

Tutorship, by the Rev. A. Wixon, M. A., a distinguished graduate of the University, and classical gold medalist of 1847.

PIERRE J. O. CHAUVEAU.

(To be concluded in our next.)

### School days of Eminent Men in Great-Britain.

By JOHN TIMBS, F. S. A.

(Continued from our last.)

#### CVIII.

JOHN BUNYAN, AUTHOR OF "THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS."

Who has not read *The Pilgrim's Progress*?—"a book," says Southey, "which makes its way through the fancy to the understanding and the heart: the child peruses it with wonder and delight; in youth we discover the genius which it displays; its worth is apprehended as we advance in years; and we perceive its merits feelingly in declining age." Lord Macaulay has said of Bunyan: "though there were many clever men in England during the latter half of the seventeenth century, there were only two great creative minds. One of these minds produced 'The Paradise Lost'; the other, 'The Pilgrim's Progress.'"

John Bunyan was born in the village of Elstow, within a mile of Bedford, in the year 1628, in a cottage which remained in its original state to our time. Bunyan's descent, to use his own words, "was of a low inconsiderable generation; my father's house," he says, "being of that rank that is meanest and most despised of all the families in the land." He was, as his own statement implies, of a generation of tinkers, and born and bred to that calling, as his father had been before him. His parents had several other children; but they were able to put their son John to school in an age when very few of the poor were taught to read and write. The boy learnt both, "according to the rate of other poor men's children," but soon lost what little he had been taught, "even," he says, "almost utterly." Southey is of opinion that Bunyan's parents took some pains in impressing him with a sense of his religious duties; otherwise, when, in his boyhood, he having but few equals in cursing, swearing, lying, and blaspheming, he would not have been visited by such dreams and such compunctious feelings as he has described.

"Often," he says, "after I had spent this and the other day in sin, I have in my bed been greatly afflicted, while asleep, with the apprehensions of devils and wicked Spirits, who still, as I then thought, laboured to draw me away with them." His waking reflections were not less terrible than these fearful visions of the night: and these, he says, "when I was but a child, but nine or ten years old, did so distress my soul, that then in the midst of my many sports and childish vanities, amidst my vain companions, I was often much cast down, and afflicted in my mind therewith: yet could I not let go my sins."

But these impressions soon passed away, and were forgotten in the society of Bunyan's village companions: according to his own confession, he ran headlong into the boisterous vices which prove fatal to so many of the ignorant and the brutal. Yet, though he became so far hardened in profligacy, the sense of right and wrong was not extinguished in him, and it shocked him when he saw those who pretended to be religious act in a manner unworthy of their profession. Some providential escapes, during this part of his life, he looked back upon as so many judgments mixed with mercy. Once he fell into a creek of the sea, once out of a boat into the river Ouse, near Bedford, and each time was narrowly saved from drowning. One day an adder crossed his path; he stunned it with a stick, then forced open its mouth with a stick, and plucked out the tongue, which he supposed to be the sting, with his fingers; "by which act," he says, "had not God been merciful unto me, I might, by my desperation, have brought myself to an end." If this indeed were an adder, and not a harmless snake, his escape from the fangs was more remarkable than he was aware of. A circumstance which was likely to impress him more deeply, occurred in the eighteenth year of his age, when, being a soldier in the Parliament's army, he was drawn out to go to the siege of Leicester; one of the company wished to go in his stead; Bunyan consented to exchange with him; and this volunteer substitute, standing sentinel one day at the siege, was shot through the head with a musket-ball.

Bunyan, probably before he was nineteen, chanced to "light

upon a wife," whose father, as she often told him, was a godly man: the young couple began housekeeping without so much as a dish or spoon; but Bunyan had his trade, and she brought for her portion two books which her father had left her at his death: *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven* was one; the other was Bayloy, Bishop of Bangor's *Practice of Piety*. These books he sometimes read with her; and they begat in him some desire to reform his vicious life, and made him fall in eagerly with the religion of the times, go to church twice a-day with the foremost, and there devoutly say and sing as others did;—yet, according to his own account, retaining his wicked life. How he was first reclaimed through a Puritan sermon against Sabbath-breaking; how he joined a Baptist congregation in Bedford, and became its preacher; was next apprehended for holding "unlawful meetings and conventicles," and was imprisoned in Bedford gaol 12½ years; we have no space to tell. His library, while in prison, consisted but of two books—the Bible, which he read intently, and especially historically; and Fox's *Book of martyrs*, which copy is now preserved in the Bedfordshire General Library. While in prison, he wrote several works, including *The Holy War*, and *Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, a narrative of his own life and religious experience. But his chief work is *The Pilgrim's Progress from this World to that which is to Come*, which has been translated into most of the European languages.

#### CIX.

ISAAC BARROW AT THE CHARTER-HOUSE.

Dr Isaac Barrow, the eminent mathematician and divine, was born in 1630, in the city of London, where his father was linen-draper to Charles II. The young Barrow was first sent to the Charter-house, where he was only noted for his idleness and love of fighting; he was on this account removed to a school at Folstead, in Essex, where he abandoned his idle habits, and studied so successfully, that his master made him a sort of tutor to Lord Fairfax, of Ireland, then a boy in the same school. The fortunes of his family had now begun to suffer for their stanch adherence to the royal cause, and the young student must have given up his career of learning had not Dr. Hammond, Canon of Christchurch, given him the means of completing his education. He died 1677, aged 47.

Few persons ever attained such a deserved reputation in such various branches of science and learning, whose life was so short, as the celebrated Isaac Barrow. His sermons will remain specimens of profound erudition, of splendid eloquence, and of the manner in which a subject may be exhausted,—so long as the Church of England and the English language exist. For his mathematical proficiency he received the highest honours from the University of Cambridge; and he was elected to the mastership of Trinity in 1672. He was a great writer of poetry; and at one time studied anatomy, botany, and chemistry, with a view to the practice of physic.

#### CX.

DRYDEN AT WESTMINSTER AND OXFORD.

John Dryden, (or Drilen,) one of the greatest masters of English verse, was born on the 9th of August, 1631, in the parsonage-house of Oldwinclo All-Saints, Northamptonshire. The house is still standing, and a small apartment in it is still known as "Dryden's Room." He received the rudiments of his education at Tichmarsh, or at the neighbouring grammar-school of Oundle. "We boast," says the inscription at Tichmarsh, on the monument erected by Dryden's relative, (Mrs. Creed,) "that he was bred and had his first learning here, where he has often made us happier by his kind visits and most delightful conversation." He was afterwards admitted a King's scholar at Westminster School, under Dr. Busby, for whom he contracted a warm and lasting regard. He was not, however, indifferent to the Doctor's severity in the use of the rod; for the poet compares his over-correction of some verses to "our Master Busby," who "used to whip a boy so long till he made him a confirmed block-head." Yet Dryden was so strongly impressed with Busby's high moral character and excellent system of tuition, that he placed two of his sons under him. The Doctor was the first to discover and encourage Dryden's poetical talent; but of his performance in this way when at Westminster, the only record we have is, that he translated the third Satire of Persius as a Thursday night's exercise. Other pieces of a similar kind were produced, and remained in the hands of Dr. Busby, but were never recovered. Here also, while yet a King's scholar, in 1649, Dryden wrote an *Elegy on the Death of Lord Hastings*, and some commendatory verses on the *Divine Epigrams* of his friend, John