

books, *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven*, and *The Practice of Piety*, which her father had left her when he died. In these two books I sometimes read with her. I found some things pleasing to me, but all this while I met with no conviction. She often told me what a godly man her father was; how he would reprove and correct vice both in his house and among his neighbours; what a strict and holy life he lived in his day, both in word and deed. These books, though they did not reach my heart, did light in me some desire to religion."

There was still an Established Church in England, and the constitution of it had not yet been altered. The Presbyterian platform threatened to take the place of Episcopacy, and soon did take it; but the clergyman was still a priest, and was still regarded with pious veneration in the country districts as a semi-supernatural being. The altar yet stood in its place, the minister still appeared in his surplice, and the Prayers of the Liturgy continued to be read or intoned. The old familiar bells, Catholic as they were in all the emotions which they suggested, called the congregation together with their musical peal, though in the midst of triumphant Puritanism. The *Book of Sports*, which, under an order from Charles I., had been read regularly in Church, had in 1644 been laid under a ban; but the gloom of a Presbyterian Sunday was, is, and for ever will be detestable to the natural man; and the Elstow population gathered persistently after service on the village green for their dancing, and their leaping, and their archery. Long habit cannot be transformed in a day by an Edict of Council, and amidst army manifestoes and battles of Marston Moor, and a king dethroned and imprisoned, old English life in Bedfordshire preserved its familiar features. These Sunday sports had been a special

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