

THE LIFE OF DEAN MILNER.\*

(From the London Times.)

The Georgian era in England, at any rate by far its larger portion, displays the reign of lukewarmness and indifference in religious principles and practice, dull decency or shameless laxity in morals, and a miserable want of taste in almost every department of art.

Towards the close of the last century prognostics were discernible of a happier age, and among the serious and able men who laboured in the advancement of a brighter state of spiritual things, Isaac Milner, the subject of the memoir before us and his elder brother, Joseph, the vicar of Hull, were conspicuously eminent.

In our recent review of the Life and Labours of Adam Clarke, we demonstrated how much that amiable and excellent man was a churchman. In order that no young man might be misled into a supposition of his various attainments being the product of the Methodist system, we will now proceed to vindicate the Milners from the people of Exeter-hall, who so ostentatiously claim them for their own.

It is essential to the due appreciation of the character of either of the Milners,—and they were so linked together in the best of bonds that they cannot be thoroughly estimated apart,—to bear in mind the state of the times in which they lived, and therefore it is we have introduced our notice of a life of Dean Milner with some few prefatory observations.

Joseph Milner was born at Leeds in 1743, and, after displaying early much promise at the grammar-school of his native town, was sent to Cambridge by the liberality of some friends who had discovered his great abilities.

He immediately resolvers," writes the biographer of his uncle, Dean Milner, in the work before us, "to release him from his obligation at Leeds, and with that view requested the Rev. Myles Atkinson, the minister of St. Paul's Church in that town, to examine into the qualifications of Isaac, to become his usher in the grammar-school at Hull.

On proceeding to the work-room in which Isaac Milner then laboured, Mr. Atkinson found him seated at a loom, with Tacitus and some Greek author lying by his side.

youth on hearing these words, was declared by Mr. Atkinson to be quite indescribable."—Page 5. The emancipated Isaac joyfully hastened to his brother at Hull, and after proving himself an able assistant in teaching the lower boys in the school, and under his brother's care improving himself in classical learning and the elementary branches of mathematics, he was placed by the same kind brother's generosity as a sizar at Queen's College, Cambridge.

Those who wish to pursue step by step the honorable career of Isaac Milner, who only eight years before he was pronounced a Senior Wrangler, incomparable, and first Smith's prizeman at Cambridge, was a poor Yorkshire lad weaving at the looms of Leeds, we strongly recommend to read the interesting life just published by his niece. We believe that this lady resided with her uncle for many years both at Cambridge and Carlisle, which may account for an easy familiarity with academical matters which few acquire but those who have worn the trencher cap themselves.

It is all very well for the churchmen of the present day, whose path has been smoothed for them by the hardy pioneers to whom we have alluded, to speak of Joseph Milner's "daring violation of the regulations of the church," but the zealous labourer could only work with tools adapted for the task which he had to perform.

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Dr. Milner's firmness and discretion, but the bitter fruits which have sprung in the University of Cambridge from the seeds sown by such men as Friend and Gilbert Wakefield have been quite sufficient to show the worth of the hand which stayed further dissemination of corruption.

In the year 1809 Dr. Milner was again, and most unexpectedly by himself, elected Vice-Chancellor, and this second term of office was a period of difficulties, originating in the insubordination of many members of the university, as on the former occasion.

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which apartment the housewife were still employed in arranging. What was his Lordship's surprise, on looking into the room, to discover Dean Milner, seated in a quiet corner, in his dressing-gown and black velvet cap, with the draught-board before him, solving at his ease the problem which had puzzled him the evening before.

Dean Milner practically followed Lord Bacon's advice, to borrow light from any man's candle; it was his settled habit to endeavour to glean from every person who fell in his way some portion of the particular knowledge, whatever it might be, which that person was supposed to possess.

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his very words, although it is now more than 23 years ago. Some robbery had been committed in Cambridge at the time. The Dean, being about to set out another question, took up the poker, and, balancing it in his hand, said, "Now, gentlemen, about these rogues. Suppose you were attacked by one of them, and wished to defend yourself with this poker; if you were to hold the poker near the end, or near the centre, and then to strike a blow, you would jar your [the type is here illegible], and lose part of the force; but if you hold it about here, and strike about here (showing us how), then it is his plump. Now, I want you to find where you must hold the poker, and with what part of it you must strike a blow so as to produce the greatest effect."

THE POPIST CONTROVERSY.

(From The London Quarterly Review for December, 1842.)

No one can have honestly engaged in the Popish controversy without feeling that he is grappling with a most powerful and subtle antagonist. It is easy to multiply hard words, and to hold up to reproach its grosser forms of corruption; and to attack it with bold generalizations and contradictions.

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truth buried beneath them, as dung will guard roots during winter. It may be they were designedly permitted to answer this very purpose: It does not justify the permission, or extenuate the guilt of suffering human faithfulness to contrive unholly means for saving what, in the utmost perils, a Higher arm has undertaken to defend.

And these accidental and providential benefits were drawn by the hand of Providence out even of the essential germ of evil in the Papacy,—its lust of power and claim to empire. Others, infinite in number, but not to be confounded with these, sprung forth at the same time from the other germ of good which lay so closely entwined with it.

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\*The Life of Isaac Milner, D.D., F.R.S., Dean of Carlisle, President of Queen's College, Cambridge, &c., comprising a portion of his correspondence, and other writings hitherto unpublished. By his niece, Mary Milner, author of the Christian Mother. 8vo. London.—J. W. Parker, 1842.

† Dean Milner points out to Mr. Wilberforce "a danger in living altogether at Clapham—danger of conceit and spiritual pride."—(Page 336.)

[But, innocent as cards are in themselves, when properly used, it is no matter for a Clergyman to banish them from his house, lest he give offence, and thus impair the usefulness of his holy office.—Ed. Cu.]

[The eccentricities of a powerful mind cannot afford any sanction to the brutal and infamous practice of prize-fighting, with which pugilism is so closely connected.—Ed. Cu.]

\*For a verification of this singular fact, see the remarkable work entitled "Annales de la Propagation de la Foi."





Poetry.

THE OLD CROW.

(From the Newhaven Church Chronicle and Record.)

The following stanzas were reflections on an old Crow, who was seated upon a tree during one of our late snow storms. I suppose some may smile at such a subject for verse, but wisdom is good, even if it be learned from the air.

Why sit you there my dusky friend / Mid the fierce driving snow? / 'Twill force, me thinks, ere long, to bend / Thy stout old heart! Yet slow / Thy measured "caw" Boats bravely by / As if you laughed at us.

High up on yonder oak's strong arm, / Right sturdy you stand; / Feeding and caring nought for harm, / From hunter's treacherous hand, / Thy bearing could would tell us thou / Art Lord of this whole land.

Thy crest of jet is waxing white, / Art prematurely old? / Have sorrow and fortune e'er met? / Are friends and fortune e'er met? / And art thou bearing bravely up / 'Gainst evils manifold?

And canst thou see thro' this wild storm / The bright and sunny spring? / And dost the sight thy bosom warm, / And nerve thy sallow wing? / Alas, thy old dear thoughts forgot, / Make thee rejoice and sing!

Art thou left all alone, old crow? / Where is thy noisy crew? / That in the summer months ago, / Here in this old wood flew? / For southern climes and southern corn / Have they forsaken you?

Thus on the summit, seated, and bare, / Of this old world we stand; / And hopes like withered leaves—once fair— / Lie strown on every hand; / And clouds and storms around; and gone / Our once true-hearted band.

But we beyond life's wintry day / Can see a fairer shore; / Where earth-born sorrows fade away; / And vexing thoughts are o'er; / Where Heaven's eternal spring-time reigns, / And joy for evermore.

Thou hast no store of daily food; / But fixed on Heaven thine eye, / Where be the fountain of all good / Hears the young ravens cry; / If this wild storm is pelting thee, / He will not see thee die!

And why fear we to trust that hand— / Forever open wide,— / Which made, preserved, and makes us stand / Whatever ills betide? / Will He not care to feed and clothe, / Who for our souls hath died?

Sing on old friend! tho' rough thy voice, / It cheers my spirit so; / To hear thee sing thy noisy joys, / While storms around thee blow, / Thou hast a strong and valiant heart, / Tho' but a bird, old crow!

And thy deep lesson to my heart / I shall not soon forget; / When from all earthly friends I part, / And joy's bright sun is set; / How with firm soul and manly brow, / Life's woes are to be met.

I thank thee for thy lessons all; / And, years to come, old crow, / When storms of sorrow on me fall— / Of pains and griefs aloud / I'll think I hear thy mighty voice / As in this storm of snow.

A CHRONICLE OF THE TIMES OF WICKLIFFE.

(From the New York Churchman.)

It was not many years before the death of Edward the Third, that there resided in the city of York, a famous master of handicraft—one Walter Gower by name, and a sculptor in wood and stone by profession. A cheery, pleasant man was Walter Gower. His artistic skill no man could gainsay; whilst all his neighbours proclaimed him a frank-hearted soul and a good citizen.

Particularly cheerful and merry was Walter on the present occasion. It was a bright, fresh morning in December, a day or two before the festival of Christmas, and he had walked out into a neighbouring forest, to gather some branches of ivy and holly to decorate his dwelling. He had accomplished his task, and was returning homeward, laden with an armful of glossy ivy and green holly, humming, as he walked briskly along, the burden of an old Christmas carol. In the midst of this glee and good humour, his ear was suddenly awakened by the sound of something approaching his path. It was the quick patter of tiny feet, together with a childish voice, beseeching him to stay his footsteps "for mercy's sake!" He looked around, and saw a little girl, with a face as white as paper, and a cry of distress was enough to excite his sympathy at all times. He instantly halted, and the little messenger of grief—almost breathless—came up to him. In another moment the child was at his side. And seldom had he gazed upon a more lovely or engaging countenance than that which now looked up imploringly, whilst she besought him to come to her poor mother, who was dying hard by.

The peculiar costume and manner of the child instantly designated her as belonging to the gipsy tribe; a portion of the human family not held in very great repute or estimation by the good inhabitants of York. But this circumstance did not prevent Walter from kindly accosting this interesting little representative of an outcast branch of God's children. "What do you desire of me, my little maiden; what do you seek at my hands?" said Walter, with his wonted kindness and frankness of speech, and with more than usual interest depicted in his honest face. "What is it you are so importunate about?" "Some holy father to shrieve my dear mother ere she die," replied the child. "I am no priest," answered Walter. "Nay, if you be not one, come but with me to my dying parent, you can minister some herb or healing potion that may compose her sufferings," was the continued entreaty. "Again, I say I am neither priest nor leech; nevertheless, I will see thy mother—mayhap I can render some service." And so saying, Walter threw down his armful of Christmas greens, and bade the gipsy child "lead on!"

Our chance companions then set out together. Their path lay beside the skirts of the neighbouring forest, now leafless, yet made vocal with the solemn anthems of the December wind, as it sighed through the short and gnarled branches of many an ancient oak. Passing out of these forest glades, they entered into—what in summer time would have been—a secluded dell. At the termination of a devious foot-path, they came to a rude, constructed little hermitage, surrounded by a stone cressel, which was overgrown with emerald-looking moss and green lichens. This singular structure had been the comfortable abode of a harmless anchorite for many years; but since his death had been deserted and was fast going to ruin. And here the gipsy child informed Walter, lay the dying one. As they were about entering the gloomy cell, a gipsy woman, wild as if she had just fled from the tents of the burning desert, darted forth from within the low portal, and stood before them. She whispered at the same time, "I have found and brought our sister a holy man."

I know not who this reverend father may be," she continued, addressing herself to the child, "who came so readily and graciously at a poor outcast's bidding; I met him journeying on the road to Beverley."

"Then I can tell you," said Walter, who had been listening most intently during this conversation. "I can tell thee who is within, now that I hear that familiar voice; and you need not be surprised at this act of kindness when I tell thee, thou hast brought hither Master John Wickliffe."

"God reward him!" exclaimed the gipsy woman. "May the gipsy's God bless him!" "Amen to that prayer," again responded Walter. There was now a silent interval. The speakers embraced it, and entered noiselessly into the cell together.

The interior of the cave presented a scene both remarkable and impressive. In a corner of this cheerless apartment, upon the cold, damp earth, with nothing to lie upon, save a few dry leaves and rushes, and a fragment of coarse frieze, lay the dying gipsy. A handful of brands were blazing in the centre of the apartment, which threw a lurid glare upon the ghastly countenance of the death-stricken. Close beside the woman, and in the attitude of prayer, was seen the form of Wickliffe, habited in the clerical costume of the time. His robes were ample, and flowing in their fashion, which imparted a singular dignity to his figure. But his countenance—how expressive and characteristic of his benign soul! and, lit up as it now was with mild serenity, whilst assuaging the bitter pangs of dissolution, it seemed truly to indicate and reveal the just and righteous Reformer.

A most thrilling scene was to the silent spectators. The child had now overcome the awe and terror which had started her at beholding death for the first time; she approached the side of the dying woman. The wretched gipsy stretched out her feeble arms to embrace the child. This seemed her last effort; she gazed wildly at the serene countenance of Wickliffe, who seemed to comprehend that anxious look, whilst he uttered, audibly, the words, "God speed thy soul, daughter!" A faint smile for a moment kindled up the rigid countenance of the woman—a convulsive shiver shook her frame—her eyes glared with unearthly vividness around, then closed again. A feeble shriek startled the little group assembled near the departing one, whose troubled spirit, in another moment, fled from this fleeting world for ever.

It was not until that moment that Wickliffe's eye met that of Walter Gower, but it was at the same time a look of kind recognition. They were no strangers to each other. Both were born in the same place, not far from Richmond, in Yorkshire. They had been playmates in infancy, and had passed the days of boyhood together. Boyhood sport and boyhood adventure had at length given place to other views and prospects. Events had separated, and made their paths in life as opposite as their respective dispositions and characters originally indicated. Walter was placed with a cunning workman in art, whilst Wickliffe's ardent desire was to covet book-craft. He became a student very early in life, and his parents subsequently sent him to Queen's College, Oxford—a seminary then recently founded by Queen Philippa, wife of Edward the Third. Here he soon distinguished himself by his indefatigable application to study. The two friends had frequently met, however, in after-life. Their respective pursuits, diverse as they were, had nevertheless brought them constantly into contact; whilst neither party had ever forgotten their boyhood fellowship and acts of mutual assistance when they had been in peril, whilst sporting together in the river Tees. This explanation will account for the quick recognition of Wickliffe by Walter, already noticed. The latter individual was at this time engaged in executing some embellishments for the choir of York Minster; indeed, his skill had been found indispensable in the decorative part of that edifice. Wickliffe's professional duties had made it necessary for him to be at Beverley during the festival of Christmas, and thus it was that the friends met at this moment. It is not therefore surprising that they greeted each other with pleasure, whilst Wickliffe thus addressed Walter—

"Good Walter, thou wast but this instant in my thoughts. I need thy services; wilt thou aid me in protecting this child?" At the same time Wickliffe laid his hand upon the head and thick clustering locks of golden hair, which fell over the shoulders of the little messenger, who had conducted Walter to the abode of death. "But before I ask so important a matter of thee," he continued, "let me put thee into possession of my reasons for requesting this charitable deed at thy hands."

So saying, Wickliffe revealed to Walter the dying confession of the gipsy woman—that the beautiful child, on whose silken hair his hand rested—was stolen!

"I thought as much!" exclaimed Walter. "There can be no gipsy blood in so fair a brow! But whence and from whom was she stolen?" "That I am unable to answer," was the reply of Wickliffe, who stated, that when he arrived at the hermitage he found life ebbing from the woman; that she spoke very unintelligibly; all he could glean was, that the child had been stolen by her. She had doubtless thought she had made him understand from whom; but it had not been possible to hear anything distinctly. She had succeeded, however, in making him comprehend that it was her last wish that the stolen child should be restored. This she had engaged to do, if it were possible or practicable. At the same time he exhibited a very curious amulet, attached to a golden chain, which he said the woman put into his hands, and intimated that it belonged to the little girl.

"This may possibly lead to the discovery of the parents; therefore I place it in thy keeping," said Wickliffe. "In the mean time wilt thou cooperate with me in rescuing this little one from vile degradation and a gipsy life? 'Aferre Domosus'—bring unto the Lord! Verily, by so doing, thou shalt have thy reward in this world; and in that which is to come recompense shall not be wanting."

"Reward! recompense! good Master Wickliffe?" replied Walter, with energy; "may I ever light upon the head of the catfish who looks for reward or recompense, when his own heart and good Master Wickliffe teaches him his duty! Reward, recompense, for this small matter?—never! I am well contented in protecting the friendless."

Often would the passing pilgrim, or the struggling forester, as he returned through this secluded dell, stop and accost the little maiden, and inquire what mysterious page could so interest a child. Her answers were always so winning and sweetly expressed, that the traveller would lay aside his staff, the forester his tough-stringed bow, or perchance throw down his burden of noble deer, and listen to Edith, as she read a page from this wonderful book—a chapter from the Gospels, Wickliffe had given her. Her auditors, in their simplicity, would hardly know which to wonder at most, the marvellous words of Holy Writ, or the female prodigy who was thus able to understand that of which, it was then thought, only learned clerks and divines had any knowledge. Walter Gower would thus frequently find Edith engaged and surrounded, as he sought her in the evening, often with quite a group around her, composed of pilgrims, rangers, and foresters.

But soon were these pleasant moments disturbed. An edict from the ecclesiastical tribunal was proclaimed: it declared it heresy to read the Bible!—Edith and her simple audience no longer met together in public. The reading of Holy Writ was now done stealthily and in secret. But the edict fell heavily upon Walter Gower. It had been ascertained that he had long aided and abetted others in disseminating the translations of Wickliffe. From that moment he was an attainted person, and held in secret mistrust. He resolved, therefore, to leave York, and seek an asylum elsewhere. This, through the kind influence of Wickliffe, was easily effected.

Some years had passed, and Walter was quietly settled in London, pursuing his usual avocations.—Edith had reached womanhood, but nothing had yet transpired to reveal her parentage. She was not only remarkable for the usual accomplishments which adorn her sex, but she might be considered a learned woman, possessing very rare gifts and endowments. One of these unusual talents was her superior knowledge of the penman's art. No clerk nor monkish scribe in London could excel her in the beauty of her manuscripts. She could also illuminate, embellish, and decorate them with wonderful designs. Many of her countrymen were indebted to her art and industry for the reading of the Bible; for Wickliffe at this time was busied engaged in disseminating his translations of the Scriptures, in fragments or portions, and Edith was of great assistance to him in making these copies—thus repaying, in some degree, the deep obligation she was under to her kind benefactor and friend.

But a fearful storm was now gathering over the devoted head of that undaunted champion of light and truth—the good and great Wickliffe. Stratagem, menace, and art, severally and ceaselessly, were employed for the purpose of intimidating this fearless and intrepid Reformer. The heresies of Wickliffe, as they were then called, had aroused his enemies, and made them numerous, subtle, and formidable. The numerous swarms of mendicant friars against whom he had waged incessant war, preached against and defamed him. The power was only wanting, to treat his quick and animated body with that fiendish contumely with which the Council of Constance, more than forty years after his death, thought to dishonour his quiet remains, by burning, and then casting them into the brook Swift. His followers, under the name of Lollards, were every where held traitors to the Church and State; until at length the intrepid Reformer himself was cited to appear before the Convocation of St. Paul's, on the third of February, 1377, and answer to certain charges preferred against him.

The result of that celebrated attempt to crush Wickliffe is well known. It terminated in the suspension of the civil and ecclesiastical process against him at that time; he retired unharméd. The excitement then existing, however, was terrible.

The work of reform commenced by Wickliffe against the mendicant friars—the dissemination of the Holy Scriptures in the vernacular tongue, together with his unflinching attack upon the abuses of papal domination, excited the wrath and indignation of the emissaries of Rome. But the good work had been committed to a potent and intrepid spirit—a spirit unquenchable—it could not be put down. The translations of Wickliffe were every where proclaimed "a new revelation of the Word of God!" His remarkable, nay, extraordinary career—when the times in which he lived are considered—raised for him a host of foes; but, at the same time, his friends were potent and numerous. Those friends exulted in being called Wickliffites.—Many were powerful and influential noblemen; and it was to a prominent one amongst those distinguished men that the early Reformer was indebted, under God, for that sustained strength which enabled him to breast and buffet the waves of those tempestuous times.—And he had great need of all the support that friends and good counsel could command. Those were indeed perilous times—times fraught with imminent danger to the life and doctrine of the great Reformer of his age.

Tumult and disorder followed the breaking up of the celebrated council at St. Paul's. The friendly offices of a noble earl had served Wickliffe on that occasion; nor did he desert him when he left the Cathedral and his holy and subtle judges.

The intense anxiety of Walter Gower and Edith, during the pending difficulties of their good friend may readily be imagined. It absorbed all their thoughts, and awakened their most anxious solicitude; whilst their fervent prayers were continually wafted to heaven for his deliverance.

Wickliffe speedily left London to resume his interrupted studies and labours. Whilst thus occupied, several months had rolled by, until the festival of Christmas was once more approaching. A messenger from the brave earl, already alluded to, now found Wickliffe at Lutterworth, in Leicestershire. His presence was requested by the earl at his castle in Northumberland, for the purpose of consulting him upon some arrangements connected with a chapel he had just completed. Wickliffe immediately set out upon his visit to his tried friend. After inspecting the interior of this new and beautiful chapel, and giving the desired advice, the Reformer drew from beneath the ample folds of his robe, a superb looking book, and at the same time presented it to the earl as a suitable thank-offering. The earl received the book with many grateful acknowledgements. It was the Gospels, translated by Wickliffe; and most surpassingly, teaches him his duty! Reward, recompense, for this small matter?—never! I am well contented in protecting the friendless."

"Be it as thou wilt," replied Wickliffe; "nevertheless, I tell thee thou shalt assuredly have thy reward."

And with these words the conversation ended.—The attendant gipsy woman made no objection to the present disposal of the child. The deceased was removed and interred by her tribe, and the little Edith or disciple of Wickliffe, whose name was Edith, quickly constituted one of the family of the worthy Walter Gower.

melancholy of his lady, was caused by the loss of their daughter when a child; she had been stolen whilst he was absent in the Holy Land. No traces of her had ever been discovered, and she was supposed to have perished long since. This was no rare thing, however, in those days.

A light now broke upon the mind of Wickliffe. His dearly cherished Edith could be no other than the earl's stolen child—the age and other circumstances, all confirmed it. Nay, if anything were wanting to corroborate the fact, the amulet was accurately described, and was at once proof, strong as Holy Writ. There could be none other like it in all England; the earl had obtained it at Jerusalem, to decorate the child. Beside, Wickliffe testified to a slight scar upon the arm of Edith, when he first met her; but it had disappeared with time. This had been caused, it appeared, by a favourite dog, who was wont to be the playmate of fair Edith.

Thus, in a most extraordinary manner, were the parents of Edith discovered. And quickly did the good earl set off for London to conduct his child to the ancient halls of her ancestors. And never had that banquet-hall witnessed so thrilling a spectacle, as it did on the ensuing Christmas day, when the earl's kindred and friends sat at the festive board; and the health and long life of the recovered Edith—as it was proclaimed—shook the rafters of the oaken ceiling.

It was at this high period of mirth and rejoicing, that Wickliffe left his seat and approached Walter Gower, who was also present at that memorable feast, and thus addressed him—

"In times past, I assured thee, thou shouldst have thy reward. Behold, I am commissioned by our host, the noble earl, thus publicly to bestow a gift of land, and other possessions, upon thee and thy fore-er.—Take thou the deed, and may God's blessing go along with it!"

So saying, he handed the legal document to Walter, whilst the old hall rang resounded with the acclamations of the delighted guests and spectators. And thus endeth the Chronicle. D.

Advertisements.

THE ANNUAL JUST PUBLISHED, IN PRACTICE COURTS, BY JOHN HILKARD CAMERON, Esq., Barrister-at-Law. For sale, price 2s. 6d., by the Publishers, H. & W. ROWSELL, Toronto, January 24, 1843.

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