

the author of the greatest epic, the other the author of the greatest allegory in the English language.

Lord Macaulay says, "In the latter half of the seventeenth century there were only two creative geniuses, only two minds that possessed the imaginative faculty in any eminent degree." These were the author of "Paradise Lost" and the author of "The Pilgrim's Progress."

John Bunyan was born at Elstow, near Bedford, in November, 1628. He died in London, August 31, 1688. But how much more crowded into those sixty years! The turbulent reign of Charles I., the times of the Civil War and Commonwealth, the reigns of Charles II. and James II. were all embraced within the years of that eventful life. "John Bunyan lived to see all that was venerable and all that was not changing places like the scene-shifting of a drama." He saw king and cavalier go down before the soldiers drawn from the ranks of the common people. He saw royalty and aristocracy in exile and men of the burgher class sitting in places of power. He lived through brief but grand years of the protectorate, when a man was proud to be called an Englishman. He saw the revelleries and excesses of the Restoration. He experienced the hardships and wrongs of the new period of persecution under Charles II. He was one of the two thousand ministers of the Gospel who were ordered from the church and hounded from corpse and from glen because they dared to preach without Episcopal ordination or in prescribed, priestly vestments. He lived through the period of the plague, and was one of the alienated preachers who taught the anxious and cheered the timid at the altars from which hirelings had fled. Then came the period of James the bigot and dissembler, the wild conspiracy of Monmouth, the military cruelties of Kirke and Claverhouse, the butcheries of Jeffries, the trial of the Seven Bishops, and, finally the Revolution of 1688. What a crowd of great events was packed into those sixty years!

Bunyan was a thinker, like his father before him, but he seems to have been superior to most of the men of his class. He speaks very disparagingly of his own early life, painting himself as the blackest of sinners. But we must be careful not to take his estimate of himself too seriously. Lord Macaulay thinks that most of Bunyan's biographers have treated him with injustice. They have understood in a popular sense all those strong terms of self-condemnation which he has employed in a theological sense. One thing is certain, he was not a converted man until he was twenty-five years of age. But it is not likely that he was ever a vicious man. He seems to have always avoided two sins that were commonly practised by men of his class, drunkenness and unchastity.

At eighteen Bunyan was in Cromwell's army. A twenty he was married. His wife brought him as her dowry two religious books that had belonged to her father. The reading of these books brought Bunyan under deep religious conviction. One by one he gave up all the sinful and frivolous practices to which he had been addicted. He attended all religious services and was outwardly a Christian; but he learned, like Paul and Luther before him, and John Wesley at a later day, that "by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." For five years he was in a state of darkness and deep despair. His vivid imagination conjured up all kinds of calamities as coming upon him. But at last he came into the light and liberty of a child of God, partly through the ministry of a Baptist minister at Bedford.

After his conversion, Bunyan soon be-

gan to preach. At first he preached only occasionally, but so acceptable was his ministry that he was persuaded to give himself wholly to it. No such preacher to the uneducated classes was to be found anywhere. He was a man of one book. He had known the Bible from his childhood. His own vivid experience of sin and grace, added to this, gave him peculiar power in preaching.

In 1660 the Act compelling attendance upon the national Church was revived, and this put Bunyan's preaching under ban. He continued his illicit preaching, however, and was arrested and committed to prison. The judge, Sir Matthew Hale, a truly godly man, was loth to send so good a man to jail; but Bunyan would give no promise to desist from preaching. Indeed, during the first three months his imprisonment was only nominal, and he used his liberty to hold religious meetings. His detention now became more real and gradually it lengthened out to twelve years.

How much the world owes to that imprisonment! They were not years of idleness. During the day he was visited by his family, his wife and four children. These he still continued to support by making tags for shoelaces. Their presence cheered his days. But when night came down he prayed with them before they parted from him and then by the feeble light of a small lamp he wrote to relieve his post-up feelings. Great thoughts surged through his brain like a torrent. They were cloudy and shapeless in their earliest rise; then they

have read them, and no words of mine can describe them adequately for those who have not. Many men of high literary standing have written allegories. Spencer, Addison, Johnson, have each attempted this type of literature, but "Pilgrim's Progress" enjoys the enviable distinction of being the only allegory in the English language that is interesting. Its strong human interest has been due to the facts of human experience that have made it a classic. The author has proven for all time what can be done with simple English words that can be understood even by the child, and are yet words that the wisest can ponder with profit. If Puritanism had left us nothing else than "Pilgrim's Progress," we could still say, "Thank God for Puritanism."

Industry

CITIZENSHIP TOPIC FOR MARCH.

Molt. 25: 14-30.

REV. S. T. TUCKER, B.A., B.D.

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." This is the ideal of Christianity. For Jesus the strenuous life was the happiest life. He had no place in His Kingdom for idleness and sloth. "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." When religion was divorced from business, it developed the extreme form of asceticism.

Jesus related religion to the whole life. It is a religious duty to develop every talent to its fullest capacity. Self-realization is a fundamental law of the Kingdom of God. By the use of our talents we realize them and increase their power. "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath." Education is the awakening and developing of our talents by using them. Human life becomes more efficient by activity. Any preparation or training, that makes our life more efficient, is a religious duty.

The aim to-day is for more human efficiency. By the improvement of his machinery, man has increased ten or an hundredfold the product of industry. The instruments of production have been made more efficient. The present problem is to increase proportionately human efficiency. In the past, the aim was to displace human labor by machinery. Material efficiency has been pushed to such an extent that it has either driven the human element out altogether, or made man simply part of the machine. Of the various elements necessary for modern production, the human factor is the most important and the most difficult to control.

HUMAN EFFICIENCY.

Human efficiency does not consist in making man a perfect machine, at the expense of his personality. Any method of training that disregards the individual differences, will crush out the best qualities of human genius. There is an automatic system of education that endeavors to force every individual into the same mould. As the Germans wish to Prussianize the world, and crush out the good qualities of other nationalities, even so there is a danger of making our



OLD NORMAN TOWER, ELSTOW CHURCH

darkened into the gigantic, or they brightened into the beautiful until at length he flung them out in bold and burning words. He had no thought of publishing anything. He wrote merely to relieve his feelings. He little knew he was making himself immortal.

In 1672, along with other dissenters, Bunyan obtained his release and a license to preach. The remaining sixteen years of his life were spent in the duties of his pastorate as Baptist minister at Bedford. Yearly he was called to London to labor among the Baptist congregations there, but he never gave up his Bedford charge.

The works he had begun while in prison he now completed and published, "Grace Abounding," "The Holy War," and "Pilgrim's Progress" are too well-known to need description for those who