was a member of that excellent institution of juvenile debate for the use of the students of Trinity, called the Historical Society, which was the arena not only of his incipient oratory, but of that of many others among the greatest men Ireland has produced.

In 1748, Burke took his degree of B.A.; that of M.A. he obtained in 1751; and he was presented with the further degree of LL.D. in 1791. Meantime, having been intended for the English bar, he had entered at the Middle Temple in 1747; and early in 1750, he left Dublin for London.

Burke's college career was free from vice or dissipation.

A high moral tone and dignified bearing, tempered as they were by an extreme urbanity of manner, and a wonderful power of charming in conversation, had already become his characteristics; already, too, his company was sought among the gay and fashionable, as much as among the learned. He had the great art of good breeding which rendered men pleased with him and with themselves. He had an inexhaustible fund of discourse, either serious or jocose, seasoned with wit and humour, poignant, strong, delicate, sportive, as answered the purpose or occasion. He had a vast variety of anecdotes and stories, which were always well adapted and well told; he had also a constant cheer-

(1) There is a pleasing anecdote connected with Edmund Burke's subsequent intercourse with the Shackletons. In the early part of his political career, he was officially installed in apartments in Dublin Castle. No sooner was he there, than his good friends the Shackletons hastened to pay him a visit, and, of course, expected to find the incipient statesman, whose industry was already a public theme, immersed in Government affairs. What was their surprise when, on entering his room, they caught him at play with his children: he was on all-fours, carrying one of them on his back round the room, whilst the other, a chubby infant, lay crowing with delight upon the carpet. The incident recalls a similar story told of the famous Bourbon prince, Henry the Fourth.

(2) Yet, Burke perfected his oratory by studying Shakspeare. He is thought to have overrated Ossian to please Macpherson, who, being the agent of the Nawab of Arcot, had probably laid Burke under obligation by affording him information on Indian affairs.

Burke was more of a versifier in his youth than was ever supposed until some time after his death. When Sir James Mackintosh said that had Burke ever acquired the habit of versification, he would have poured forth volumes of sublime poetry (*Mackintosh's Memoirs*, by his Son), he little suspected that while he was at Trinity College, the great statesman and philosopher was the most inveterate of versifiers. He seldom wrote a letter to a friend without enclosing him some specimens of his verse, which, though rarely above common-place, breathe a sincere love of all that is virtuous, beautiful, and pious; he continued his poetical efforts longer, and met with less success, than any man who ever engaged in political life with a tenth part of his qualifications.—*Mackintosh*, vol. 1. p. 26.