ANCESTORS

A Personal Exploration into the Past

by

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Ancestors
by Michael Lewis

'Gem' is an overworked word in the publisher's vocabulary, but its application to ANCESTORS is surely beyond question. Professor Michael Lewis is already known as one of the world's greatest naval experts whose erudition masks a breadth of interest and delight in humanity which is all too rare amongst historians. It is these latter qualities which make ANCESTORS so outstanding. The characters who emerge so articulately and four-squarely from these pages range from a great Norman statesman to a retiring and saintly scholar whose spirit is battered but not bowed by the inhumanities of the seventeenth century; from a great Elizabethan admiral to some obscure but lively characters—Welsh and English—of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. All these superb portraits are linked—they are all ancestors of the author. Moreover, the strange, absorbing and near-infinite ancestral links here examined have a relevance all their own. If, the Professor asks, one so essentially 'middle-class' as himself can get such worthwhile results from the pursuit of his forebears, why should not the rest of his middle-of-the-road contemporaries obtain comparable results? Why, since all have, roughly, the same number to choose from, should

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Wrapper design by Judith Ward

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theirs be less interesting than his? From this angle, in fact, the particular 'I' who gets himself born on the last page is not so much 'I' as 'You'—once you realise the potentialities of the pursuit.

But the reader, even if he will not follow the Professor this far, will certainly find the ancestral portraits becoming his friends. Michael Lewis has brought them to life by many years' study of remote sources and obscure records, distilled by a keenly critical mind, and enlivened by his own appreciation of human foibles and eccentricities. There is about the whole gallery of them a steadfastness of purpose which, in whatever society they find themselves, adds to the glory and liveliness of their country.

Professor Michael Lewis's previous books include:

A Social History of the Navy, 1793-1815

and recently published

The Navy in Transition A Social History 1814-1865

ANCESTORS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

England's Sea-Officers
British Ships and British Seamen
The Navy of Britain
Armada Guns
Ships and Seamen of Britain
Armed Forces and the Art of War
History of the British Navy
The Spanish Armada
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The Navy in Transition, 1814-1864

EDITED

Sir William Dillon's *Narrative*, 2 volumes
The Commissioned Officers of the Royal Navy, 1660-1815
3 volumes (Admiralty Publication)

FOREWORD

THE FORMULA

Recently—and for the umpteenth time—I came upon certain sheets of tattered foolscap tucked away in a back drawer. They contained a bald but very long list of names, and were simply headed PEOPLE WHO INTRIGUE ME.

I instantly identified them as a rough Memo of persons long dead, who, over many years and for many reasons, had struck me as people whom I should like to know better: worthwhile people or classes of persons who, when I first listed them, had seemed unkindly passed over by busy biographers, or otherwise neglected by posterity. They range from the quite well known (though seldom the outstandingly great, who usually do, sooner or later, find biographers) down to much humbler folk who, either in themselves or their earthly context, had roused my interest. Anyway, the factor common to them all was the general inability, of myself and others like me, to "look them up" in easily-accessible sources, and so satisfy a natural curiosity. Yet of this I was sure: could I but make a serious study of any of them, the effort would amply repay the labour.

The idea was sound: but, so far, it remained an idea. The list had remained—a list, occasionally augmented but never diminished: a sad example of initial inertia, becoming ever harder to overcome as the list grew longer and less manageable. The crux of the problem, as I very well knew, was indecision about which to choose and where to start. It was slowly strangling the idea itself.

Then came the day when I pulled myself together—and started. This book is the result. It is about a few—a mere score or two—of the potentially interesting people (by now grown to hundreds) whose names adorned the original tattered sheets. They are not all fully treated here, but still in some sort treated. They all qualify as "neglected" worthies, and virtually all are Englishmen (or Welshmen) by birth or adoption. Otherwise they vary widely: in their personal standing when on earth, in the work they did here and in the environment in which they did it: in time too, from the Norman Conquest to the early 19th century. They start with a king and queen or two, sad sinners mostly, yet unexpectedly redeemed by

the presence of a real saint. Then there are (in their day) a few Very Important People, but they soon grade down steeply to Very Ordinary (yet still, I submit, Interesting) People—or *types* of people, for this is an excursion into Social History no less than into Biography.

So, for good or ill, the spell is broken, the inertia overcome. How? By my finding one day the selection-formula, lacking which my decision was paralysed. It came to me quite suddenly out of the blue when I was thinking about something seemingly quite different. This "something", however, provides so important a clue to the whole work—I might almost say the only clue—that it deserves an essay all to itself—the first. For though History has long been my professional pursuit, for just as long it has been paralleled by a private pursuit, quite as arduous and, to me, quite as absorbing—Genealogy. Moreover, these twin pursuits, though different, are sometimes complementary and, occasionally, even identical: and here I recognised just such an occasion. A number of the "people who Intrigue me" (historically) were also "persons whom (genealogically) I pursue".

This solved my problem. In such folk I had a clear double interest, professional and private. No wonder I selected my entire team from among them: for herein lay the unusual, but ideal, opportunity for Genealogy to reinforce and enrich History. To me as historian, the persons pursued in this book are mostly unrelated to each other: but, to me as genealogist, they are very nearly related indeed. Virtually all my characters are my direct ancestors.

THE PURSUIT

Call it if you like "the Hobby"—a light word carrying sometimes overtones of amateurism or even dilettantism—and certainly I will be the first to admit that mine is but an amateurish effort in Genealogy. But I prefer to call it "The Pursuit". For such it is, in both senses of that word—at once an "occupation" and a "chase". And it is this chase that I would stress now: its nature, size and scope, and how, after many years of tireless pursuit, I, for one, am convinced of its worthwhileness.

In my genealogical ramblings I have no time for "collaterals", because they are only partly bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. But all my *direct* ancestors (and I would add the occasional uncle and aunt, all of whose forebears were mine too) do concern

me, profoundly and equally whatever their sex, their country or their century. All these I pursue personally, and would not only catch them but also *know* them, as intimately as I may. They have always enchanted me with their incredible diversity, and their complete detachment from each other even when all were alive on earth together; each self-contained in his own little existence, yet all in total and happy ignorance of one another's lives, and of that one event, still deep in the womb of time, sublimely insignificant yet remorselessly pre-ordained, which, years later, is to link them so queerly together—my birth!

Later—very much later: when in fact this book is all but complete, and I have only to acknowledge the sources from which my material is drawn—I shall return to this pursuit, seeking to show the essential rest and recreation which stem from it. Here I will only observe that I have another hobby, oddly resembling this major one. I love the coy trout and the cool, pleasant places where he hides. He is often nearly as hard to catch as the elusive ancestor: for both operations demand peculiar skills, some of them curiously similar. Both exact a great deal of patience, and equanimity in face of disappointment: both bring a big thrill, when or if success comes. Here, I think, ancestor-angling wins. For one thing, your trout may well be a tiddler, which you have to put back. But (if you fish to my rules) no ancestor need ever go back. In fact the tiddlier he is the greater, probably, the prize since he is usually the harder to hook. Here too you are excused what to some people is the least attractive part of trout-fishing—dispatching a gallant victim. Beneficent Nature did that for you long ago.

Then there are the places to which the sports lead. Here perhaps the trout has it, because his home in beck, brook, river or lake is almost always a home of quiet for the angler too. But ancestors are to be sought everywhere; often in the peace of the countryside but sometimes in uglier, busier places. I have had sport in Birmingham, Bloomsbury and Bethnal Green: good angling-grounds, but hardly beauty-spots.

Where in my view, however, the ancestor scores his winning lead is in the people I meet when I go looking for him. In trout-fishing, by and large, the ideal is perhaps the absence of all company: but not in ancestor-angling, where not only are folk necessary, but often they provide as much pleasure as the ancestor himself, or nearly. They are in fact an intrinsic—and additional—part of the sport. It is the whole body of these helpers which supplies such soothing and

comfortable memories. Only consider what, in terms of real altruism, this modern world of ours has to offer, with its hurry, its un-ease its essential self-seeking. But, as it is, I have only to take out of their secret resting place in my mind the many evidences of real altruism which I have culled from all sorts of ready helpers; some highly educated, some quite humble, yet all equally eager to oblige; all so utterly innocent of self-aggrandisement and love of gain. These, surely, are the real prizes of my catch. Unlike so many of the other fellow's best fish, they did not wriggle off at the last moment. They are there, for keeps, in the creel of my memory, and I can take them out and savour them whenever I feel weary or depressed.

But only think! Had I not gone a-fishing I should not have known that they existed!

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ILLUSTRATIONS

(between pages 184-5)

I THE SIZE OF THE PROBLEM

To Adam and Back

"You see," said my dear old friend Freddie Dewe one day, "we come of an old family."[1]

"Ah," I replied, judicially but as interrogatively as possible.

"Yes. We came over with the Conqueror, see? From Eu in France: so we got called 'De Eu'—Dewe—eh?"

I knew the gambit of old, and gave the expected reply.

"How do you know?"

"Oh, that's easy. It's all down in black and white: in print, every word of it. You see, old Sir Gilbert De Eu (or Dewe) was the man who . . ."—and off he prattled happily.

So far it was all according to the book. But now, after about half an hour, in which he had got safely down from 1066 to the 1890's, it suddenly struck him that I might have a family too, and *might* be the kind of fellow who liked to be asked about it. So the old boy—very sportingly, I thought—suddenly broke off short and said:

"Well I never! How I do run on! What about you? Where do *you* start?"

I pondered awhile; then replied, "Oh, quite some way."

"To the Conquest?"

"Rather further."

"Who to, then?"—his interest was now rather more real.

"Adam," I said modestly.

"Adam? Adam who?"

"Adam-and-Eve—*you* know."

I could read him like a book. To him the subject was serious, and my apparent levity in rather doubtful taste. Still, he knew what is expected of a Dewe in a crisis like this. He tittered, a little nervously.

"Ha, ha! Of course we all do, don't we?"

"Yes: most of us, I fancy—that is, if we believe in the Verbal Inspiration of the Scriptures."

"I know. But *I* was thinking of authenticated pedigrees. Like mine, I mean: all down in good solid print; and without a break."

[1] Unlike every other characrer in this book, Freddie Dewe is fictional.

"Well," said I, "you may not believe me, but so was I."

"Oh come," he cried. "You can't mean it! *No one* can trace his people to our First Parent: not, I mean, giving chapter and verse."

"Sorry, old chap," I said apologetically: "but *I* can. So can thousands of other folk—you among them if you go the right way about it."

He was quite excited now. The thought of such a vast augmentation of family-antiquity clearly left him panting for more.

"How do you make that out? Tell me!"

I told him—how, years ago, my son, then aged 12, had one day shown me several sheets of paper, and the schoolboy writing on them revealed, beyond dispute, how he (and I) were descended from the First Man—and of course the First woman: not a generation omitted, not a step but was vouched for by what can fairly be described as "a respectable printed authority". My son had had to use only four such authorities: and the respectability of the first can hardly be gainsaid. It is the Bible, where one can read, in Genesis V, the descent from Adam to Noah; and, in Luke III, the ascent from Noah to Adam.

This no doubt Freddie knew already. It was probably the evidence of the next authority which surprised him, as it must surprise anyone who reads it. It is much the most crucial of the four, since it takes the voyager through ill-mapped country and uncharted centuries. Yet, all between the covers of one highly respectable and respected book, printed now these many hundred years and in many editions, we are actually led from sun-baked Mesopotamia to misty Britain, from (according to Bible chronology) 2468 B.C. to about A.D. 900, in one breath-taking passage of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*—it is on page 62 of my modest Everyman edition. So, at one dizzy bound, we reach if not modern at least historic times: for no one doubts the historic reality of Alfred the Great. His father, we learn, was Ethelbald, and Ethelbald's was Ethelwulf—

> And Ethelwulf was the son of Egbert, Egbert of Ealhmund, Ealhmund of . . .

I will not list them all here. Look for yourself, under the year 854, and contemplate the strange, wild names of them—my (and very likely your) remoter sires: Cynegils, the first reputed Christian among them; Cerdic, who landed on the south coast in A.D. 495 to found the Kingdom of Wessex; Brond and Woden (not, surely,

the God himself?); Finn, Gaet and Taetwa; Heremond, Hathra and Hwala; and at last, 37 generations from Alfred, Bedwig himself: Bedwig whose parent was Sceaf—"That is, the son of Noah who was born in Noah's Ark".

Pray note. Poor Freddie asked for it: and he got it. He, not I, chose the criterion—the setting out of the generations in good print. It is astonishing how many people, even in this allegedly educated age, still confide so pathetically in the sanctity of "print": though, to give him his due, I think my old friend's credulity in this respect was rudely shaken before I had finished with him.

The next stage was easy. My son's third authority was, genealogically speaking, infinitely more reliable. The College of Arms itself will take the Royal Line from Alfred to her present Majesty: and therefore anyone who has just one Royal Descent—that is, who can hitch his own line on to the Royal one anywhere between Alfred and Elizabeth II—will be descended (as she is) from Alfred and Cerdic—and of course, *on the evidence just cited*, from Bedwig, Noah and Adam.

I, like a great many others, have my Royal Descents: and they are by no means spectacular because, though mostly avoiding the bend sinister, again and again they do not disdain the distaff. I join the Royal Line at Edward I, thereafter, naturally, sharing with him all his ancestors; but not his kingly descendants, because I derive from his daughter and grand-daughters—two of them. From these I descend by several lines, of which the most easily traceable—by which all I mean is that someone else has done the hard work—comes through the family of Taunton. One of this family, some 60 years ago, took the pains of—and paid the fees for—getting his labours confirmed by the College of Arms: and (to the last, Freddie, I have not misled you!) got his results *printed* in a small book called *The Tauntons of Oxford*.[1]

There are 70-odd links in the long (but continuous) chain which joins me to Noah: and (need I say?) I do not place equal credence in every stretch of it. Let me then dwell a moment upon those earlier ones which, I fear, commonsense will presently prevail upon me to discard altogether; and especially upon that bold link which binds Sceaf to Noah. What a pity the authors of Genesis (commendably genealogically-minded men who go in some detail into Noah's family) forgot to mention that he *had* a son called Sceaf. Or perhaps I wrong them: perhaps they did mention him, but by another name

[1] Elliot Stock, London, 1902.

more familiar to us—Shem, or Ham, or Japheth? Even so, however, we run into difficulties. For instance, according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Sceaf was born *in* the ark while, by then, according to Genesis, Japheth, Ham and Shem were already vigorous youngsters of 100 or thereabouts. This matter of ages, too, might give rise to another objection. At flood-time Noah was 600 years old and might, in our degenerate day, be regarded as somewhat past the begetting stage. But what takes the edge off this objection is that there is not all that difference between 600 and 500, which was his age, Genesis tells us, when he did beget Shem, Ham and Japheth. At least, it is all down in print: so I suppose it is true.

Again, how interesting it would be to know where, in the unsettled state of the marriage-market then prevailing, Sceaf picked up a wife, without whom he could hardly have begotten the illustrious Bedwig. The other three sons were all right, because they took their wives in with them: but not Sceaf, because he was not born then. One can only deduce that he married into the family of Shem or Ham or Japheth since, elsewhere, help-meets were right out of stock. This is reprehensible on genetic grounds, but possibly excusable under the trying local conditions. Anyway the evidence is definite enough. He did find a wife, and he did found a line: and we should like to know a little more about its trek from Arabia to Anglia. Not that it was pressed for time, because some 2,963 years stretch between ark-born Sceaf and sea-borne Cerdic.

There are other chronological problems too. Still keeping strictly to the Printed Word and Verbal Inspiration, we may read in the older Authorized Versions that the World was created in 4,004 B.C.; which would make Adam (who was created with it) some 5,970 years old were he still with us. Allowing 79 generations between him and myself, we find that each averages out at circ. 76 years: which, though not competing seriously with Noah's performance, does seem overgenerous. For during most periods of human history, the lives of men (to cite that eminent authority John Hobbes) were "nasty, brutish and *short*". It is in fact indisputable that, during most of his sojourn on earth, far from having an average begetting-age of 76, Man has had an average *dying*-age of barely half that!

The only logical way out, I am afraid, is to do what every scholar did long ago, and discard verbal Inspiration; while, as for the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, no one to my knowledge ever invested it with any such sanctity. So I had better double-query all these

fascinating people (whom, I must admit, I have never entered in my "official" Ancestor Record-Book). They must all go, including old Noah himself and that Noah-Sceaf nexus, much the weakest link in a patently weak stretch of the cord. I shall allow myself Cerdic, however, seeing that the Heralds themselves normally allow him to Her Majesty the Queen. For the rest, it is time for me to come right down to earth for a much more critical examination of my forebears: to pose, for instance, such mundane questions as how many I have, how many I may hope to catch, and which.

"The Multitude No Man Can Number"

In this sea-loving land there is an old piece of slang with a strong nautical flavour, which seems pleasantly apposite here. When a man and a girl decide to make a match of it, they seek out an obliging parson and "get spliced". To my mind, this is quite the aptest metaphor for ancestral records; much better than the more hackneyed one of a "tree", which seems sadly to distort the person at the bottom of the trunk, where all the twigs, boughs, branches and limbs end at ground-level. On any self-respecting tree the bole is so very much larger than the twigs at the top. But am I all that larger than my earlier ancestors? I am not. I am approximately the same size, and have no wish to appear larger.

So let me elaborate the "splice" metaphor. In it, every individual is a cord, each of roughly the same size, and all depending from, and fastened at one end to, a parent-splice above them. All the loose ends at first dangle down and wave about in the breeze of life. Some never do anything else, but ultimately wear out or rot away. But others, in the course of their waving, make contact—by Chance, Fate or their own volition, whichever you will—with other cords whose only vital difference is that they belong to the other sex. They "get spliced" and between them, in due course, produce a new cord.

And so on.

Everyone, of course, is apt to be particularly interested in that little length of cord which happens to be himself: let us look up, then, and see what is visible from our level. First there is our own parent-splice, the result of two cords firmly knit together. Then most of us can see clearly enough that each of these two goes up, each to its own parent-splice, from each of which two more cords continue the upward journey. Perhaps we cannot actually see very

far beyond this, but we all know the inevitable pattern of what lies beyond—endless individual cords bifurcating above a parent-splice into two essentially different cords: and we soon come to realise that at each splice, which is a generation, the sheer number of individual cords is increasing quite uniformly. Only two went up from our own parent-splice, but four went up from the level above, eight from the one above that, then 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, 512, 1,024. Here then is a mathematical formula—the number of cords doubles at each generation so that, at 10 generations, there are (theoretically) "two-to-the-power-of-ten", or 1,024 such cords.

And so on. It is a formidable thought because, if we put the length of a generation, as it is customary to do, at three to the century, or approximately 33 years, we are only back in A.D. 1632 —in this country in Charles I's reign—when we find that, apparently, we have 1,024 ancestors, every one of whom is entirely essential to the making of us as we actually are.

We can, of course, go much further back than this, and shortly shall have to do so. But first let us pause, and consider two very different sorts of ancestor-hunting. Above us stretches, apparently, this vast upward-bifurcating pattern of individual cords, making a countless number of continuous (though oft-spliced) cords up any of which we can make a continuous climb. It is in this choice of cords for scaling that would-be genealogists differ so much. Take Freddie Dewe. He presses upwards, I suspect, as eagerly as anyone: but he has a very definite, and limited, itinerary in view, and he invariably sticks to it. From the start he made for the upward-going *male* cord as it left each parent-splice, and, thereafter, generation upon generation, he follows the same policy, persisting in it until at last it brings him to old Sir Gilbert (temp. William I). Doubtless as he passed the various splices he casually noted the existence of the relevant female cords. But he did nothing serious about them: did not, at any rate, follow them up. The result is a fine "Family Record". He can tell you the names, perhaps the dates, and possibly quite a number of facts about one Dewe in every generation between Sir Gilbert's and his own.

It is quite a logical policy; but it is nothing like mine. Where he is essentially exclusive, I am essentially promiscuous. I like to climb up every cord there is; or rather (because life is far from endless) up any cord I can, or have time for: and the more the merrier.

Our very different targets lead, of course, to very different results. But perhaps the most obvious difference is this: at any

named generation—say, for example, that flourishing in Charles I's time—Freddie is looking for *one* man, but I for some 512 men and 512 women, or 1,024 souls. This incidentally goes far to explain why I (but not Freddie) can use my own brand of ancestor-hunting as a "selector" in winnowing out the names in the dog's-eared list I mentioned in my Foreword, of "People who Intrigue Me." Freddie could not because, on any named generation, he would have only one candidate to choose from—his contemporary Dewe and no one else. And it is evidently clean against all the laws of chance that that particular individual should figure on *anyone's* list of "People who Intrigue Me": especially in the list of anybody who is not himself a Dewe. But my chances are far rosier; in fact more than a thousand times greater than his, even at the 10th generation. And, as we both go back further, my chance doubles at each generation: but his remains at *one*. Let us then explore my chances, and see where we get to, and when.

King Charles's day, compared with Adam's, is but yesterday. By the 1630's we have got, in time, just nowhere. It needs no great mathematical acumen, however, to realise that *each* of our 1,024 Caroline forebears had 1,024 forebears of his (or her) own only 330 years before—i.e., about the time of Edward I. But 1,024-squared is something over one million—one million persons, male and female, every one of them essentially responsible for me being me, or you being you!

It begins to be quite frightening, does it not? But let us shut our eyes tight and take the mathematical plunge. If, at 20 generations up, the number is one million, then at 40 generations up it is one billion—and we are only then back in the year A.D. 663. I will bother you with no more steps: and I feel I shall stand excused if I do not carry the reckoning above Adam—that is, circ. 4,000 B.C. For the answer (which means nothing at all to any ordinary mortal) is, approximately, 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000! (At least, I think so. But I am no great hand at figures; and anyway a dozen noughts either way makes no practical difference whatever.)

Moreover, strictly I should not stop here. Having discarded Verbal Inspiration, I have no particular chronological interest in Adam, nor in the year 4,004 B.C. I ought now to be thinking in terms of the Java Man, the Pekin Man, Pithecanthropus, etc.: who, whatever their dates, were certainly on this earth long before 4,004 B.C. We can but coin some such phrase as "Pithecanthropus's

X-Great-Grandfather", and leave it at that, noting that "X" is shockingly large. No further attempt will be made to express in figures a total which, it is becoming apparent, must have gone wrong somewhere. None the less, that number which I excuse myself from setting down is—in mathematical theory—*half* the number of ancestors I have to choose from.[1]

And—in any given generation—Freddie's number is still *one*.

Now for the fallacy: for of course there is one. There never were, are not, and never will be such an appalling number of souls in this world, or, probably, in all the worlds. But the fallacy is not mathematical: it is wholly historical. One factor, an historical one, has so far been overlooked—the existence of inter-breeding, or of intermarriage. This horribly overswollen number would be correct only if there were never intermarriages or sexual intercourses between related individuals: if none of the couples "spliced" shared a single drop of blood in common; but if, instead, each one of them had a set of ancestors completely separate from all the others. This, of course, is a totally false assumption. Such intercourse has been a common, though not uniform, occurrence through all the ages of Man: and every time a child is born of cousins, however remote that cousinship, the cumulative diminution of that child's *real* number of ancestors is profound, growing ever profounder as the cords recede in time.

The nature of this diminution is demonstrable in a simplified illustration. The person whose parents are quite unrelated, we saw, has eight great-grandparents. But a person whose parents are first-cousins will have only six, because one of his father's and one of his mother's parents will be brothers (and/or sisters), with common parents at the next splice up. Working back from here, we find that, at ten generations (when the no-cousin person has 1,024 ancestors), the child of first-cousins has only 768. As one continues upwards, of course, the discrepancy grows ever larger. By A.D.1300 the one will have topped the million-mark, the other will be only at 786,000-odd. Then let us suppose that, around 1630, another first-cousin marriage took place. The respective figures in 1300 would then be, approximately, over one million and well under 600,000—not much over half. Going back again, if we allow for only one cousin-marriage every ten generations—which I shall show is far too little—we find that by A.D. 660, when the big mathematical figure has

[1] *Minus 2*, the purists tell me.

reached a million millions, the cousin marriage figure is 50,000 millions, only one-twentieth of it. This is still impossibly large of course, but by no means so blatantly astronomical. In fact this one illustration, seriously over-simplified as it is, does explain how, in practice, a mathematical absurdity is reducible to a historic reality. Because of cousin-unions, the sum total of any man's ancestors remains consonant with commonsense. Though still vast enough in all conscience, it is a finite number, strictly proportionate to world populations.

Unfortunately, however, I cannot set down that finite number, even in my own case: nor, I make bold to assert, can anyone else do it in his. For the answer can be reached, even approximately, only by a person who knows *all* his ancestors, and who therefore knows all the cousin-alliances which occurred between them: and this—if we are going at all far back—is *no one*. All that can be said, as everyone will agree who has had any experience in groping up these strange cords, is that the habitual blendings and crossings of lines, caused by consanguinity of the contracting parties, is common, and tends to become ever commoner as one presses back in time; into those less complex ages in men's affairs when society imposed more and more limitations upon the free choice of its members. These limitations are, of course, both geographical and social.

A supreme geographical limitation can be exemplified in a community inhabiting an island isolated from outside contacts, or in a tribe hemmed in in a valley with impassable mountains all about it. In such cases there will have to be excessive in-breeding if there is to be any breeding at all. It is even conceivable that, with no influx of fresh blood from without, *all* breeding will be cousin-breeding, and that the members of new generations will acquire no fresh ancestors at all. In such a community, in fact, everybody will be related more or less closely to everybody else: and Nature, as it is well known, does not approve of this arrangement.

There are also corresponding *social* limitations. It is possible (if perhaps a little unrealistic) to envisage a community in which super-Draconian laws have ordained that only the descendants of kings may marry into the Kingly Class, only priests into the Priestly Caste, and so on. This in time would create a class-situation closely analogous to the geographic one just described. Again, if it were rigidly enforced, all King's Kin would ultimately be more or less close relations: so would all Priest's Kin; and perhaps all Soldier's, Merchant's and Labourer's. In all such cases a man's

total accumulation of ancestors is growing but slowly: in really extreme cases, in fact, not growing at all.

Now, almost certainly, neither of these conditions, whether of Geography or of Class, ever prevailed absolutely in this country, at least during "historic" times. Yet it is certain—and obvious—that the more primitive our community was, in both respects, the more it tended to approximate to this kind of "taboo". Let us take our stand at any named point in England's mediaeval development, and compare what was happening then with what normally happens now.

GEOGRAPHICAL

In the England of Edward I (say in A.D. 1300), the ordinary locality in which a labourer sought his mate was confined to his own village; his own county, or possibly its neighbour; or, at the very widest, England. The range of his lord was wider—it might extend to Scotland, France, Germany or even other parts of Western Europe. But now—in this 20th century—there is no corner of the inhabited world from which an Englishman *cannot* take his girl: from the South American pampas, from an Eskimo igloo, from the paddy-fields of Malaya—localities clean impossible in Edward's day. True, so venturesome a Briton is hardly the norm, even now. But many of his fellows are only a few degrees less enterprising. Their range of choice is wide, and ever widening. Well, we know now that we are all God's Children, so that these ladies of their choice may well, as human souls, be our sisters. But, strictly genealogically, it is long odds against them being our *Cousins*!

SOCIAL

The corresponding "class" comparison needs no underlining. The very word is become suspect, almost taboo. Still, no doubt, the average Englishman marries within certain (though rather elastic) social limits. But it is manifestly not the same thing as it was in Edward's time: when—overwhelmingly—Gentle consorted with Gentle, Trade with Trade, Labour with Labour. Yet, I think, the bonds of Class were never quite so imperious as those of Geography. For though no doubt the Baron's son seldom mis-allied with the proverbial miller's daughter or the pretty milkmaid, he might well, alas, mis*behave* with her. Illegitimacy is indeed an important factor in the computing of ancestral numbers, because, from the nature of the case, cousin-marriages and common fore-

bears do not usually feature prominently in affairs conducted in clandestine corners or under draughty hedges. (Incidentally, I would mention that Bends-sinister and similar escutcheonal blemishes daunt me not at all. I take them in my stride, because neither Common nor Canon Law alters those basic facts of fatherhood or motherhood which alone concern me.)

The diagram which follows, extracted from my own Ancestral Record-Book, illustrates the nature and import of cousin-unions in ordinary "tree"-form. This particular excerpt shows, among other things, how, simply for this reason, one individual (in this case Edward I himself) comes to be my ancestor four times over. It also shows that this same individual actually stands in three different relationships to me. He is once my 17-times-great-grandfather, once my 18-times-great-grandfather, and twice my 19-times-great-grandfather. This is not so odd as it may sound. It is due to generations, over the years, failing to keep pace with one another. More important, it must be realised that the extracts here cited record only those cousin-marriages which occur on the direct cords which link me to Edward I. They do not represent the total of the cousin-unions which occurred between me and his *contemporaries*. Most of these I do not know; but, by analogy, they must be pretty numerous —I would guess at least ten times as many as the three shown here.

Here I would add a *caveat*. Let no one suppose that I quote this particular extract from my Record-Book in order to advertise or up-grade the importance of my progenitors. The *whole* collection of them is a very "average" one—that of a person who (like me) is essentially "middle" class. And, for my own genealogical purposes, I would not stand anywhere else, because from the "middle" it is easier to move either "up" or "down". Yet in any Record-Book, however "middle class" it be, there are bound to be some sections soaring quite high, and others sagging correspondingly low. A flat, uniform "middle" level could not be. In practice, too, any genealogist soon discovers that it is much easier working "up" than "down", or even than working along the level. For almost all the worker's natural sources of information conspire to make it so, especially as he ploughs back into the 16th century. It would indeed be a most exceptional set of cords and splices (which, as I say, mine is not) if, in traversing the period between 1600 and 1300, it contrived to include only labourers, artisans, shop-keepers or even small professional men. The ordinary facilities for finding such people are

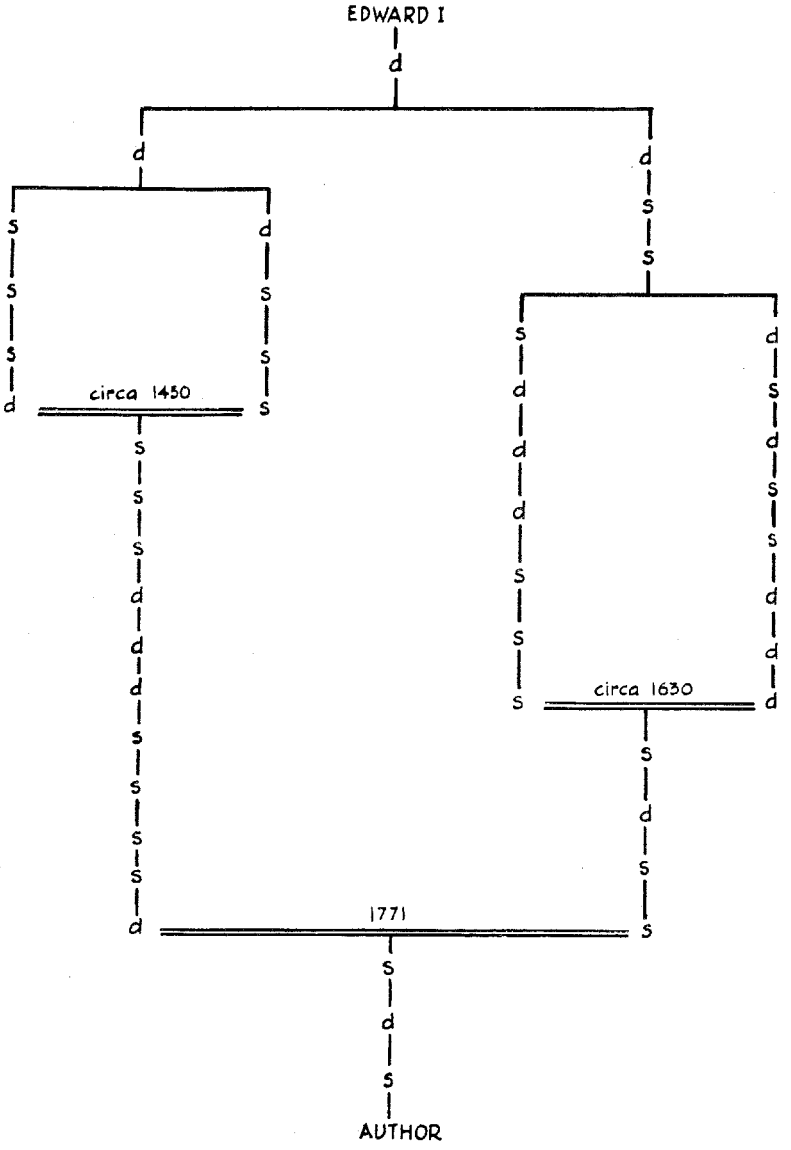


DIAGRAM ILLUSTRATING COUSIN-MARRIAGES

s = son d = daughter

Note varying number of generations in various lines

fading away, until they no longer exist. Thus we are already back in a period when that genealogical mainstay, the Parish Register, is "off". So is that other great aid of more recent days, the outside tombstone in the graveyard—our English weather has seen to this. Another absentee is that proud personal possession, the Family Bible with its lovingly written-up fly-leaf; partly because this did not exist before the middle of the 16th century, partly because, even if it did, its owner all too often could not write. On the other hand, the memorial *inside* the church, though often still legible, will almost always commemorate the neighbouring great family, or, at lowest, the local squirarchy: the fairly numerous Visitations, largely concerned with Heraldry, will concentrate upon the same sort of people, the "armigerous"; and the occasional "accepted" pedigrees which survive are even more socially exclusive, confining themselves, in the main, to the really important "houses". In short, virtually all the normal standbys of the "middle-class" seeker cease to help him with his humbler forebears, and lead him only to such of "the quality" as he can find. Indeed, there comes to most of us middle-of-the-road amateurs a critical moment when, however ardent, we may as well pack up unless we can penetrate to ground covered by Visitations, or succeed in hitching ourselves on to an "established" pedigree. And, even then, it behoves us to step warily, because some of these "authentic" works, (even when *printed*, Freddie!) are as full of wishful thinking—indeed of straight lies—as a plum-duff is full of raisins.[1]

We are now in a position, perhaps, to assess from my Record-Book the many strengths—and the few weaknesses—implicit in my rather unusual methods of ancestor-angling. The work may be analysed along two different lines—Quantitative and Qualitative.

In quantity it contains, probably, more names than are commonly to be found in such a work: not surprisingly, since the acquisition of sheer quantity has always been one of its *apparent* objectives. How many different names it actually contains I have never ascertained, mainly because—which is perhaps surprising upon first consideration—sheer numbers do not interest me much. It is a fact, of course, that, whenever I succeed in linking up with any known family, I can if I so desire plunder its whole store on all generations above the splice where I joined it. I could therefore, if I wished and my time

[1] For a somewhat more detailed account of ordinary geneological "aids", see the final section of this book, called "Acknowledgments".

were endless, enormously increase my tally of mere names. But I have neither the time (for no man's hobby must ride him) nor even any great desire to do so. I am after more than sheer names: I want to know something—something interesting if possible—about them all. Well, one gradually becomes worldly-wise; and often, quite early on, one senses the poor potentialities of certain lines. In these, conviction soon grows that, though one may painfully find a few more names and cords and splices, the chances are going to be sadly against finding anything else, interesting or otherwise. All too plainly nothing else at all has escaped oblivion.

Here is one example from my own experience, an oddly pathetic one. I find a certain Thomas Thomas who, about 1700, marries a girl named Charity. And who was "Charity"? I do not know, but the inference is all too clear—a workhouse waif who, probably, no more knew her parents' names than did the contemporary Mr. Bumble who called her Charity. Here indeed is food for Fiction—of the *Oliver Twist* tradition. Who is to know that her mother was not the local Mr. Brownlow's dead friend's light o' love? Who alas!—but Genealogy is not (or should not be) Fiction. Nor, of course, dare I or anyone else deny that Charity *may* have been a most interesting creature in her own right, with a wealth of sterling qualities, endearing ways and fascinating adventures. But there's the rub. *Who* knows?—Not I!

So I have never chased sheer names and numbers. As a matter of comparatively minor interest, however, insofar as I have counted them I would esimate my Book to contain some 4,500 names; and, if I cared to make the effort, I feel that I could quite easily double that figure: indeed without undue labour, raise it to five figures. And many of these—in fact most of them, being follow-ups of the 4,500 already there—would be people who had left behind them *some* echoes in the world.

The question now arises what, in relation to *all* my forebears, does even my maximum 10,000 amount to: what in terms of *percentage*? One per cent? Probably a good deal less, since I feel sure that, whatever be this "multitude no man can number", it is almost certainly greater than one million. So, for all my labours, at least 99 out of every 100 are still missing!

Put in that way it does not sound impressive. But now we must switch over to the other, the "qualitative", side of the story: and here, on the score of "importance", I have obviously done a good deal better. For if by "qualitative" we mean "class quality", or

simply "getting one's name into print", it must be clear by now that my 10,000 tend to be the Cream of the milk where the poor Charities represent the Skim. In other words, I have probably found a great deal more than one-per-cent of the collection's Élite, because it was by so much the easiest part to find—the most worldly-important part, I mean, though by no means necessarily the most interesting. Moreover that layer of Cream is generously thick: much thicker than most people (and I once among them) would ever have thought; and, surely, infinitely thicker than Freddie Dewe's ration, which—unless I am sadly undervaluing the Dewes' performance throughout the centuries—is often practically invisible. In any case, it seems undeniable that I have given myself an infinitely brighter chance than he ever had of running into worthwhile people. And what a kaleidoscope of potential interest they provide, extending as they do from Charlemagne to Charity through an infinitely small gradation of steps!

And their names? Of course I cannot mention, still less describe, them all. Limitations both in my knowledge and in the size of this book conspire to prevent me. But I can, I think, indicate to those whose families are, like mine, essentially "middle-class"—not particularly high in the bulk nor particularly lowly—the kind of bag which may come their way: not only whopping great fish but tiddlers too: not only those who sat in the seats of the mighty but also those found in odd and unlooked-for by-ways: on the broad plain of British history, along the lesser thoroughfares of ordinary towns, and in the little winding country lanes. I can at least gives samples of my catch, to illustrate the diversity of types which I have landed.

Apart, then, from Princes, Peers and Potentates who (as I shall shortly show) must abound far up the cords—if I have got thus far at all—I am descended—

From that comic-relief character in Shakespeare's *Henry V*, Fluellen;[1] from no less than two Founders of Oxford Colleges;[2] from England's most renowned late-mediaeval general, another Shakespearean character, the hero of *Henry VI, Part I* who clashed with Joan the Maid;[3] from Elizabeth I's foremost naval administrator, from his father, the rough pioneer of England's overseas trade and from his son, the "Compleat Seaman" of his contempor-

[1] Said to be taken from Dafydd Llewelyn, of Peytyn in Brecknock, nicknamed David Gam (the Squinter). He fought, and was slain, at Agincourt, and is said to have been knighted by Henry as he lay dying on the field.

[2] John de Baliol and Thomas Tesdale (Pembroke).

[3] John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury.

aries;[1] from a number of those queerly attractive, devil-may-care, quasi-piratical Cornish and Devonian gentry of the same epoch, themselves so intricately intermarried;[2] from a distinguished and saintly divine, the Master of Jesus College in Cromwellian Cambridge and co-founder of the Neo-platonist school of philosophy; from another clergyman of the Established Church, parson of a remote hill-parish in Wales, yet a very early convert to Methodism; from an ingenious "projector" of Dutch extraction who operated in 18th-century London; from a Judge of the High Court, a Sergeant-at-Law and a Recorder of Oxford; from a round dozen lesser clergymen and half-a-dozen medical men, who in their day practised over the length and breadth of the country; from a succession of eminent London businessmen, members of the great Skinners Company; from another, and humbler, businessman who yet rose on his merits (and his connections) to oversee, in his Majesty's Mint, the striking of his said Majesty's spade-guineas; from a clever German, imported from Hanover by King George II to establish his garden at Kew; from a (quite undistinguished) naval officer of the old wars who fought against Napoleon; from a very wealthy (but unfortunately very hen-pecked) London gentleman whose son (also my ancestor) once owned all the waterfront at Putney (but inconsiderately disposed of it before I came along); from a comfortable draper of Fleet Street, whose wife, oddly enough, descended from the Conqueror, and from a respectable fishmonger of Cambridge town who did not; from a Carmarthen innkeeper who, like most Welshmen, was perfectly certain that he sprang from the loins of half the Princes of old Wales—but was never able, quite, to convince me that he did; from a rosy-cheeked, bucolic old boy whose daub of a portrait I am proud to possess, who, if he was not a good old Farmer Giles, I must say looks uncommonly like one; and—from Charity. Of all of these, and of many more unnamed here, I am entitled, by my own terms of reference, to tell the story.

In fine, the thing, I shall always believe, has been worth doing; and in my ambitious way too. You will have to admit, Freddie, that, in this context, sticking to one's own family-name, however "old", hinders rather than helps. And for you others who have not yet taken to the sport—but who now, I hope, will do so, once you know of its existence and something of its possibilities—the great

[1] Hawkins, John, William and Richard.

[2] e.g. Tremayne, Cary and Carthew.

thing to remember is that, roughly speaking, we all have the same number of forebears, so that no one can say (any more than I can) that the water he fishes is understocked. Here, as with the trout, it is the qualities which the angler brings to the sport that count. Some experience is of course advantageous, and perhaps some luck is needed for a good bag. Patience too is a great virtue: so is hard work. But the greatest of all is Enthusiasm.

The Problem of Selection

So far, then, my policy is decided. All the main characters are to be my forebears. But still one vital problem of selection remains. Where, in Time, shall I begin?

It is no easy decision. Thus, in my own Record Book, I see a person like CERDIC,[1] the Founder of Wessex, as well as that odd couple HENGIST and Horsa. These names occur too in my list of "People who Intrigue me"; as also, on a higher and more strictly historical plane, do CHARLEMAGNE, EGBERT and ALFRED THE GREAT. All then are equally "eligible", and naturally they all "intrigue" me, both as Historian and Genealogist, just as they must intrigue all serious students of the past.

Yet, after much thought, I have decided to exclude them all, primarily because what *is* known of them is reasonably well known; and I could add to it—if at all—only by making these people the main theme of this book. But that would be clean contrary to my main purpose. It would seriously overload the earlier centuries, when my forefathers, still of kingly or princely status, would be bound to crowd out their humbler contemporaries. Yet it is these humbler men—my truly "neglected worthies"—whom I want to make my chief concern. It is they who are not so well-known or appreciated as they might, or should, be. Indeed, my desire to protect the interests of such people has led me to formulate a selective policy which, sometimes, deliberately passes over "the greatest" and focuses instead upon "the less great", who, it seems to me, stand in greater need of such protection. Thus I have nothing to say here of Henry I and Edward I—great kings both—nor of the two College-founders, notables in their own day: nor even of those faithful, skilful but unfortunate soldiers, the gallant Shrewsbury and the colourful Davy Gam. It is a pity; but, in my scheme any-

[1] Hereafter, throughout the book, the name of a direct ancestor of mine, on appearing for the first time, is printed in small capitals.

way, there seems to be no place for them. Perhaps the best example, however, of this policy in action occurs in Part IV, where the most distinguished of my forebears in the modern world—John Hawkins—is invited to stand down in favour of his own father and his own son; interesting though lesser men whose lives and achievements have, unlike his, been neglected.

So I have decided—arbitrarily I admit—to follow that rather outmoded school of British historians which believed, not very logically, in starting with the Norman Conquest. By doing so I can at least establish a point which I want to make, and have already half made: that, in all early periods, such progenitors as we know of will always, or almost always, be people of the first importance. For if they were not important we should not know them to be progenitors—an *obscure* 11th-century ancestor is so rare a phenomenon as to be almost a contradiction in terms. In other words, it is odds-on our finding our early forefathers playing a vital part in the story of their period.

On the other hand, my deliberate policy will work the other way too. Clearly it commits me to a regular descent in strictly "political" importance. In that line of country an 11th-century Conqueror will inevitably loom larger than a 13th-century Regent: a 13th-century Regent than a 16th-century Sailor: a 16th-century Sailor than a 17th-century Scholar: a 17th-century Scholar than an 18th-century Businessman; and so on. But this is not necessarily the true order, either of importance or of interest, either in economic or in social history. For in this book I hope to show how the Ruler, the Soldier, the Sailor, the Scholar, the Merchant and even the Country Parson, each in his own time and environment, got on with the job of living. And that, which can be interesting and even exciting, can be very important too.

Anyway, all is now set for my first stage, where the Team I have picked is busy *Spanning the Conquest.*

II "SPANNING THE CONQUEST"

NORMANDY

In the middle 1000's, on the north-western fringes of Europe, life was no bed of roses for anyone; not even for those comparatively successful people who had forced their way to the top and become leaders. In such tough times there was no standing still. A man might find the prize he sought and take it: but this was never enough —if he wanted to retain it. For he was at best only *primus inter pares*; and he had not only to keep himself first among his peers who had helped him to climb to the summit (and who often seemed strangely loth to let him stay there), but also to guard against whole batches of new aspirants, who might appear from almost anywhere to challenge his primacy. Everything conspired, in fact, to make him rely upon his own right arm, and little else.

Just such a one was ROBERT II, Duke of Normandy, who liked to be called Robert the Magnificent, though his contemporaries did have another name for him—probably behind his back—Robert the Devil. He was not the man who had made the first great climb himself: that had been his great-great-grandfather ROLFE, the first to win Normandy and become its *Duc*. This had happened in about 911, and since the day of his death in 927 the Duchy had been kept together, and gradually expanded, for almost exactly a century when Robert II succeeded in 1028.

The nicknames of these Normandy dukes are instructive, if not always quite apposite. Rolfe had been called "the Ganger" (or Walker), meaning, presumably, the man who "goes places"—wanders before settling down. But perhaps not: there is a prettier story than this to account for the name. He was, it is said, so tall that when he sat upon one of the little northern ponies, his feet fouled the ground to such an extent that he had to walk. His successor was WILLIAM "LONGSWORD", a sufficiently self-explanatory name. Next came RICHARD "THE FEARLESS": next—for distinction, perhaps, rather than for objective truth—RICHARD "THE GOOD". Then (after

another RICHARD who scarcely had time to earn a nickname) came the Magnificent (or the Devil) Robert. That second name may be a little over-harsh, because he does not appear to have been so very bad, as bad men then went. At least he paid a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and died there in 1035; which alone would seem to show that he did occasionally try to log an entry or two on the credit side of his life's balance-sheet. Incidentally, this pilgrimage serves to remind us that, at one time or another, all these Norman dukes called themselves Christians, though to modern eyes the brand of the Christianity of some of them may well ring strange. Thus "the Ganger" was "converted" as part of the price he paid to the French king for acknowledging his conquest. There is no evidence that he experienced any more spiritual form of conversion: and some at least of his immediate successors remained within the fold on much the same terms.

For all that, however, Christianity sat upon the consciences of them all in real, if strange, ways. It made them realise, for instance, that certain categories of behaviour were "bad": and though it may be doubted how far this consideration restrained them when they felt like being bad, it still made them feel that, if they could not show on Judgment Day a credit as well as a debit side to their Last Account, their hereafter might be uncomfortably hot. So, when nothing more exciting was on, they would build churches or found cells, or protect wandering clergy who came their way; all which actions (as doubtless the said clergy told them) would somehow act as counterweights to deeds of unredeemed tyranny, bloodshed or treachery. Moreover, they were gradually improving. Rolfe might have gone to the Holy Land—if he thought there was anything worth picking up there. But that can hardly be called a "pilgrim-age", such as Robert undoubtedly made—though, once there, his behaviour was oddly unpilgrim-like. In fact they were, all of them, an odd crew, whose Christianity was almost more of an insurance policy than a religion: rather primitive, often incredibly naïve, but always—tough.

Let us return to Robert the Magnificent. He was very like the rest at bottom. When he found what he wanted he generally took it, if he thought he could: and one of the things he found—and wanted, and took—was ARLETTE, or HERLEVA, the buxom daughter of one FULBERT, a working tanner in Robert's town of Falaise. No one expected him to marry her, of course, and he did not: but she bore him at least two children. One was ADELA (Adeliza or Adelaide). The

other was a male child who became in his own lifetime, and has remained ever since, one of the most famous figures in all English history—WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

Very little is known about the fair Arlette; which is a pity. She appears to have been faithful to her lover, and to have served his needs for a long time, even, perhaps, giving him another child, called Herleva after herself. Robert, on his side, also seems to have been faithful. At any rate we hear of no other concubine nor—for certain—of any other children. In fact neither Robert nor his more famous son had a reputation for lechery. Both give the impression of being too busy over other and obviously more profitable pastimes.

Now though we—wise after the event—always call William of Normandy "the Conqueror", this, naturally, was not his original nickname. At first it was, simply, "the Bastard", and then—his contemporaries soon coming to appreciate the size of the man—"the Great". For great he unquestionably was. He had to be. He had to be outstanding almost from the start, or he would not have stood at all. His beginnings were shaky. When his magnificent father died in Palestine, the child was only seven years old. Robert's known wishes were just sufficient to secure his son's proclamation as Duke, but the position of a minor in those days was always precarious, especially when ill-wishers could call him "Bastard": or, if they wanted to be particularly rude, "the Tanner". More than once while yet a boy, therefore, William came within an ace of death.

His father had left behind as his guardians the four best men he could find, and, fortunately for the lad, they proved very faithful: even unto death, for all died in protecting him. The narrowest escape he had was at Vaudreuil, where his would-be assassins actually penetrated into the room in which he lay asleep. The last of his guardians, Osbern, who invariably slept in the room to protect him with his body, put up a great fight and was slain, but not before one of the boy's humbler uncles, Arlette's brother Walter, smuggled him out and hid him in the hovels of his own people.

William grew up to be a fine figure of a man: not particularly tall, but broad, deep-barrelled and phenomenally strong: active and athletic while still young, and possessed of tremendous endurance and vitality. We see the type yet, heavily-built and muscular to a fault who, unless they are particularly careful in middle age, tend to run to seed, their overdeveloped muscles degenerating into fat.

Clearly this was what happened to William, and it was to cause his death. But this was not yet.

From time to time, even after William had reached manhood, people would still call him "the Bastard". They were right enough, but they were not discreet. Pleasantries of this kind emphatically did not amuse him; and that badinage of this kind might be very dangerous a single instance will show. In an ill-considered moment, the rebellious citizens of Alençon hung out raw hides upon their walls, crying, "See, Bastard, work for the Tanner!" William's retort was to take all the townsmen whom he held as prisoners—32 of them—put out their eyes, cut off their hands and feet, and drive them into the town. He was like that: not a good man to be on the wrong side of. Not that he lacked his own sense of humour with its coarse, jolly laugh and his favourite oath sworn "by the Splendour of God". He delighted in being matey, hail-fellow-well-met—with those whom he could trust. But it was rather a grim one-sided jollity when all is said, and most men preferred to keep clear of him altogether if possible. "Stark man he was," wrote the chronicler, "and great awe men had of him".

For all that, however, the Conqueror did have certain ideas, even ideals, which must certainly be described as Christian. The church of St. Stephen at Caen and the Abbey at Battle were monuments to them, though odd ones; and the uncharitable may still label them "insurances" rather than "ideals". He was very regular too in his attendance at mass; gave most generously to various monasteries; made, by and large, admirable appointments to the churches in the lands he governed, and lived, it was said, a remarkably chaste life.

There is one other trait in his character which is often chalked up to his credit. He is said to have hated taking human life, at any rate by process of law. But this, if true, can only have been yet another aspect of that strange "re-insurance" idea. For, apart from the thousands he slew in the ordinary course of battle, the number who must have died lingering deaths as a result of his habit of maiming people is obviously legion. And where lies the merit, we may fairly ask, in sparing the actual life of a man because the Gospel says it is wrong to take it if, instead, one mutilates him beyond repair? In any age before Lord Lister's the distinction between the cutting off of a man's head and the cutting off of his hands and feet seems almost too academic to be worth making. Nor is there much evidence of William ever having forgiven any man his trespasses on the score of mere humanity. "He slew one of my deer, did he?" was

his invariable attitude. "Put out his eyes, and he will not do it again." Yet there, apparently, it is. During his whole career, only one man's life is known to have been taken, deliberately, in the course of law. That solitary exception, however, was, like William himself, an ancestor of mine: and he will shortly call for attention.

SCOTLAND

Meanwhile, let us cross the Narrow Sea to Britain, arriving a number of years before the Conqueror. Let us not pause, as he did, in London, but press on northward to the Kingdom of Scotland, independent though historically mist-laden. Here that "good old king", DUNCAN I, held sway—until, that is, he was liquidated by the celebrated Thane of Glamis and Cawdor: and here we find ourselves once more among characters as well-known as the Conqueror himself, if for quite a different reason. There is no reason to doubt that Shakespeare, in his *Macbeth*, told a story which, in its barest outline, is a piece of real history: that his principal characters were once flesh-and-blood people. Four of them, in fact, were my ancestors—Duncan himself, both his sons, MALCOLM and DONALBAIN, and the English earl, SIWARD.

Of the very real existence of Malcolm III, surnamed Canmore, William himself and his successor Rufus had every reason to know. He ruled Scotland for 39 years, 12 of them before the Conqueror obtained the southern kingdom and six after he died; and although he had to bow before the terribly efficient William, he often contrived to be no inconsiderable thorn in his flesh. He was in fact the first King of Scotland who emerges as a figure of history rather than a hero of quasi-myth. He was no mean warrior himself. After barely escaping from Macbeth as a young man, he remained an exile at the court of Edward the Confessor until 1054, when, aided by Earl Siward, he went north for his first round with the usurper. On 27th July of that year—known as "the day of the Seven Sleepers" —he defeated but failed to crush him. But he secured the subkingdom of Cumbria and, returning to the charge three years later, caught Macbeth at Lumphanan in Mar, slew him, and won back the whole of Scotland. Thereafter he never ceased fighting for long, and extended his territory at the expense of less persistent campaigners. At length, in 1093, he died at Alnwick, still fighting. He was, it would seem, an odd mixture of the primitive and the comparatively civilised. He could never learn to read, but was

apparently the master of three languages, Latin, Gaelic and Anglo-Saxon. He was also, in marked contrast to the Conqueror, a man who could, and often did, forgive his enemies.

The thing about him, however, which appeals most to a descendant is that, by his second marriage, he took to wife a real live Saint. This was MARGARET, grand-daughter of EDMUND IRONSIDE and sister of Edgar Atheling, the last of the native English princes. Anyone, surely, would be proud to have such a lady in the family: for clearly her virtues were unimpeachable. She was, among other things, an expert at fasting, adding to abstinence during Lent the delectable habit of fasting for 40 days before Christmas as well. She also fed orphans with her own spoon; regularly washed the feet of the poor (some say with her own tears, but probably there were too many poor for that); possessed, and most nobly gave away, a particularly large piece of Holy Cross, and a unique copy of the Gospels which had the miraculous property of being submersible in water without taking any harm. Withal, her piety found more practical outlets. She it was who tried very hard, but unfortunately failed, to get the members of her own sex admitted into places of worship, a curious prohibition common at that time in the Celtic Church preventing them. But she had more luck in her fight to forbid men marrying their stepmothers; and, more practical still, she is said to have secured the observance of Sunday by the banning of work on that day, and to have re-introduced the seemly practice of saying grace after meals—indeed, the grace-cup in Scotland was for long called by the pretty name of "St. Margaret's Blessing".

With such virtuous concerns to occupy her, it may seem odd that she could bring herself to marry. The answer to that is simple—she had to. Coming to Scotland a fugitive with her mother and her brother Edgar, she naturally came under the eye of the militant Malcolm, who

> began to yearn after Margaret to wife: but he (the Atheling) long refused, and she herself also declined, preferring a virgin's life. But the King urged upon her brother until he answered Yea: indeed durst not otherwise because they were come into his power.

Having once taken the plunge, however, she was not one to shirk her duties and, before she had done, she had given him six sons and two daughters: an exceptional quiverful too, including no less than four kings of Scotland. The daughters also can never be forgotten, especially the elder, MATILDA (or Edith), who married HENRY I of

England, to become the ancestress of all our subsequent kings and queens save only STEPHEN; who, however, was also "in the family" because he married the daughter of MARY, the Saint's younger daughter. Both Matilda and Mary, as well as DAVID I, the youngest of the four kings, were my forbears, so that St. Margaret is my ancestress at least three times over.

She died in Edinburgh Castle a few days after Malcolm's death at Alnwick. It was not a happy moment. She was actually being besieged there by her brother-in-law Donalbain, who was not nearly so estimable a character as her husband—he was busy securing the crown for himself almost before his brother was cold. Saintliness, however, has its advantages: there was no delay in getting her out for burial before the high altar at Dunfermline because, at exactly the right moment, there descended a mist so thick that her attendants bore her unseen through the heart of the enemy host.

She was canonised in 1250 by Pope Innocent IV; and that set in motion further adventures for her mortal husk. A rich shrine was now built for her; but when the time came to move her, a curious thing happened. Malcolm Canmore lay nearby, and when they raised her body, it grew unaccountably heavy: heavier and heavier at every step they took, until they had to set her down. From this circumstance, ecclesiastical experts who were present deduced that it must be wrong to separate her from her husband. Here, in its way, was quite a pretty problem, because, of course, nobody had thought of making a saint of battered old Canmore; and, uncanonised, was he entitled to anything quite so splendid as the new shrine? Still, there was nothing for it. They could not move her body an inch until they had had the old warrior up: but then, as light as a feather, she was borne with him to the new shrine and laid beside him in it.

It would certainly be seemlier to be able to report that there they lie together to this day. But it cannot be done. Her adventures were far from over. For some reason by no means clear, Mary Queen of Scots thought it would be nice to have the Saint's head in her apartments. It was therefore brought to Edinburgh where, in Mary's hurried flight to England, it got left behind. Had it fallen into the hands of John Knox and his friends, that would doubtless have been the end of it, because saints' heads meant less than nothing to him. But it did not. Instead, it was saved by a private gentleman, of, presumably, Catholic proclivities; and he kept it safe for some years in his own house. But then it embarked upon

a new series of what, one would have thought, were essentially unnecessary journeyings. It crossed the North Sea and came to Antwerp; and, some 30 years later, it reached the Scots College at Douai. Here it was again among the faithful, and was venerated for many years. But the French Revolution was too much for it. It disappeared for good during that holocaust.

Meanwhile, the rest of her had got under way. It is said that Philip II of Spain secured it for his Escorial, where for long it lay in *two* urns. But when, long afterwards, Scotland asked for their return, both had vanished. It all sounds culpably careless. Yet are we to believe that St. Margaret herself cared? However tempting it may be to smile at the chroniclers and hagiographers, it is easy to believe in her essential saintliness, if by that word we are content to envisage a woman of real piety, loving God and her neighbour, and well ahead of her contemporaries in serving both.

From Malcolm let us ascend one generation, and look at his father Duncan: who in his turn can hardly be discussed without a glance at his rival Maelbaethe, Maomor (or sub-king) of Ross, or perhaps Moray: who hereafter shall be called Macbeth; and his wife (Gruoch or Gruach) will be Lady Macbeth.

To Duncan first, and a preparatory word of caution. Shakespeare was concerned to give us tragedy—and how well he succeeded. But here we are concerned with history, or rather, perhaps, with groping through the old chronicles in search of it: and we must fortify our minds against surprises. First, in 1040 when he was slain, Duncan cannot have been an old man, or even a middle-aged one. He had been only six years on the throne of Scotland, and had succeeded his *grand*father. Now in any century, and especially in one so insecure as the 11th, it is not usual for anyone but a young man to have a grandfather left on earth. True, in 1034, Duncan had probably reached man's estate, because no boy would be likely to secure, or to keep, the crown which his grandfather left him. But he can have been little more than grown-up: for the grandfather whom he succeeded—MALCOLM II—had himself secured the throne in 1005, and was certainly even then not in his first youth. Indeed there is evidence—though all "evidence" of this period is really little more than "conjecture"—that Duncan was actually a younger man than Macbeth; because, five years before Duncan succeeded Malcolm II, Macbeth was already established as a sub-king, and therefore unquestionably an adult.

The chances also are that Duncan and Macbeth were first cousins, and that Duncan and Lady Macbeth were first cousins too, the common ancestor of all three being Malcolm II: and from this it is not unreasonable to suppose that both Macbeth and his lady (or at any rate Macbeth *through* his lady) had some claim to the Scottish throne, or thought they had. There is also some reason to suppose—and the inherent probability, all things considered, is quite great—that in the perennial struggles for the Crown Malcolm had cleared the path for his favourite grandson by making away with the parents (query, grandparents or brothers?) of either Macbeth or his wife, or of both of them: in a word, that there really existed some sort of blood-feud between the cousins. And this, when one comes to think of it, instantly casts doubt upon Shakespeare's motivation. According to him, unadulterated ambition (wife-inspired) was the key to Macbeth's crime. But the above facts —if facts—would surely point rather to the very different motives of "blood-revenge" and "succession-rights", each held by both the Macbeths.

Many of the chroniclers hint too at yet another motive. They tend to depict both Duncan and Macbeth as basically decent men, but sharply contrasted in character. Duncan is a more than ordinarily "good" young fellow, but, in the eyes of his contemporaries, if anything *too* good: good to the verge of softness, a quality which, however laudable, was horribly dangerous in those days. Macbeth on the other hand, though equally "good", tended the other way—to a somewhat ruthless exercise of his (legitimate) powers. In a word, he could keep order where Duncan could not: and this alone would certainly account for Macbeth having a strong following, and for Duncan suffering from disaffection and disloyalty among his people.

Already there seems to be a case for thinking that, after all, Macbeth was not so black as he had been painted: and there remains to be told an even more cogent reason for thinking so. The really damaging charge made by Shakespeare against his character is that he was guilty of that universally detested crime, breach of hospitality. In Shakespeare's time, in that of the men concerned—indeed in almost all times—it was one thing to make away with somebody—not quite right, of course, yet in certain circumstances not utterly damnable. But it was quite another to welcome him into your own house, and murder him in cold blood, in his sleep, under your own roof. This, of course, is what Shakespeare makes Macbeth

do. And yet—there can be no sort of doubt about it—this part of the charge was invented, entire, by Shakespeare. Or rather (for we would be exact here) Shakespeare's authority—which was Holinshed—tells the horrid Macbeth story, but in connection with another man altogether: one Donwald who, he says, had thus made away with one of Duncan's remote predecessors. This, however, is not to let Macbeth out altogether because Holinshed (for what he is worth as an objective historian, which is not very much) does accuse him of murder, though of a much less aggravated type. What he actually says is this:

> . . . communicating his proposed intent with his trustie friends . . . upon confidence of their promised aid, he (Macbeth) slue the king at Enuerns, or (as some say) at Botgosuane in the sixt year of his reigne. Then . . . he caused himself to be proclaimed king and foorthwith went unto Scone where (by common consent) he received the investiture of the kingdome according to the accustomed maner. The bodie of Duncane was first conveyed unto Elgin and there buried in kingly wise: but afterwards it was removed and conveyed unto Colmekill, and there laid in a sepulture amongst his predecessors.

Evidently quite a decent little murder as such things went. No foul breach of hospitality is even hinted at: no sleep-murder, no nasty reprisals on the corpse. There is even some slight corroboration of that other aspect already mentioned. Macbeth has no difficulty in getting himself properly invested because, we may presume, those interested thought that he would make a better job of Kingship than poor Duncan had done. And, by all accounts, they were right. Macbeth ruled Scotland for 17 years, if not exactly well at least firmly; and he was only overthrown when Malcolm was able to pick up enough help from outside to upset him. In fact, even now, perhaps we have been unfair to Macbeth. Some modern authorities (including the pioneer E. A. Freeman) thought that "murder" was too harsh a word for what he did to Duncan: that what the pair of them had was just a good clean fight for the throne of Scotland, as scores of rivals had done before and were to do again; and that Duncan, no Achilles in the field, ran for it, but was overtaken and slain in the ordinary aftermath of battle. This, admittedly, is not nearly such a good story as Shakespeare's, but it is far more consonant with the times. Indeed, if the said times conveyed any lesson at all, it was, again and again, the rather cynical one that it did not pay a prince to be too *nice*.

In order to deal with an ancestor—Duncan—it has been necessary to digress somewhat, because, though probably first cousins-x-times-removed, the Macbeths themselves were not my ancestors. In fact, for all the Thane's exhortations to his good lady to

> . . . bring forth male children only;
> For thy undaunted mettle should compose
> Nothing but males.

there appears to be no evidence that they achieved the composition of any offspring at all. Nor, incidentally, is there much warrant for either Banquo or Fleance, or even Macduff. They seem to be the fruits, not this time of Shakespeare's, but of Holinshed's invention.

ENGLAND

But "Old Siward, Earl of Northumberland and General of the English Forces", is real enough: large as life, if not indeed a good deal larger. For Siward, called Digora (or the Strong) is a most formidable ancestor, with—if we are to believe what he himself believed—a most interesting and unusual family background. His line began, he used to boast, in the union of a white bear with a lady. But, though much of his conduct seems consistent with such ancestry, no one, surely, who has just been strong-minded enough to exclude Noah and Sceaf from his book is likely to fall for the bear.

Siward's discoverable line, in fact, starts only with his father BIORN, of whom little is known, save that he has "viking" written all over him. For though Shakespeare presents Siward as a typical Anglo-Saxon eorl, he was no such thing. He was a purely Danish jarl who, in his own drakar, slid quietly one day out of the northern night into the daylight of recorded history. What his business was is anyone's guess; but his first landfall was Orkney, where he had an exciting encounter with a dragon. Thence he passed south to Northumbria, where he was vouchsafed a vision, in which a dream-like figure stood before him and ordered him to go to London. Save perhaps for the dragon and the dream-figure, there is nothing unusual in that. No doubt numerous dream-manifestations had instructed whole fleets of Siwards to make for London where, of course, there were richer things to find than dragons. But this is only what *he* said. It is much likelier that the dream-figure was of a rather more substantial nature: in fact none other than King Canute

himself: and it was very likely Canute who not only brought him over but also made him Earl of part of Northumbria, a title to which he answered quite ten years before the great king's death. Ultimately he secured the whole earldom—by distinctly ursine methods. He first married the daughter of EALDRED, EARL OF BERENICIA (the other half of the territory). He then waited with what patience he could muster for Ealdred to die, possibly out of respect for his wife's father, but much more likely because of the known strength of Ealdred's right arm. As soon, however, as the old man passed on, he invaded Berenicia, slew the new earl and secured the whole earldom from Tweed to Humber. He also entrenched himself firmly in the court of the Confessor, over whom he seems to have established great influence, and further augmented his already considerable possessions by slaying Tostig of Huntingdon and collecting that earldom too.

The chronicles describe him as a gigantic creature, wielding arms which no one else could lift, a berserk of a man who lived for war. Yet, oddly enough, he did not die in it; but, to his shame, looked like dying in bed. This, however, was not to be borne. As his hour approached, he cried (they say), "How shameful is it that I could not have died in one of all my fights, and have lived on, to die like a cow!". Then he caused his men to gird on to him all the weapons of his prime—helmet, shield, breastplate, gilded axe and two-handed sword. Then they stood him on his feet, and the weight of all that gear soon did his business for him.

Shakespeare, we recall, makes him somewhat more polished than this, yet does contrive to catch one echo of the old bear's attitude to life and death. They come to tell him that "young Siward" (whose real name was Osbeorn) is dead in battle.

Old Siward Had he his hurts before?
Ross Ay, on the front.
Old Siward Why then, God's soldier be he!
Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death:
And so his knell is knoll'd.

This sounds as though he had many expendable sons; but in fact only two are known; and perhaps one daughter, who must not be overlooked because indirectly, it was she who brought Earl Siward to Scotland to aid Malcolm Canmore. She is a misty figure. Her name, probably, was SYBIL, and she may have been not the daughter

but the sister of the old Dane. But she had certainly been King Duncan's wife, and so, though no longer alive, Canmore's mother. Thus is old Siward provided with a motive for going after Macbeth —he would be helping his nephew (or great-nephew) and avenging his own Scottish kinsman.

With Siward's other son, however, we have come nearly full-circle. We return to the Conqueror, and to the only man he ever caused to be executed by process of law—WALTHEOF, EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND. Among the native earls this young man holds a place not dissimilar to that of Edgar Atheling on a slightly higher plane. Both, in their own spheres, were destined to be "the last of the English", though neither, on that account, was destined to any special fame. The Atheling, though chosen king immediately upon Harold's death, was too young to face the terrible Conqueror, flushed with success: and, badly served by those self-seeking English earls, Edwin and Morcar, who should have been the props of his throne, he soon surrendered, to spend a long life in ineffective and ill-timed rebellions alternating with far from glorious submissions.

Waltheof's record is a little better; but not much. Clearly he was not the stark man his father had been, though like him in stature, strength and physical courage. Perhaps, in character, he favoured his Northumbrian mother: perhaps the civilising veneer of the Confessor's court had effectively overlaid the Viking in him. He certainly considered himself to be, and for all practical purposes was, an English earl: and as such the English regarded him.

That he was not typical of that breed, however, may be deduced from another stray scrap of information which has survived. He was, by a great deal, Siward's younger son; too young, probably, ever to have come under the influence of that bearish old man, who died when he was still a child. Old Siward's hopes in fact, for all his alleged indifference, were probably centred upon poor "expendable" Osbeorn. Indeed there is reason to believe that, as a lad, Waltheof actually had leanings towards a monastic life—an ambition which only a younger son, and that of a civilised father, could hope to fulfil. It is indeed impossible to visualise old Siward encouraging aspirations like that: and even as things were, the boy did not get his way. Yet he does seem to have acquired one accomplishment which we may be sure his father never possessed. He could repeat the whole Psalter by heart; and to solace himself in the

many troubles which came his way he often did so. He was just old enough in 1065 to be made Earl of Huntingdon and Northampton by Edward the Confessor, but he does not seem to have taken part in the great battles of 1066; and, soon after Senlac, he submitted to William without any recorded struggle.

The Conqueror treated him well enough, being in fact delighted at having at his side a vassal so potentially dangerous as Waltheof might be: and, having got him, he held him tight for a while: not as a captive, but as a freeman in his train. Three years later, however, the youth must have given him the slip. He contrived to join the fleet of Swegen the Dane, and to invade Northumbria with him in 1069. The city of York was set on fire, and most of the Normans within it were slain: many (if we follow the Norse authorities) by Waltheof himself who, they say, stood at the city gate and dispatched a hundred of them as they fled from the flames. William quickly avenged them by turning the whole of Yorkshire into a desert: but, somehow, Waltheof succeeded in making his peace, to such tune that his earldom was restored to him. Here, for once, William appears in an amiable light. Not only did he forgive his rebellion: he also gave him to wife his own niece JUDITH, the daughter of his sister ADELAIDE. There was almost certainly, however, quite as much policy as humanity in this. From the very start it had been the Conqueror's object to conceal the fact that he had conquered, wisely realising that, sooner or later, he would have to establish viable relations with the native English: and it would evidently pay him handsomely to win over entirely, and once for all, so important a native, binding him by matrimony to his side. Little is known about Judith: but that little is unattractive. She was to prove, as we are to see, something of a snake in the grass for poor Waltheof. For the moment, however, the device worked. The young earl rose still higher in the great man's favour and was, in 1072, appointed Earl of Northumberland.

It was just at this period, while Waltheof still basked in this rather precarious sunshine, that the last of the serious English rebellions broke out—and failed. Waltheof had no part in it. This was the revolt which will for ever be linked with the name of the only contemporary Englishman worthy to be called a hero—Hereward the Wake. But, though sporadically aided by the double (if not treble) traitors Edwin and Morcar, his forlorn fenland adventure failed. He disappeared from the scene. So did Edwin, killed by his own men, and Morcar who went permanently into

exile or prison. So Waltheof became, in the eyes of most of the natives, "the last of the English".

With the English, however, though he did not yet know it, William was to have no more serious trouble. Yet, no sooner was this most obvious of his problems behind him than he was assailed by a new one, destined to be almost perennial for him and his successors. In future, it was not to be the English who challenged his power and place, but his own Normans. In 1075 Roger Earl of Hereford and Ralph Earl of Norfolk, meeting ostensibly for a wedding-feast, began a really serious conspiracy. What followed is not perhaps certain: only very likely. To secure "native" backing, they approached Waltheof. On the spur of the moment—probably—he agreed to come in. But he very soon had second thoughts, and took them to Archbishop Lanfranc. This great churchman, a Norman, advised him, as one would expect, to go straight to William and own up: and he went.

William behaved well again—or so Waltheof thought. He laughed his jolly laugh, swore by the Splendour of God, and said in effect, "Forget it!" None the less he took care to keep Waltheof within reach: and who can blame him? The rebellion was safely scotched: but then, unfortunately for the English earl, a Danish fleet suddenly appeared in the Humber, on the invitation, apparently, not of Waltheof, but of the rebel (and already beaten) barons. These, again, are probably the true facts: but perhaps William may be pardoned for not being quite sure of Waltheof's innocence. Anyway, he had him arrested and brought to trial. Now Judith reappears in the equivocal role of informer, affirming her husband's complicity, and alleging that the Danes had arrived at his express request. Why she took this line, or indeed what was the true extent of his complicity, will probably never be known. Be that as it may, her evidence seems to have turned the scale; he was found guilty. But sentence was deferred. For five months he was kept in suspense, daily working through the Psalter. Then he was sentenced to death for plotting against his liege lord. William refused to interfere: indeed, knowing as we do his untrammelled power, we can only conclude that he intended the earl's death. In May, 1076, therefore, he was beheaded at Winchester.

Tradition has it that, on the scaffold, he sought and received permission to repeat the Lord's Prayer. But the headsman, impatient fellow, grew tired of waiting, and Waltheof had only reached "as we forgive them that trespass against us" when he

aimed the fatal stroke. But this (the faithful allege) did not prevent the head from completing its devotions. As it rolled away, it was distinctly heard to say, "But deliver us from evil!". After this, it will come as no surprise to learn that, in the hearts of his countrymen, he came to enjoy a posthumous reputation greater, perhaps, than he had deserved in life. Some years later his remains were removed to Crowland Abbey, and when his coffin was opened 16 years after that, it was found—believe it or not—that his head had rejoined his body, with nothing but a thin red line to show that it had ever left it. Thereafter, all sorts of miracles are recorded in and around his tomb. For though denied the nimbus of papal sanctity, he had achieved something nearly as enduring—the crown of national martyrdom.

On the whole, the Conqueror does not show up too badly in the business. Coming from a man already caught out once in treachery, Waltheof's second (if not third) declaration of confession-cum-remorse must have sounded fishy to a man like William, who could ill afford to take risks. Besides, how are we to know for certain that Judith, a pure-bred Norman, was not right in denouncing her foreign husband to her Norman uncle, the head of her house and the natural fount of her allegiance? Perhaps after all she too was not quite so bad as she looks.

While still on the subject of ancestresses, a word must be spared for one more, the Conqueror's own queen, MATILDA. His union with her, like that of Napoleon Buonaparte with the daughter of the Emperor, was primarily "dynastic". It stemmed from the parvenu's desire to bolster up his status by marrying into contemporary "royalty". The lady was the daughter of the powerful BALDWIN, COUNT OF FLANDERS, who had already "arrived" by a similar process, having wedded (as his second wife) the daughter of one French king (ROBERT II) and the sister of another (Henry I). For good measure, the blood of both Charlemagne and Alfred the Great ran in Matilda's veins. Before William won her, and indeed for a good while afterwards, there was obstinate resistance to the marriage in several quarters, ostensibly because of some rather mysterious allegations of consanguinity. Much more likely, however, the real reason lay in William's unfortunate but undeniable illegitimacy. Indeed, Matilda herself may well have been unwilling, at first, to wed a bastard; and from this there grew a scurrilous canard, just such as his ill-wishers would delight in spreading and his

enemies in believing. Having heard that she had declared, in public, "I will never wed a bastard", he took the law into his own hands, rode secretly to her home in Bruges, waited for her outside church one Sunday and there, on the church steps, gave her the thrashing of her life, reinforcing the lesson with his boot. Thereupon her father indignantly sent him packing. But not so Matilda. She retired to bed and sulked, declaring that she would never wed anyone but William! Certainly the policy of "treat 'em rough" does not seem altogether alien to conquistadorial form: but it does sound just a little too good to be true.

She seems to have made an ideal Queen, beautiful in face, imposing in presence, noble in character. She was a good wife too, bearing him four sons and five, or even six, daughters. Clearly William was devoted to her, and we hear of very few rows, even when she sometimes thwarted him by aiding her beloved eldest son, the rather disreputable Robert who was always at loggerheads with the rest of the family. She spent most of her married life in Normandy where, they say, she was much loved. She it was who built the Abbey of the Holy Trinity at Caen, and her body reposes there. She died in 1083. After that, her husband grew over-stout, and in various ways *passé*, and is said never to have been the same man again.

It would not do to be cynical about Queen Matilda either. Chroniclers will get things wrong, accidentally or deliberately. But when the whole corpus of them, Saxon and Norman alike, speaks nothing but good of her, its testimony begins to be convincing. Besides, we are not to forget that she—and William—gave us every single crowned head which has since adorned our Throne. This, surely, is something.

Not one of these forefathers of mine who spanned the Conquest fared very well in his end. Not one of the males died quietly in his bed at home, though Siward might have done had he so desired. Robert and William of Normandy died on campaign, Malcolm was slain in battle, Duncan murdered, Waltheof beheaded. This was typical of the uneasy warring world of the 11th century, when men, even kings, lived dangerously and often died violently.

III "MARSHAL"

We begin to descend the social scale. Henceforward crowned heads will no longer take the centre of the stage, but will appear as supporting characters to people who are essentially self-made—in fact we are first to see one busily making himself. Another, to be sure, by virtue of his own merits, ended his days as nearly "royal" as any subject can well be. But he began life as perhaps the lowliest 12th-century figure in my Record-Book.

In his youth the first of my Marshal ancestors had dealings with the Conqueror's youngest son, so that, here, we have to face no great change in time or environment: and the England which he adorned was still Norman England.

Life and Education under King Stephen

THE ARRIVISTE

In the later years of KING HENRY I's reign there was a man at his court named GILBERT. If he had any other names we do not know them: in fact, we really know only three things about him. First, he owned a little land in Wiltshire; not much, but enough to allow him to rank as "gentle". Second, we know his post in the royal household. He was Marshal of the Court; not an important place, though its holder had to know a great deal about horses (which were in his charge) and, probably, about fighting, wherein horses then played an enormous part. Indeed, our third piece of information seems to confirm that he was no incompetent fighter himself. It is on record that, on one occasion, he had to prove judicially before the King that he was entitled to the post of Marshal. This he did—by battle—and won his case against two claimants.

Beside him in the lists rode his son, whose claim was that the Marshal's office was hereditary: and he won too. Here is a good opportunity of seeing how surnames evolved, at least one kind of surname. Gilbert died about 1130, and his son, thanks to his own right arm, appears on the stage blessed with the much more resounding name of John fitz-Gilbert le Maréchal: which, after all, only means John son of Gilbert, Marshal of the Court unless or until someone can produce a stronger right arm.

Actually, however, no one ever did that because JOHN MARSHAL (to give his name as it crystallised) was a very formidable person indeed: one, in fact, who spent practically the whole of his life in doing two things—fighting, and bettering his worldly position. In both he proved a past-master, because he possessed two qualities admirably suited to those ends: he was evidently an exceptionally strong and skilful soldier, and he knew very well how to take his opportunities when they came. He also *lacked* one quality, the absence of which was almost as valuable to him as the possession of the other two—a conscience.

The prime of his life was spent in the days of KING STEPHEN[1] when war, mostly of the civil variety, was quite the norm. He soon showed his flair. When Henry I died, and nephew Stephen beat daughter MATILDA in the race for the crown, John accepted the fact, and so kept his place at court. But he was never enthusiastic about Stephen, having an instinct that the future lay rather with the lady, and her son HENRY PLANTAGENET. So, when Countess Matilda landed in England to dispute the succession on her son's behalf, he went over to her, choosing his moment nicely; contriving, in fact, to render both her and the young prince very considerable service. The incident is worthy of record because it illustrates to perfection the sort of man John was.

The Countess, all but surrounded by overwhelming forces in Winchester, was constrained to get out of it in a hurry; and John, who had just joined her, suggested that her best chance was to make a bolt for a nearby castle of his own: for by then he possessed several, and a tidy little private army too. When the party reached Wherwell, on the river Test, it crossed that stream, but was barely over when the enemy appeared in great strength on the bank they had just left. Persuading the Countess to ride on, he fought a covering action to impede their crossing. It was an altogether forlorn hope, but he delayed them long enough for the lady to gain a good lead. Then he retreated, disputing every yard, to Wherwell church, barricading himself in with only one or two men. King Stephen's people, who knew their Marshal well, and evidently had a wholesome respect for his fighting reputation, made no attempt to force the building. Instead, they set it alight, and waited. But no one came out, and, at last, they concluded that John had perished inside.

This, however, was not so—quite. When the church became

[1] My descent from King Stephen is not certain.

too warm to endure, Marshal, with one companion, retreated up the tower. Soon, that too began to grow so hot that the companion suggested surrender. John, however, was just beginning to enjoy himself, and gaily told his friend that, if he mentioned the word again, it would be his last. But still the temperature continued to rise, and the roof-leads began to melt, dripping upon the defenders. One such drop John failed to dodge: it fell into one of his eyes, blinding it for ever. But still John stayed in the tower, sticking it out until his enemies, quite certain he was dead, resumed the now hopeless chase of Matilda.

After this the Countess did not forget him: nor did her son who, upon Stephen's death in 1154, became HENRY II. Then indeed John prospered, and—on the whole—deserved it, because between the fight at Wherwell and that (to John) all-important date he had a very thin time indeed. And theoretically, no doubt, he deserved that too, because, by feudal law, the mere fact of leaving Stephen after swearing fealty to him automatically made him a bad man and a traitor. And it is certain that this is how Stephen regarded him, because the very pro-Stephen chronicler who wrote the *Gesta Stephani* calls him "a limb of Hell and the root of all evil". Yet it is only fair to say that, *in* times like Stephen's, "bad man" and even "traitor" were apt to be rather relative terms. In fact, compared with most of his contemporaries, John was quite a shining example of fidelity—because he only changed once, and was thereafter consistently devoted to the Plantagenet cause.

Now, however, we are perhaps in danger of going to the other extreme and whitewashing John. So let it be recorded that it evidently paid him to be faithful, and that it would be a sad mistake to look for altruism at any moment of John's life. That self-interest always came first may be revealed by just two examples, his treatment of his first wife, and his utterly inhuman behaviour to his fourth son.

Nothing is ever recorded against his first lady, either by himself or by others—save, perhaps, that she had no great wealth or social standing. When, therefore, on his upward climb he received the offer of a better social proposition—the sister of a man soon to become an earl—he exchanged wives without second thoughts or regrets. Both did their duty by him. The first had given him two sons: the second added four more sons and two daughters.

While this increase was taking place, John was waiting, with what patience he could muster, for Stephen to die, sticking it out

against a whole host of enemies in much the same way as he had stuck out the fire and the molten lead: living, in fact, an utterly lawless existence, and waging constant war against his neighbours with his private army; but ever gaining, if only by little and little, one more acre here, another there. One may admire John for some of his qualities, but not love him. Let us, therefore, see him at his very worst before leaving him, at his death a prosperous man of minor baronial status.

The last of his actions to be reported here was one of peculiar loathliness in modern eyes, but to his contemporaries, it would seem, only a neat bit of chicanery. One of his castles, at Newbury, was closely beset by King Stephen. Its castellan, as a last chance, asked for a truce while he informed his master (John) of his peril, and—if necessary—obtained leave to surrender. This was normal practice. But it was also normal for the besieger to demand a pledge of good faith, to make sure that his opponent did not use the truce for reinforcing and revictualling the stronghold. All was done in form, Stephen demanding a hostage and John sending one—his fourth, and at that time his youngest son. But John never had any intention of keeping faith. He instantly threw strong reinforcements into Newbury.

Stephen, as this story will show, was a most amiable man: and, though by universal custom the hostage was now due to be hanged out of hand, he thought fit to give the father one more chance. He therefore sent in a message, offering to release the son if John would surrender the castle. But John merely laughed, returning the brutal and impertinent answer that, with a fertile wife like his, one son more or less was expendable, and, anyway, not worth a nice strong castle.

The son thus sentenced to violent death by his own father was six years old, and his name was WILLIAM. He was the second son of the second marriage, and he is the hero of this sketch. This is the first news we have of him and, but for the touching conduct of an oft-maligned man, it would also have been the last.

Little William was led out next morning to an oak tree in full view of the castle. A heavy escort under the Earl of Arundel accompanied him; and at the last moment Stephen himself, fearing that a rescue might be attempted, went with it. As they neared the tree, the child, entirely innocent of what all this pomp was about, spied in the grim earl's hand a short lance which glittered in the

morning sun; and, frisking up to him, asked, "Please may I have it to play with?" This was altogether too much for Stephen, who had dearly-loved sons of his own. He picked the boy up in his arms and rode back to the camp with him. His people were horrified, urging him at least to attach William to the transmitting end of a balista and lob him over the castle wall. But Stephen refused. He loved children, and they loved him. Back in his camp, he even found the time to play with his little hostage, using plantain-heads for a game of "conkers": and both were heard crowing with delight when, with a shrewd blow, William struck off the King's head![1] It was the first of William's blows to be recorded. There were myriads more—and shrewder—to come.

King Stephen is not the subject of this chapter. Yet he too was (probably) my ancestor, and his memory shall not go altogether undefended. This pretty little story epitomises as well as any the tragedy, and the failure, of Stephen of Blois. It is the case of King Duncan all over again, only better authenticated. Sad though it is to have to admit it, a strong king—in contemporary eyes a good king—*would* have hanged little William, or (perhaps more effective for propaganda purposes) have fired him into the town: and a bad king would have done what Stephen did. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle admirably summarises this attitude in a dozen words:

> He was a mild man, soft and good, and did no justice.

How very true! How very bad for John Marshal's morals to be allowed to get away with such a very dirty trick! What a shocking example for other would-be Johns: and what a shocking failure on Stephen's part to "do justice"! None the less—if I may venture upon a prophecy which I cannot hope to prove—on Judgment Day . . .

A 12th-CENTURY SEMINARY

William remained a hostage in the King's hands for some years: until, in fact, Stephen made his peace with Henry Plantagenet by acknowledging him as his successor. Only then was the boy allowed

[1] Very nearly all we know of William the Man—as opposed to the historic William Earl of Pembroke—comes from the *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, by an unnamed rhyming chronicler who executed the work at the behest of William's son. It is exceedingly long, running to more than 19,000 lines. The original, which is in Norman-French, has been translated into modern French, and edited by Paul Meyer for the Société de l'Histoire de France. Students of the Regent should also consult—as I have, freely and profitably—*William Marshal, Knight-errant, Baron and Regent of England*, by Sidney Painter (Baltimore, 1933).

to return to a father relieved of most of his trials and high in favour with both mother and son. But now William was 13, and the question of what to do with him arose. The choice was strictly limited. John's acres were broader than of yore, but not nearly broad enough to provide for six stalwart sons, with suitable credit for any of them. The eldest survivor among them would succeed to the acres, and was thus settled. His name also was John; or, to give him the full tally to which in good time he aspired, John fitz-John fitz-Gilbert le Maréchal—the "Maréchal" part, this time, unchallenged. That the name had already in effect become a surname is clear from the fact that William always used it too. We do not, however, hear much more of John Marshal II.

As to William, one thing only was certain. Acknowledged as gentle, yet landless, he would have to make his own way: and here the alternatives were virtually restricted to two. If he were so inclined, he might enter the Church. But emphatically he was *not* so inclined. In the things he liked and disliked he was evidently a boy of his class and age. No cloister for him: rather, he had clearly inherited one characteristic from his father, and that one of the better ones. His childish desire to play with lances and knock off people's heads was symptomatic. So the profession of arms was the only one left; and, in the 12th century, 13 was the correct age to enter it.

John, of course, would know the proper procedure; which was to put the lad under the care of a qualified master, who undertook to train him for the career of soldier; that is (William being gentle), to prepare him, after a probationary period of no less than eight years, to be dubbed a knight. It is possible here, though perhaps not very likely, that John was trying to make amends to William for his shocking earlier treatment. Anyway, he chose a good master for him. This was his cousin, one William Tankerville (or Tancarville), who held the important post of Hereditary Chamberlain of Normandy: a doughty, experienced warrior himself, in splendid training and practice, since it would seem that he spent all his time in either war or tournaments; and with a fine reputation for bringing on young men as Squires: manifestly a first-rate tutor.

From the nameless chronicler's *Histoire* can be gleaned a remarkable inside knowledge of how the young gentleman of the mid-12th century was educated: and indeed, though it had its crudenesses, the system was not without considerable merits. Thus the aspirant began his apprenticeship (to borrow a word from across

the centuries) as a "fag". He started right at the bottom. He learned to clean out his master's stables, to scrub down his horses, to clean his armour till it shone again, to keep his arms sharp and bright. He also attended his tutor very closely, almost as his body-servant, went on campaign or to the tournament with him, nursed him if he were hurt or sick. But, while yet a squire, he did not actively participate in battle, save under the most unusual circumstances.

Meanwhile there were many things to do as well as to learn: and one of the first was to see to his own physical development. The ideal knight must be at once enduring and strong and supple. He must continually strive to fit himself for the great weight of his armour, often to be worn for long stretches of time: and only trained strength and oft-tested endurance could compass that. But this was not enough: he must also be quick and skilful with his weapons, not only practised in their management but also opportunist in their use. He must learn, too, to sit a horse as though he were part of it. Indeed, to fulfil all these conditions he must be strong, enduring and agile at the same time and all the time. One accomplishment, for instance, which was the *sine quâ non* of every knightly aspirant, was to be able to leap, fully armed and armoured, into his war-horse's saddle without using the stirrups.

Such exercises constituted, as it were, the physical background of his preparations—the sheer professional technique. But there was a higher, more spiritual side of his training too. William, as it happened, was just learning his business at the moment when "Knight-Errantry" was beginning to flower, almost as a way of life. All the vaunted paraphernalia of knights-in-shining-armour, ladies-in-distress, quests, vigils, idyllic love, absolute purity of heart and of deed, absolute truth; vows and untarnished honour, faith-keeping and generosity—all came into it: as romantic dreams perhaps, yet still real enough on that plane, and assiduously taught to aspirants, above all in academies of knighthood like Tankerville's. These establishments existed in England; but in that sad, damp climate the more exotic flowers of Chivalry never reached their full maturity. In Normandy, where William was sent, the standards were a good deal higher: but the schools in which the really prize blooms were grown were to be found in the sunnier south, in Aquitaine, Guienne, Gascony.

Since that first bright dawn, the image of Knight-Errantry has been sadly smirched: its ideals have somehow degenerated, almost

if not quite, to the point of becoming a laughing stock. And, of course, not only did the ideals themselves really degenerate, as such lovely things will. They never actually existed—in real life. There *is* something risible, after all, in the image of our John Marshal lying in bed, a naked sword separating him from his damsel-in-distress: or indeed in his defying sin in any form. But we ought to laugh at the right places (of which this is one.) At least we should know, and marvel a little in the knowing, that all such virtues were conscientiously taught in the schools of Chivalry: and perhaps—nay, probably—there did exist many a young squire (but possibly we should stress the "young") who, for a while, really did cherish the image of himself as a veritable Sir Galahad. Nor, for all that such ideals never came within miles of establishing themselves as the norms of life and conduct, must they be written off as bogus, and still less as useless. A genuine ideal is never entirely bogus, never utterly useless. In fact, this may be said with confidence: the pre-knight-errant world of Western Europe was crude almost beyond modern conception: the post-knight-errant world was crude still, yet appreciably less so than the other. In other words, Knight-Errantry was, by and large, an instrument of moral progress.

How, then, were these excellent virtues inculcated in the schools? On two planes, the secular and the religious. In both, we must remember, the self-appointed instructors started with certain considerable advantages. On the secular side, intellectual recreations were few: the cult of reading scarcely existed, and even where it did the literature to be read was severely limited. What took its place for a lad like William was, in the evening when work was done, to sit in the great hall (if one was available) and listen to the songs, ballads and tales of strolling minstrels or *trouvères*, who purveyed, of course, what was popular in that day and in that environment: which was, in all probability, exclusively "knight-errant" in colour and texture—the deeds of knights, the loves of knights and ladies, and all the rest of it; all couched in the most unearthly, aetherial (and, we must probably admit it, unnatural) language. And the squires not only listened: they performed. They composed their own airs to the ballads they had themselves written—if they could. If not, they just listened. Yet that was quite a second-best, because it was emphatically "the thing" to be able to do it oneself. It was implicit in the whole "knightly image". Your true Knight-Errant not only loved his Lady (in an altogether

idyllic sense, you understand); obeyed her least whim, guarded her from the slightest peril, saved her from the merest whisper of ill-fame: he also warbled to her, soulfully and (apparently) almost continuously. If he could not make a passable noise in the process, that was just too bad. He might be a very good fellow, but he would never be the Perfect Knight.

It is not asserted, of course, that such pretty pastimes *really* filled the minds of our young aspirants all and every night, to the exclusion of other more practical, less worthy matters. There was, no doubt, endless "shop" talked—the form of this or that favourite knight at the last tourney; the latest way to shoe a horse, fasten a girth or lace a helm. It would be wildly optimistic, too, to suppose that the conversation of these young gentlemen, mostly reared in homes, perhaps, not noticeably different from Father John's, never descended to far bawdier levels. Of course it did! The point is that, when they did raise the sights of their minds, the target they aimed at was really high, and seemed to them really worth hitting.

The second—the religious—advantage of the educators lay in the fact that all their pupils, without exception, were devout believers in God the Father and His Son. Often, maybe, these beliefs were essentially uncritical, superstitious and unintelligent. But that is hardly relevant here. They did believe, and believed in the main what the Church told them. For, beyond any doubt, the Church was in on this cult which we are calling Knight-Errantry, even if it had not actually started it. And, in the main, its teaching was the teaching of Christ: and the beau-ideal of Chivalry—the really Perfect Knight—was not all that far removed from the Perfect Man, possessing, in common with Him, so many truly Christ-like qualities—Love, Purity, Honour, Good Faith, Loyalty, Generosity, Humility, Patience and the like. Moreover, we may be very sure, every pupil would go regularly to Confession, there to have dinned into him just the same lessons, solemnly, and as pre-requisites to Absolution. It would be very wrong to ignore, even to minimise, the influence of Mother Church on the schools of knight-errantry.

A course so intensive, so long-enduring, applied through all the impressionable years from 13 to 21, cannot possibly have failed to leave its mark. Some students would naturally imbibe more profitable, more lasting benefits from it than others. But few can have imbibed—nothing.

What then did William get from it? Well, he was certainly among the better products; but not, I fancy a really "show" pupil. On the practical professional side, perhaps yes, being—*on* that side—quite without a rival in his day: but probably not on the more spiritual side, because he was not the spiritual type at all. He was practical rather than imaginative, intelligent rather than intellectual, sensible rather than sensitive. This partly explains his success. In the hard business of his profession no knight could afford to be too starry-eyed. For a business it was—to all, perhaps, but those who had means of their own: and these were scarce, because most of the real professionals were, like William, younger sons. So knight-errantry was not only a way of life: it was a livelihood too, where the practitioner positively had to live on his earnings. This William discovered at once: in fact on his first day, when, in the summer of 1167, his schooldays were over and he was duly dubbed knight by Tankerville. He saw his first service that morning.

The *Histoire* gives a close-up of our 21-year-old warrior as he was when he "passed out". Granted the writer is not particularly impartial; but the lad's record as a simple knight makes it certain that he must have been, in the main, as here described.

> He seemed so well and straightly made that any impartial judge would be compelled to admit that he had the best-shaped body in the world... His face, even more than his body, showed a man of high enough class to be Emperor of Rome. He had legs as long and stature as good as was possible in a Gentle Man. Whoever fashioned him was a Master.

Knight-Errant

But fine looks and flawless courage are no substitutes for experience. Action was joined in the little town of Drincourt on the river Bethune. William at once rode into the thick of the press and, ignoring everything but glory, hewed long and hard at every enemy helm within reach. All seemed lovely: he was enjoying his first real fight no end: so much so that he failed to notice a rascally "sergent" (common foot-soldier), who adroitly flung a hook at him. It fastened itself to his shoulder, and his own velocity did the rest. Horse and William parted company, and he found himself prone amidst thundering hoofs and iron-shod footmen.

Now possibly "the Use and Abuse of Hooks in Battle" was not in the school curriculum. Fortunately, however, "How to Behave

When Unhorsed" was included. Even the most accomplished of knights must be prepared occasionally to face this indignity. So William knew what to do. He first got rid of the hook, before it could haul him to ignominious captivity; then by great circular sweeps with his sword, fatal to the legs of either horse or man who ventured within radius, he succeeded in clearing the press and was free.

Victory went to his side: but his tutor's expert eye had watched his conduct. Tankerville was satisfied, but, like the wise man he was, he was not going to say so yet. In fact, William was subjected to a double rebuke, subtly and kindlily administered, yet well-calculated to profit the culprit. First, Tankerville, as though in jest, asked for a small present out of William's spoils—"just a crupper or an old horse-collar". Not quite catching his drift, young William declared that he had no such things—never had had them. The old warrior's eyebrows went up in feigned surprise. "What?" he said. "Surely you won 40 or 60 today?" What he meant was that, from the *business* angle, such hard work as William had put in ought to have given him considerable booty: indeed, had done so if he had cared to stop and collect it. And then he did realise that, in his case, fighting *was* his livelihood.

The second snub he received was probably expected. Though William had won through, his war-horse had not. It was dead or captured, he knew not which. This was obviously bad. The great cart-horses trained for war were expensive commodities: far more so than a poor new knight could afford to lose. And William was sunk in despair when Tankerville, cruel to be kind, refused him another. He knew that the sooner William learned the economy of knighthood the better for him. So there was poor William, the most ludicrous and despicable of all objects—a knight without a horse! And now, to fill his cup to overflowing, came the news of a grand tournament to be held at nearby Le Mans. Everybody would be there, including distinguished nobles and far-famed knights from all over France. Ah well: no horse, no tournament—that was clear enough.

But the Master had no intention of unduly humiliating his most promising pupil; and, when the moment came for distributing the horses to be used that day, there was a beautiful one for William. He was happy again: but he had learned his lesson. Never again in all his long life was he to be short of a horse; never again to leave a tournament without more horses than he had when he

entered it. Thereafter too (so far as we know) no canaille of a "sergent" ever hooked him. He was a quick learner because his whole heart was in the business.

At this his first tournament, he acquitted himself with great honour—and profit. When the affair started, instead of joining the principal mêlée, he singled out one man, forced him out of the press into a place where there was room for single combat, and overpowered him. Then, pausing only long enough to accept his surrender and pledge of ransom, he returned to the press, collared two more knights, one after the other, and made the same satisfactory arrangements. As these involved not only hard coin but also all his captives' accoutrements—horses, arms, armour and baggage, as well as those of all his entourage—he found himself well set up. The man who said that "war never pays" probably lived long afterwards, and perhaps had never heard of a 12th-century tourney!

He attended his next tournament, not with a party of Tankerville's knights, but on his own as a private competitor. Here he not only found profit—and tremendously hard blows when attacked by four knights at once—but also returned to his master with the first prize, "awarded to him who had borne himself the best". It was a superb Italian war-horse.

No-one, not even his faithful admirer who wrote the *Histoire*, can follow William fight by fight through his knight-errant period. All that need be recorded is that it was uniformly successful as far as tournaments were concerned. But wars, though not as we shall see so very different in many respects, were, in one way, another matter. Unpredictable things might happen there, and sometimes did, as in the next adventure which will be briefly described: which, indeed, might well have been his last.

Late in 1167 he took "short leave" to England. Here he visited his uncle—that same man for whose sister John had deserted his first wife. He was now the Earl of Salisbury and a great personage; and he had just received orders to accompany Henry II to the Continent. He invited William to go with him, and the young knight, already missing his fighting, decided to transfer his sword and services from Tankerville to Salisbury.

He was now in more exalted circles. Henry, who had brought his Queen with him, left the lady in Salisbury's charge at Lusignan, far to the south in Poitou, and himself rode north into Normandy. This was not very prudent on Henry's part. Lusignan was actually

the home town of the rebels whom he had come to chastise; and as he had only just captured it, the odds were all in favour of these rebels—two of the notoriously warlike de Lusignans—returning to secure their own again.

Just so it fell out; and Salisbury, as well as Henry, seems to have been caught napping. One day in April, 1168, QUEEN ELEANOR and he were taking gentle horse-exercise near the castle, the Earl not in armour. Here they were surprised by a strong Lusignan party, intent on taking the castle and, still more profitably, their enemy's queen. Eleanor made a bolt for it and reached the castle. But Salisbury could not follow—the Code would not allow him to run. Instead, he called for his armour and war-horse.

In what came next we see both how Chivalry was meant to operate, and how, all too often, realities upset ideals. The Chivalric Law spurned to take advantage of Surprise, that most useful (and legitimate) feature of modern warfare. When one side caught the other unprepared, the rules said, very clearly, "Knightly Honour demands that you wait until your opponent is on equal terms with yourself"; and to that code of rules the Earl was naturally playing. Unfortunately, however, someone in the other camp was not. Someone—nobody tells us who, but it was not one of the Lusignans themselves—refused to wait, aimed a mortal blow at the Earl's back just as he was mounting, and killed him instantly.

William was not far off and saw it all. Though only half-armed—he was bareheaded—he leaped into his saddle and charged. The odds were impossible. He killed one man, but as he did so another brought down his horse. In a flash he freed himself, and contrived to get his back to a high thick hedge. Here he held his own by hacking at the legs of his adversaries' horses, so that no mounted man could get near him while no unmounted one dared to do so: and all went relatively well until he was outflanked by an enemy who thrust through the hedge and ran his sword deep into William's thigh. He fell, and was taken. Tactically, the action of this assailant was permissible: once battle was joined, Surprise was allowed. Yet, strategically, his foes had as little right to attack William as they had to slay Salisbury, because, lacking his headpiece, he was technically "unarmed".

This was not the worst thing that they did to William either. They tied him on to a mare's back and sneaked off, knowing that a very angry Henry would be back as soon as the news reached him. They would not dress his wounds nor give him the wherewithal to

dress them himself. Here, at first sight surprisingly, his biographer does not inveigh against the inhumanity of allowing a wounded captive to bleed to death. And it may safely be inferred that there was little fear of this, because they could hardly have wanted him to die. That would have been an egregious waste of good money in the days of Ransom! Rather, they probably thought that the more uncomfortable and miserable they made him the bigger the ransom he would offer them. Indeed, it would not be altogether surprising to learn that such a policy was accepted teaching in the Schools themselves because, as we have seen, the profit-making side of Knight-Errantry was quite heavily underlined. This in its turn should perhaps caution us against thinking too highly of what the Schools taught. For that teaching would seem to contain a basic contradiction between ideals and realities. Idealism says that you must be generous to fallen foes: but Realism—equally basic to the code of Knight-Errantry—says that business is business, and cannot be neglected. Are we here, perhaps, back at the very core of the dilemma which Christ Himself stated so uncompromisingly? Strive never so hard to combine the uncombinable: still "you cannot serve God and Mammon".

Meanwhile William did his best. He wriggled out of part of his bonds, and dressed his thigh as best he could—with rope. That night, however, when the party halted, though they still refused what common humanity demanded, a lady who was in the company took pity on him, and secretly sent him a loaf of bread. He soon discovered that the inner dough had been removed and a proper bandage inserted. Maybe her appraising eye had not overlooked "the best-shaped body in the world".

Soon, however, a more potent lady intervened. Queen Eleanor had witnessed the fight at the hedge, and she went to the length, unusual in those days, of underwriting a prisoner's ransom. The liberal offer she made soon secured his release, and he returned to recuperate under her care. Later, scandalous tongues were to allege that she too had fallen for the best-shaped body in the world. But the lewd implication—aimed at her rather than at William—is certainly false. It consorted with the character of neither of them. The Queen it is true, was a great believer in Chivalry, and even "courtly love", the chivalric jargon for the "spotless-knight-faire-ladye" connection. But the favours which she—and still more her infinitely more hard-boiled husband—accorded henceforth to William had nothing whatever in common with the less courtly

variety. Perhaps, however, they do bear witness to young William's charm and knightly courtesy, otherwise rather hard to gauge. For the *Histoire* to praise them is one thing: for the Queen of Chivalry to be impressed by them is quite another.

Anyhow, though for the moment he was not to know it, the gratitude and favour of the King and Queen of England were to be the making of his career.

By now William was a full-fledged knight, already famous in chivalric circles for his remarkable professional skill and his unusual strength of character: engaged sometimes in the entourage of a great lord, sometimes on his own as a free-lance. But he was still virtually landless and so, in an age when land was by far the greatest source of wealth, essentially poor compared with his social equals. True, his professional earnings were probably higher than those of most of his kind: but he still had to live on them, so that his fortunes remained precarious. The next period of his life, lasting some 15 years, saw him engaged in the same way: he was still essentially knight-errant. Yet he had made one considerable advance. During most of this time he had but one master, and that a most useful one.

In 1170, when William was only 24, Henry II decided to set up his eldest son (also Henry) on his own; to which end he had him crowned king at Westminster. This was not altogether unusual. It was Henry's attempt to preserve the succession, especially against the untimely end of the reigning monarch. All the King's lieges had to take the feudal oath to the son as well as to the father. In fact, there was only one escape-clause for the senior king. The vassals swore fealty to the prince against everybody save—specifically named—the King himself.

The Young King, however, was not to escape tutelage: quite rightly, because, though curiously precocious both by nature and by upbringing—he had been married at the age of five—he was even now only 15. So Henry appointed sage counsellors to educate him politically and, because he must be coached in war and chivalry too, a military tutor. And it speaks volumes for the reputation which William had already earned that he was appointed to the post.

This remained his task for 13 years, only once broken for a while by a rather pointless quarrel. His position in the Young King's court was peculiar, but very powerful, especially because his master himself was badly bitten by the rage for Chivalry and

Errantry. Through all those long years, in fact, Marshal was the acknowledged model, the representative pattern, of the cult.

It was a hectic life, led mostly across the Channel where the game could best be played. And can it be doubted that William loved it? For it was *his* game: the game in which he surpassed all others. What did it amount to? Perhaps the life of a champion tennis-player endlessly doing the round of the tournaments might furnish a pale modern analogy: but not at all adequate because, of course, the nature of the "play" in the two games brooks no comparison whatever. For the 12th century tournament was intended to represent almost all the features of the real battlefield. Indeed, almost the only difference between them—in intent, though, as we have seen, not always in fact—was that, in the tournament, there was provided a sort of sanctuary known as a "refuge", retiring into which the performer was reasonably safe as long as he stayed there. This naturally did not exist in battle; yet, even there, a strong castle was often a fairly close equivalent. Otherwise, a high-grade tournament might last for days, even weeks. It was not confined at all to the "field" where it started, but might rage over wide tracts of country, with one knightly party relentlessly hunting the other, principally for what ransom each side, or each individual, could pick up. It was no child's play either. Fatalities were quite common, though not so common as they would have been but for the fact that, at this period in the history of war, Defence was far ahead of Attack. The armour worn was much more efficacious than the arms used. Incidentally, this was true of real warfare too—if one happened to be of the class which wore armour.

Last, what were the reasons behind this ferocious "sport"? Why were the tourneys countenanced by every ruling prince of Western Europe? The question should be posed the other way about—why were they encouraged, even if not organised, by the rulers? There are two answers, and both show that it was the ruler who stood to gain most from them. First, these tournaments were training-grounds, exceedingly realistic dress-rehearsals for the real thing. They certainly taught battle-tactics, and sometimes battle-strategy, to the men upon whom he had to rely to fight his battles for him. Second—and more important—they acted as safety-valves for the blowing off of potentially dangerous steam; outlets for the blood-letting proclivities of his leading subjects—all those, in fact, who were ironically called "gentle". Every wise prince knew that these people must indulge their innate lust for war, and for its spoils; and that,

in one way or another, they would inevitably do so. When he could lead them in real war against his proper enemies, that solved his problem. But, even in those days, he could not always be at war: he had to make provision for peace too because, if he did not, he would certainly be faced with rebellion against himself or with internecine clashes, in real earnest, between the props of his throne. It was from this dilemma that the tournament, in great measure, saved him. Could he but convert their murderous hates, their insatiable greeds, into the semblance of a game—with prizes and at least a few rules—he might hope to keep them reasonably happy until he wanted them again. Some, probably the weaker, might perish in the tournaments, but a majority—and those the fitter—would still be there to serve him at his own time and place.

The Young King loved his tourneys, and travelled widely to attend them, with William always at his back. But if Henry loved them, Marshal was positively fanatical about them, and managed, it would seem, to attend quite twice as many as his master—being usually, in the superfluous half, "free-lance". Again we can pick out only a few highlights in this, the prime of his knight-errant days. Nor may we confine our attention to tournaments; for there were many battles too during those 13 years: and several wars—one a particularly distressing one, and a little awkward for William himself. For the Young King rebelled against the Old King—and William had sworn fealty to both. This, however, was not quite so bad as it sounds, and no one, it seems, had any doubt as to which master he should serve. At first sight it might be supposed that here was an obvious case for the "saving" clause already mentioned, and that the King's claims would override the Prince's. But in the complex structure of feudal custom, apparently, this was not so. A vassal swore fealty, primarily, for his fiefs, the lands held of his overlord; and William had no land to speak of. On the other hand, he was the appointed servant of the Prince—appointed by the King—and, in the ethics of the time, that was held to be his primary loyalty. So he continued throughout the quarrel in the Young King's service, and at no time did anyone, not even Henry II himself, throw William's conduct in his teeth as a breach of feudal propriety, though he was actually in arms against the King. As ever throughout his extraordinary career, Marshal went through the whole business with moral reputation entirely unspotted.

There was however, one breach, of quite a different nature, which for a short time separated William from the younger Henry. The

Young King was half-persuaded by people jealous of his tutor and friend that William was the lover of his young wife, Margaret of France. Yet there is evidence that Prince Henry never more than half-believed it, and that the Old King, though it suited him for a while to pretend the contrary, did not believe it at all. Nor, since, has anyone else seriously believed it.

Yet the rumour was dangerous to William, and he met the threat head-on as he faced all life. Banished for a time from his Prince's presence, he heard that a more than usually representative Court was to meet at Caen for the Christmas feast. He boldly repaired thither, and, uninvited, penetrated the great hall in person. Both kings were there: so were the Prince's brothers Geoffrey and Richard (the Lionheart to be), and nearly every other notable from England and Normandy. He strode up to the kings as they sat side by side at the head of the table, solemnly denied the rumour and, addressing the Young King in particular, offered to prove his words by battle. Not feeling like suicide just then, the Prince refused the challenge; whereupon William offered to take on the three most skilful of his accusers on three successive days. Still the Prince refused—he did not want to lose his best men. Thereupon William held up his right hand, saying, "Cut off a finger, and I will fight the best of them!". But still his offer was declined. Then William turned to the Old King, and demanded safe conduct into France. He obtained it at once. Henry II could not refuse because, by feudal law, if a vassal demanded trial from his overlord (and this of course was what he was doing—trial by battle) and was denied it, then he was automatically absolved from his oath of fealty. Fortunately, however, the quarrel was soon patched up. Marshal's unique prowess, whether in tournament or battle, was an asset which neither king cared to forego; and every charge was unconditionally withdrawn.

For this phase of William's career the *Histoire* again opens many fascinating windows upon the day-to-day events in high 12th-century circles, revealing as none other does the attitudes of the actors towards each other, and towards life in general: and their ordinary codes of morals, so astounding to us. Never again can we hope, no doubt, to get inside the skin of a 12th-century knight: but the *Histoire* enables us at least to be a fly on an adjacent wall. And we shall find real humour here, both (one suspects) in the characters who figure in the poem and in the unknown poet himself. Of his almost endless stories, three may be selected in illustration.

(1) Someone caught a pike: such an angler's dream that it struck everybody as being far too grand for mere plebeian bellies. It must go to Court, or at least grace some great banqueting hall. It reached in due course, a high-ranking lady, who sent it with her compliments to the Duke of Burgundy. He, not to be outdone in courtesy, sent it to the Count of Flanders: who, continuing the gesture, dispatched it to the Count of Clarmont, who pressed it upon the Count of Blois. This was becoming embarrassing. Mediaeval transport was notoriously slow and refrigerators were of course unknown. But once this kind of chivalric rivalry had started, no one liked to be the first to break the chain and eat the fish: in fact, by this time there may well have been another reason altogether for the reluctance. At last, however, someone had a really bright idea. Why not give it as the first prize at the next tournament? Everyone applauded the suggestion. The winner (as usual) was Marshal; and two inferior knights were told off to seek him in his "refuge", preceded (one presumes) by a menial carrying the fish. On reaching the place, they found no William, but were told that he was down at the blacksmith's. Thither the procession hurried, and ran their man to earth. He was on his knees with his head on the anvil, while the blacksmith laboured with bellows, tongs and hammer to remove his helmet, so twisted from the blows it had received that the eye-holes gave on to the nape of the knight's neck. We are not told what William said when at length he could use his eyes to see what he had won: but probably his nose had already informed him.

(2) Just once in a while, if he were really lucky, a knight might stumble upon a chivalric adventure of authentic Galahad vintage. He *might* find a lady in distress, and succour her! The next episode starts (though it does not finish) with such an occasion.

While on a journey, William, wrapped in sleep and an old cloak, was awakened by a female voice which said, "Ah God, but I am tired!" A mounted couple was trotting briskly past. Up leapt William, sprang into his saddle and soon caught them up. He seized the man by his cloak and demanded who they were, and what doing. The man mumbled something and tried to escape. But William gave chase once more and, catching the man by his cap, pulled it off. Beneath was the shorn head of a monk who, now very frightened, admitted that he was running off with the lady. Here indeed was promising errantry-stuff—with, however, one unfortunate snag: the lady refused to leave her monk.

What now? No *trouvère*, to William's knowledge, had ever visualised such a situation. In some perplexity, he asked what they proposed to live on when they reached wherever they were going. The monk produced £48, which William thought too little to keep them, and said so. "Well," replied the monk, "I do not exactly intend to live on that sum. When we get to where we are going. I shall invest the money and live on the interest." Shocked to the core, William cried, "At usury? By the spear of God, that shall not be!" —and (to cut a long story short) he took and pocketed the £48, saying in effect, "Go and live in sin if you must. But, in the hell whither you are going, you will not need any money!"

To us this looks uncommonly like highway robbery. It was not even as though he was succouring the lady. Yet it is impossible that William looked at it like that. Had he done so he would never (as he did) have boasted about it: nor would his son, on commissioning the *Histoire*, have let the poet boast about it either. No: this problem of conduct can only be examined through 12th century eyes. To the Church (of which William was a devout member) the monk was committing the horrid crime of breaking his vows. The lady was flouting established opinions at one of their tenderest points: she was making a mockery of parental control. The pair of them were doomed thereafter to live in mortal sin, for no respectable priest would ever dream of marrying them. These were all bad things; yet evidently, in William's eyes not the worst. That was the unforgivable sin of usury, which no decent Christian—only the unspeakable Jew—ever dreamed of practising. He felt that from this awful offence at least he could do them the service of saving them: and doubtless accepted the £48 on the principle that the labourer is worthy of his hire. So he shared out the swag with his men, and *boasted* about it.

(3) Who, in a romantic chronicle of 12th-century Knight-errantry, would look for a classic *Punch* joke of the early 20th century—the one which shows a furious cyclist towing behind him an empty swaying trailer, and yelling over his shoulder. "Hang on, Auntie, round this corner!"? Yet there it is, basically exact.

In one far-flung tourney, the Young King found himself at the approaches of a small town, separated from all his train—from all, that is, but William, who was ever at his back. Suddenly there issued from the dark street a party of the enemy composed of some 500 "sergents": and in their midst was one officer—a knight. It was of course unthinkable that King and Champion should turn tail

from a pack of knaves like this. The nature of their action was pre-ordained. William went to the front, and charged: Prince Henry, no more reluctant, followed. The "sergents", with no chance—or stomach—to dispute with "armour", gave them free passage. When William reached the officer, he seized his horse's bridle and forced him to follow. They soon left the press behind and thundered through the narrow streets, William leading by half a length. Then came the strange knight, then the Prince, bringing up the rear. On they rode, left the town behind and finally reached their refuge. "Ho, squire," quoth William loudly, "remove me my prisoner and hold him safe!"

But there was no prisoner; only a horse: and the Young King, weeping with laughter, was able to explain the reason. In one place in the town a low-water pipe overhung the street. William had avoided it, easily. But the officer, "on tow" on that side, had been less fortunate—he was swept away. William, we learn, who was at heart a simple, cheerful soul, was just as much amused as the Prince. He had no false pride of the kind which resents the laugh being against himself.

In a trade like his which involved him in so much violent dealing with so many of his fellow-men, it was such traits that set him up in his day as a "character": and they go far to explain how very few real enemies he had throughout life. With "the Public"—with everybody, that is, upon whom chronicler and minstrel made any impact at all—this is not surprising: nor with the young squires, and all aspirants to the profession of arms. To them he was the inevitable "pin-up boy". They were his natural fans, and they applauded his every feat for the same reason, and in much the same spirit, as the Oval crowd applauded Jack Hobbs in his prime. As for his equals, who, in his earlier days, had all been—or considered themselves to be—his superiors, their respect for him must have been based upon something rather more substantial than mere military expertise: and that something clearly lay in the core of the man. He was straight: he could be trusted, and loyalty came naturally to him: and these, unfortunately, were qualities none too common in baronial England. Yet certainly, as we are to see again and again, it was just these qualities which brought him to the top and kept him there, until the day came when, by universal accord, he was raised to the highest pinnacle possible for a mere subject.

BARON

In June 1183 the Young King died suddenly, and the Old King, wisely, took William entirely into his personal service. Thus was his way of life changed, for ever. He did not give up fighting: but he gave up errantry. He became in fact the Crown's leading general and military adviser. There was plenty to do. Henry II's last years were filled with bitter quarrels and unnecessary wars, mostly with his surviving sons, and especially with his new heir. This was Richard, later the Lionheart but just then—regrettably—ally of King Philip of France. And at length he worsted his father, in spite of all that William could do. Moreover his triumph and Henry's death came simultaneously in 1189, so that Marshal found himself, suddenly, at an unexpected crisis in his life.

He was nothing if not a "King's Man", always and utterly faithful to the Crown—or Crowns, having served both Old and Young Kings impartially. And, since he became a figure of military importance, he had served no one else. Moreover his fidelity was at last to be rewarded. Just before his death Henry had given him one of the greatest matrimonial prizes in the land, ISABEL DE CLARE, heiress of the lands of the Earl of Pembroke. Such a match meant everything to a man like Marshal. It would make him one of the aristocracy of England: for the first time too. So far, in his countrymen's eyes, he was *not* a great man, not yet possessing the one qualification of greatness in their eyes. He held no land.

Now, however, this bar would be removed. He would hold vast fees in the West, more in Wales, and more still (if more shadowy) in Ireland. Moreover, though not automatically an Earl, he would qualify to be made one if his master would oblige. But, unfortunately, when the Old King breathed his last at Chinon, the gift, though clearly bestowed, had not been implemented. William had not secured the person of the young lady, still less married her. Nor was he the least sure, now, that he would ever be allowed to: for now power resided, not with one who had learned to lean heavily upon him, but with his son, whose rebellion had just helped to kill off his father and who might well want to take it out of that father's staunchest supporter.

More: a very recent episode must have raised even graver doubts in William's mind. He and Richard had actually clashed in the field; and, as ever, William had come off best. In fact he could easily have slain the then heir, but now rightful King. It happened thus.

Richard, a very brave man and a skilful, if over-rash, knight, had pressed far ahead of his men in pursuit of Henry when the dying King was driven from Le Mans by a disastrous fire. Indeed so rash was he that, in following, he had omitted to don any armour but an iron cap. He would not have done that had he known his William as well as he afterwards did: for as, all alone, he came up with the King's rearguard, there—of course—was Marshal, covering the retreat. They fought, but not to the death because Richard (and who shall blame him?) went as near to asking quarter as such a firebrand ever could.

"By the legs of God, Marshal," he cried, "do not kill me. That would not be right, for I am unarmed"—meaning, of course, unarmoured.

This was so. By the rules which William always kept, he could not. So he replied, "No. Let the Devil kill you for I shall not"—and speared Richard's horse instead.

Such was the ticklish state of their relations when Richard, now king, sent for William Marshal. No one need suppose that William's knees were knocking together or anything like that. But he must have known that his whole fate hinged upon the next few minutes.

All was well. The Lionheart, in many admirable ways, deserved his name. He may have proved a lamentable king, but he was fair and generous by nature; and—which was perhaps quite as important for William just then—was a leading addict of Knight-Errantry and its higher ideals. More, he was so much younger than Marshal that he had doubtless looked up to him for as long as he could remember—again very much like the now adult Ovalite who as a boy has passed many a happy hour on the grass below the gasworks, worshipping the great Jack from afar. He made but one attempt, and that a very human one, to save his kingly face.

"The other day," he began, "you wished to kill me, and would have done so had I not turned your lance with my arm."

William, one feels, would not have said that. Nor, now, at this crisis of his affairs, was he prepared to overlook even so mild a deviation from the truth: no, not even to buy himself pardon and prosperity. He knew that he had done no wrong, that he had failed neither in duty nor in skill: and he was not going to admit that he had. "Sire," he said, "I had no intent to slay you, nor have I ever tried to. But I am still strong enough, I hope, to aim straight. Had I wished, I could have struck you down, as I did your horse. If I had

done so, I should have committed no crime: and I still do not repent having killed your horse."

Mark this reply, as logical as it is cool and concise, containing all such feudal law, custom and common knowledge as was relevant, and which both knew by heart. At the time in question Richard was an oath-breaker with sword drawn against his liege lord, an outlaw whom it was no crime to slay. And William was a soldier, under orders from *his* lord to cover his rear from any assailant. Law authorised William to slay Richard, but Custom did not: so he refrained. Both Law and Custom, however, obliged him to impede the assailant which he effectively did by killing his horse. The only personal touch he allows himself is, "Don't make excuses. It is common knowledge that William Marshal hits what he aims at".

Before such honesty Richard capitulated at once; as no doubt he had always intended. Chivalry apart, he knew what a man like William was worth to him. He simply said, "Marshal, I pardon you, and I bear you no malice."

They never quarrelled again. William at once became the faithful servant of his third Plantagenet lord. Richard confirmed all his father's gifts to William, including the fair Isabel and all the lands that went with her. He also, upon leaving England on crusade, made William one of his Council of Regency.

William had certainly arrived. But how happy he was is more doubtful. He would have greatly preferred to accompany Richard upon a fighting mission about which he had but little to learn, and to a land which he had already visited.[1] But Richard, wise for once, would not have it. He did not trust William's fellow-justiciars all that much, nor his own brother, JOHN OF MORTAIN: indeed, the only man he really believed in was William Marshal, Baron (but not yet Earl) of Pembroke.

In his absence things went far from well, and he was away for much longer than he intended because, on his way home, he was captured and held to ransom by the Emperor. Meanwhile there had been endless trouble, even war, between Prince John and Richard's Chancellor Longchamps, the Chief Justiciar. Here neither party commands much sympathy, and no one (except Longchamps) complained when Richard sent over the Archbishop of Rouen to

[1] Henry the Young King had taken crusading vows, but, knowing on his deathbed that he could not fulfil them, had besought William to stand proxy for him in the eye of Heaven, and this the faithful man had done.

replace him. Then things went somewhat better, until, in 1194, Richard himself returned.

William and his colleagues, the junior justiciars, had not been able to do much. Indeed it must be admitted that in this his first excursion into politics he was nothing like the statesman he afterwards became. Why should he be? Politics was not Errantry, and William was not one to whom they naturally appealed. As always, however, he did his best, and, in spite of Longchamps' ridiculous accusation that he was in league with Prince John, he emerged from this unsavoury period with the entire confidence of the King, and of everyone else; not for his statesmanship, but for his moral stature. When it came to collecting the vast ransom demanded for Richard's release, he was more in his element, and gave, as might be expected, very generously.

The King had five more years to live, and almost all of them were spent in France, in all but constant warfare. Throughout William was at his side. In one way they were very much alike. Both dearly loved fighting, and both were experts at it. But thereafter it is the difference which must be stressed. Richard, suckled in Knight Errantry, never quite grew up. He remained a brilliant and dashing tactician in the form of war as then fought. But strategy, or indeed any settled course of prudence, remained beyond his reach. William, however, though no less in love with war, had already learned the value of strategy. They formed, indeed, a singularly well-matched pair—Richard the C-in-C, William his Chief of Staff, yet such a one as loved to take his share in the execution as well as the planning.

Once, however, the roles were reversed, and William reappeared in his old role. At Gourney in 1197, the scaling-ladders were up, but Richard's men were getting distinctly the worst of it: especially the leader on one ladder who, as he reached the top, was pinned by the neck against the wall by an enormous fork in the hands of one of the defenders. Our old warrior had, hitherto, been content to direct operations from a point just beyond the moat. But this was too much for him. He swam that moat (in armour of course); thrust aside the knight's followers who had deserted their officer, leaving him to his fate; wriggled past the unfortunate man, and attacked the defenders so fiercely that they gave a pace or two, and the knight was released. Up came the Constable of the town, like the worthy knight he was, hurrying to the point of greatest danger which, he rightly assessed as being the spot where William was.

But it availed him nought. William cut him down, and stood for a moment upon the wall.

But only for a moment. His feat had put fresh heart into the attackers. Up went the ladders again; over the walls poured the people, and the town was stormed. Then someone noticed that William was not in at the death. Surprised at so unusual a circumstance, they came to look for him; and there he was, quietly seated upon the Constable, taking a breather. No wonder. William was now well on the shady side of 50, and perhaps—compared with the old days—a little out of training.

Two years later Richard I died, slain gratuitously as he strolled unarmoured within bowshot of the petty fortress of Chalus: and JOHN succeeded to the throne. William's share in this change was considerable, and, as his first appearance as arbiter of England's destiny, requires notice.

It has not escaped criticism from later historians. They dispute John's title. He was the oldest surviving child of Henry II. But, though Henry the Young King and Richard were now dead without issue, the next-eldest brother, Geoffrey, though dead, had left a son called Arthur. Nowadays this lad would automatically succeed, just as, on William IV's death, Victoria had precedence over the sinister Cumberland because her father (the Duke of Kent) was older than he was. Marshal, however, chose John: and to maintain (as his critics do) that William thereby broke the succession-law is surely a case of putting the cart before the horse. True, the succession-law was soon to come in, but—at *that* moment—all was still undecided. In fact—if anything—William was taking the traditional view, most frequently followed hitherto. And are we to blame him for following tradition?

John instantly sent William to London, there to face Arthur's principle champion, Hubert Walter, Archbishop of Canterbury. They argued the case, quietly and dispassionately, as became the two most trustworthy men in England. But the choice was hard because, we know, both men knew the weakness of both candidates. John was dangerously unstable, Arthur (who was only 12) dangerously young.

William prevailed. John was crowned, and awarded his champion the Earldom of Pembroke. William's critics hint at covetousness. But will this really do? The promotion was an obvious one: to one who had long held all the Pembroke lands it might almost be called overdue. Moreover, who dare aver that Arthur, if chosen, would

not have done the same thing? And surely, in any case, a really covetous man would have hoped more from a fledgling than from a tough character like John? The choice, it is true, turned out a bad one. But this only means that William may have been wrong—a criticism from which no man has ever been exempt.

One thing, however, may be safely assumed. Had Walter prevailed, and Arthur become the King, crowned and anointed, William would have served him as faithfully as, we are to see, he served John. He was built that way—somehow different from all his contemporaries in this matter of loyalty to the Crown. Can it be, in fact, that he is really a prototype, born out of due time, of the modern "Service Officer", whose business is not to choose his master, but to serve him, whether he approves of him or not?

Be that as it may, however, in 1199 William found himself serving his *fourth* Plantagenet, with all his abilities if without his old love and reverence. And now, at last, he was a great man, a member of the only aristocracy which England knew—William, Earl of Pembroke.

EARL

Yet the period of John's reign must have been the unhappiest of William's life, principally because of the essential tug-of-war between his loyalty and his personal predilections.

John, as a man, was able above the average, and by no means entirely a bad one. But he had one unlovely flaw in him, serious in any man, fatal in a king. He had not the power of winning, and of keeping, the love and respect of his servants: and, knowing it, could not bring himself to trust them. But indeed, which came first, the Hen or the Egg? Did he suspect the worst of people because they would not love him? Or did he fail to gain their love because they knew he suspected them? Perhaps it does not greatly matter: probably both were true. What is certain is that the alienation and the suspicion were for ever growing side by side, each nourishing the other. Like most of the Plantagenets, too, he had an ungovernable temper; and this did not help at all. Indeed these three weaknesses must have made him, throughout life, a very unhappy man, lonely, trusting none, by none trusted.

It was this king who quarrelled with William—even William, by nature so unquarrelsome, especially where his liege-lords were concerned. So, in the main, it may certainly be assumed, not that John and William quarrelled, but that John quarrelled with William,

as, at one time or another, he did with every soul he met. The origins of this breach are a little mysterious to this day, and cannot be deeply probed here. Yet it would not be fair to leave the impression that John was entirely in the wrong—that is the case in so very few quarrels. It is worthwhile, then, to try to discover what right, if any, was on his side.

The estrangement first arose out of the loss of Normandy, that bitter pill to all Englishmen, and, even more, to all Anglo-Normans. That England profited by the loss in the long run is true; but naturally that was no consolation to anyone then. Nor was the undoubted fact that it was due to John's ineptitude. This only made the English angry, the Anglo-Norman baronage angrier, and, angriest of all, those of them with lands on both sides of the Channel. Had Normandy been lost in Richard's time, perhaps William would have had to share part of the blame, as Richard's Chief of Staff. But John, though quite a good soldier in his way, could never work with anyone else; so that William had been demoted from "military adviser" to "divisional general"; serving faithfully as ever, of course, but not advising.

The immediate effect of the loss was to cause a very unusual feudal situation which the ever-ambitious Philip of France was not slow to exploit. Here was an obvious opportunity to divide his enemy. He soon let it be known that any Anglo-Norman land-holder who would do homage to him for his Norman holdings should retain them; but not otherwise. This sounds reasonable; but, naturally, John did not like it, fearing the accompanying division of allegiance, which was in fact most unusual in any feudal system.

On their side, however, the Anglo-Normans concerned could see no reason why they should forfeit their lands just because of John's bunglings, and they were quite willing to dance to Philip's tune. William was one of them: but, as ever regarding his Plantagenet allegiance as the first call upon his loyalty, he first asked John for his permission to become Philip's man for his Norman lands: and—according to William—the English king gave it, though not with a very good grace. So William swore fealty to Philip for the Norman lands, knowing in his own heart his unchanged loyalty to the man whom he would always regard as his supreme over-lord: and, being much more honest and less suspicious than John, he failed to see what all the fuss was about. He was therefore genuinely surprised, and not a little hurt, when John announced that he had given no such permission.

Now with our knowledge of John's and William's normal motives and reactions, we might have no difficulty in believing that John was merely lying. But, this time, there is reason to think he was not—quite. Or at least he *thought* he was not. There seems, in fact, to have been some genuine misunderstanding as to what John had said. Exactly what that was is never likely to be known now. Yet there does remain a clear possibility that, for once, William was not being completely candid: not dishonest, but not candid: that, in his natural anxiety to keep his lands, and his natural pique at the whole of John's attitude, he may have misinterpreted the extent of John's compliance, perhaps even unconsciously. Surely it needs no tour-de-force of imagination to guess what really happened? Surely you and I—assumed here to be ordinary honest folk—will admit to occasions when we have heard—we are sure of it—what we wanted to hear rather than what our interlocutor said (afterwards) that we *had* heard? A verbal reservation here, a nuance in the odd word there, not caught in the give-and-take of conversation, and the misunderstanding is complete.

Anyway, the fat was in the fire now. One grain of suspicion planted in the royal breast was enough. Says John, "So Marshal is false after all! I've always half-suspected it. Fool that I am to have made him too powerful for my peace of mind! I must break him at once, before it is too late." Says William, "If he can suspect *me* of disloyalty, the man's hopeless!"

This, of course, did not lead to William striking back, not even when John, very meanly, tried to bully a council of English earls into pronouncing William guilty. The effort misfired entirely. Not a single earl would support him against Marshal on so unlikely a count. But now William had had enough, and he prepared to withdraw himself as far as he could from such distasteful exchanges. He asked leave to go to Ireland, to look after his immense lordship of Leinster. John wanted to get rid of him, and granted him leave: but then, as suspicious of William in Ireland as in England, he withdrew his consent at the last moment. This was too much for even William. He went without leave, and John retaliated by depriving him of all his offices and confiscating all his English lands. The tragedy was now complete. John had wantonly kicked away the principal prop of his throne, and he had to pay for it, though not quite at once.

The breach remained unhealed for four years, and during almost all that time William remained in Ireland, revealing himself there

in a most pleasing and—for those days—unique light. It is safe to say that, since the English first set foot in that sad, turbulent land, not one of them had thought to look after the people that went with the land. Contemporary Irish politics are altogether too chaotic to be followed here. It need only be recorded that William, through his wife, had grave responsibilities there, and was conscientious enough to do his best to fulfil them. The Lady Isabel was the daughter and heiress of none other than RICHARD "STRONGBOW", the first English conqueror of Ireland.

Meanwhile John was busy in England quarrelling with everyone, and rashly dissipating his strength. Normandy was gone, as it proved for ever, and for England's good too. But the loss carried one immediate disadvantage whose implications John did not perhaps fully realise. Though he still held most of his more southerly fiefs, there was now less occasion to give his warlike vassals-in-chief the safety-valve of fighting his French wars for him. War being at once their profession and their chief pastime, they were now, one might say, unemployed, or at least underemployed. They thus had more spare time at home, and therefore more time to get into trouble with the King: who, it must be admitted, went more than halfway to meet them. They were certainly dangerously restive, nursing a special grievance against the man who had lost Normandy. Some, moreover, went further. They were disloyal, and sold themselves, or contemplated selling themselves, to Philip Augustus, not only for their Norman lands but actually for their English ones too: and Philip, still as ambitious as ever, now began to toy with the idea of setting up his son Louis as Lord of England itself.

For good measure, John had gradually been alienating the formidable Pope, Innocent III, who at last, in 1211, went to the length of excommunicating him. Any such action by the Papacy was always serious, though just how serious depended upon many things. The cutting-edge of the weapon of excommunication was, of course, that it absolved the victim's subjects from their oaths of allegiance. When this point was reached, what really mattered was whether the subjects in question wanted to break allegiance. Sometimes they did not, as in the well-known cases of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I: and then the threat to the Sovereign was not so great. But, in John's case, it was all but fatal, because it gave his many disgruntled vassals just the excuse they needed for open rebellion.

Thus it came about that, by 1211, the wretched King had

arrayed against himself no less than three separate kinds of enemy. In that one year he learned—and the tidings were in the main correct—that a powerful section of his own baronage was preparing a league, if not to murder him, at least to get rid of him: that Philip was manoeuvring for a full-scale invasion in support of Prince Louis' claim to the English Crown; and (as we have seen) that all good English sons of Mother Church were enjoined not to obey their King. He was in despair. With only the smaller half of his great vassals behind him—and those nearly all suspect in his eyes—he knew very well that he stood no chance whatever against the larger half of the barons, the whole temporal power of France and the even more threatening spiritual might of Rome. What was he to do?

The answer to that question reveals perhaps more clearly than anything else the status reached, and the recognised character, of the hero of this study. John called on William Marshal to save him: and William, letting bygones be bygones, instantly answered the call. No one who has followed his story so far would expect anything else of him. The crown—and the person—of the Plantagenet to whom he owed faith was in danger. He returned at once, without even making conditions.

William was never much of a hand at party politics: but his ingrained common sense had by now taught him the rudiments of statesmanship; and, with it, the lessons of when to withdraw, whom to conciliate, how to divide. He instantly put his finger on the real danger; and he saw the remedy. The combination ranged against the Crown was unnatural, and therein lay its weakness. The rebellious barons, even the French king, were formidable. But the menace that could be fatal was Innocent III. William therefore insisted that John should make his peace at once with the Pope. The King, quite tamed for the moment, did so, going to the length, not quite so drastic as it sounds, but even so further, probably, than William meant him to go, of becoming the Pope's vassal.

The whole scene thereupon changed overnight, and not altogether unhumorously. From being a sworn enemy, Innocent became a dear friend and enthusiastic champion, positively purring (as he thought) over the myriad English souls snatched from Hell and now safe in the bosom of Holy Church. Moreover, just as John was strengthened by the Pope's switch-over, so was Philip weakened. It was one thing to be able to proclaim the invasion of England as a

Church-consecrated crusade against a notorious sinner excommunicate and damned; quite another to invade a neighbour's realm now reconciled, indeed virtually belonging, to the Church itself; especially when he patently meant to do so with the help of England's discontented vassals who, with John reconciled, immediately became plain rebels. No feudal king could like that much. To encourage vassals—even one's enemy's vassals—to break the feudal oath was a weapon apt to cut both ways.

None the less, Philip had his invasion in the end, and the discontented lords had their rebellion; and, in a sense, their triumph. But that triumph, when it came, was not pro-French, and certainly not anti-English. History knows it as Magna Carta.

In all these disturbances William played a leading part, acting throughout as supporter, close adviser and often negotiator for his ungrateful king. The French War itself hung fire, because Philip, though he sent over strong contingents of knights to help the rebels, for long hesitated before sending his son. But the crisis with the barons themselves could not be delayed.

They were no ordinary rebels; though, at one time or another, many of them sided with a foreign usurper. They were also, even if by accident, patriots, with genuine grievances against a king who was, on any standard, a pretty bad one, and whose arbitrary use of kingly power they were bent on checking. In fact, on the English, though not on the French, issue they were mainly in the right. If there was ever to be internal peace again, the King must be curbed. And against them, almost alone, stood King John, who would certainly yield nothing but what was forced from him.

Between the parties stood the Negotiators, William, and Stephen Langton the Archbishop; men both wise and true-hearted. Of the two, Stephen had, not an easy, but the easier task. He had not served four Plantagenets for over 40 years with all the constancy of a loyal soul. But William had; and, at this crisis and at long last, he could not give his latest master his undivided allegiance. For he knew that the rebels were right—or, rather, *where* they were right. He knew that, at all costs, the King—his King—must not be allowed to get away with his pretensions and excesses. Yet, wise as he was—wise, I believe, rather than lucky—he found himself ideally placed as a go-between. The King had at last been driven to trust him, at any rate as he trusted no one else, and so in effect left him the final composition. John was shrewd enough—he was very shrewd when he wanted to be—to know that he must yield some-

thing, leaving it to William to decide what that something was to be.

The lasting importance of Magna Carta is not our business here. They tell us now that it was less important than we used to think: less so than the early charters of Henry III's reign, in whose production William's part was certainly a leading one. Nor to this day is it easy to assess exactly his share in Magna Carta. It seems fair, however, to split such credit as is due between William and Stephen. After that, it is up to anyone who thinks he knows the answer to attempt a closer division.

John, backed by William and a few loyal barons, was still at war with the rebels when, in October, 1216, he made his calamitous crossing of the Wash, lost most of his train, fell seriously ill and died at Newark on the 19th. In his dealings with this erratic, unhappy king, Marshal surely shows up at his best, his principles at their purest. Where he had loved, or at worst respected, his earlier masters, this one, personally, he disliked, even despised. Yet he continued (whenever allowed) to serve him as faithfully as he had served the others. Once more, the analogy between Marshal and the modern "Service Officer" is hard to avoid.

At that moment the fortunes of England were desperate. John's last months on earth had been bitter. In May, Prince Louis had at last arrived with his invasion fleet. He did not surprise John: things were more humiliating than that. Knowing both the time and place of his landfall, the King was there to oppose him. But, even in the act of drawing up his men his heart failed him. Shunned by so many of those who, in any feudal state, should have been standing firm behind him, he had had to fall back upon hired mercenary troops whom he could not trust. And here, for once, suspicion was justified—they were *not* to be trusted. Instead of attacking, therefore, he retreated without a fight; and Louis, mopping up the castles which still held out for John, reached London, already occupied by rebels, and went far beyond. By July, in fact, the whole of Eastern England was in his hands, save for a few strong points. The worst of it was that, as usual, success breeds success, and, almost daily, the dreary news filtered through to the wretched John of more and more defections to the enemy. Desperately he flitted from place to place, not without courage and military skill, but without much hope. Then came the final disaster.

William was not at Newark when John died. He was at Gloucester, facing attacks from at least three sides. Yet John knew now who

was his true servant; and, on his deathbed, threw himself unreservedly upon the goodness of his great subject:

> For the love of God, beg the Marshal to forgive me the wrongs I have done him. I repent them fully. He has always served me loyally and never opposed me, no matter what I did or said to him. For God's sake, my lords, pray him to pardon me! As I am surer of his loyalty than of any other man's, I pray you to entrust to him the care of my son who will never succeed in holding this land unless by his aid.[1]

The evidence is partial. The *History* is, primarily, a eulogium, and the wording does not somehow sound much like John. But the central fact is certain. On his deathbed John saw clearly, and perhaps for the first time, where England's salvation lay.

REGENT

The news reached Gloucester. Instantly William set forth. At Worcester he met two small parties. The one bore the corpse of his fourth Plantagenet: the other escorted the fifth, the last whom he was to serve. The young PRINCE HENRY, a fair-haired boy of nine, beautiful like all the Plantagenet children, had been secretly brought from Devizes, where he had lain, concealed and in grave danger of capture. The nameless poet records the meeting in full, and the child's touching speech:

> Sir, you are welcome. I give myself to God and to you.
> May God give you his grace that you may guard me well.

Very likely he said no such thing. Yet, once again, it must have been what he, and all true Englishmen, *meant*.

The story of how William fulfilled that trust is something much more than an episode in William's life. It is a chapter in the History of England: and it will not be retailed here, save insofar as it rounds off the old warrior's career.

First, the loyal earls and barons of England appointed him Regent. He was diffident: genuinely, not in mock modesty. He protested that this was not in his line at all; and that, in one sense, was true enough. All his life he had fought and served—he loved fighting, and serving came natural to him. Now, however, they were asking him to rule; almost to reign; to be, though without the trappings, *King*. Then again he felt that he was too old (he said 80,

[1] *History*, II. 15,130–15,190.

though in fact he can hardly have been more than 72, and perhaps only 70): too old anyway to make a success of so very new a job, let alone one of such daunting magnitude. But no one would excuse him. The only other possible candidate, Ranulf of Chester, the most powerful of all the earls, refused in effect either to serve as Regent or to serve under anyone but William. So it was done. William relented, accepted the post and, after some discussion, was called *Rector Regis et Regni Angliae*.

The period of his Regency was not very long when reckoned in years—from October 1216 to April 1219. It falls sharply into two parts. In the first William is primarily a soldier, the Commander-in-Chief directing a full-fledged and—to begin with—all-but-lost war. In the second he is the statesman, bringing back a divided, war-torn country to its former state, tackling a hundred vital problems all at once, and with such success that the old man's claim to the highest level of statesmanship is as pressing as the young man's had been to pre-eminence in knight-errantry.

As a general he showed himself to be a sound, though, perhaps inevitably, a somewhat cautious strategist; yet quite good enough to win the war. There was much widespread fighting, but at length victory came, principally as the result of two highlights, a land-battle and a sea-fight. The first was fought and won in May, 1217, in the streets and around the walls of old Lincoln, where the northern elements of the French and rebel forces, divided by a fatal error of Prince Louis, were totally destroyed. The crisis of the battle occurred just outside the city's western gate, where it chanced —but *was* it chance?—that the Regent of England and Commander-in-Chief of her armies was "reconnoitring" with a handful of knights. A body of his own men, having entered by another gate, came tumbling out, pursued by the enemy. This was altogether too much. "By the lance of God, my helm!" cried our septuagenarian. It was produced; but he could not wait to don it, so that his squire had to ride after him and pop it on in mid-career. Off he went, whooping, "Charge! Shame to him who delays!" And it is altogether in the spirit of the times that, step for step, shrieking, "*Ça! Dieu aide au Maréchal!*" thundered—the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Winchester. Marshal was in at the death too. The French commander made his last stand in the space in front of the cathedral. William led the charge against him and seized his horse's bridle, receiving for his pains three mighty blows on the helm, but holding on like a limpet while an English knight dispatched the Frenchman.

If the veteran had a headache that night, no chronicler has thought to mention the fact.

The other battle, perhaps even more decisive, was fought on the Narrow Seas off Sandwich in August, 1217. A formidable fleet under that sinister sea-rover Eustace the Monk was bringing essential reinforcements from King Philip to his son. William was there to meet him: so was Hubert de Burgh, the heroic holder throughout the war of the key castle of Dover. William, it is said, was hardly restrained from embarking in the Cinque Ports' ships; but, with everyone seeking to dissuade him, he gave way, partly as a generous gesture to de Burgh, who certainly deserved any further credit that was going, but mainly (one cannot help thinking) because a sea-fight would scarcely give scope to his favourite battle-companions—a strong horse and a stout lance. De Burgh's victory was complete. Eustace was taken and, already condemned as a pirate, was beheaded on the bulwark of his own ship. The lesser fry were unceremoniously bundled overboard: but 32 of the greater lords with their ransomable followers were brought home as prisoners. There was also much booty on board, including money; and the mariners had the time of their lives (we are told) "sharing out coins by the shovelful". After this, Louis quickly gave up, and was allowed to take himself off on most generous terms. Already many rebel barons were trickling back to the now winning side. There was practically no proscription: William knew well enough when to be merciful.

There followed the reconstruction of England. Half of it had, for well over a year, been under the heel of the French invader: the other half had, for several years, been widely fought over. All the machinery of government had run down—the whole administration of the state, the collection of taxes, the entire judicial system. All had to be reinstated. Then there was the chaos of feudal confiscations, many of them now rescinded: for William realised that all Englishmen had now to relearn the art of living together. Then there were new charters of liberties to issue. In the civil strife which followed it, Magna Carta had been largely a dead-letter. But William was well aware, as we have seen, that kingly abuses must be curbed, that they led inevitably to rebellion, and that many of the rebels' grievances had been real enough. Indeed, in most ways William's charters were an advance on the Great Charter; more workable, giving less scope in the future to the tyrannies of passionate or thoughtless kings: humaner too—for the first time, for instance,

no sentence of death or even maiming was to be passed on offenders against the Forest Laws.

It is hardly possible to know how much of this great reconstruction can be ascribed to William himself. Yet it must be ascribed to "the Regency": and William was the Regent. Certainly wherever his personal share is discoverable, it is always on the side of the right—and of the sensible. Probably, indeed, at this stage in his career the epithet "sensible" best summarises the man.

If, in his earlier days, William seems to anticipate the "Service Officer" of modern times, then, in this latest phase, he calls to mind even more forcibly one particular "Service Officer", more than 600 years his junior—Tennyson's

> Foremost captain of his time,
> Rich in saving common-sense,
> And, as the greatest only are,
> In his simplicity divine.

This is the Duke of Wellington. It is Henry III's Regent of England too.

Yet even commonsense is not *the* characteristic of William. The one which lifted him so high above his contemporaries was loyalty, not only to his Princes but also to his peers, and to all his people. Make no mistake, loyalty, in his age, was unfashionable; in the rough and tumble of political life not held to pay. Yet at the last *everyone* in the England of which he was Regent believed in him, because they judged him faithful. There was no sign whatever of an "anti-Regent" party: nor, had there been one, could he have done what he did. It is quite remarkable to see what the haughtiest earls, his equals (or higher in all but character) would take from him. Thus Ranulf of Chester, an unbending man if ever there was one, conspicuously lacking in all sheeplike qualities, accepted without a murmur a ruling of William's which lost him a rich manor. The reason, of course, was that, to him and everyone else, the Regent was the only man for the job: the only one whom they all trusted. Let it be said, for the last time, that all we know of the *man* comes from one source, an avowed panegyric: and, since his day, critics have found faults in him which are doubtless true bills. But, here, this is hardly to the point: which is that his own contemporaries failed altogether—indeed did not try—to fault him. After all, we reap in the main what we sow. Let the cynic say what he will: loyalty *does* breed loyalty.

Around the new year of 1218–19, when the machinery of government was repaired and once more running smoothly, the machine which was William showed unmistakable signs of running down. His labour had been incessant: he never let up. He had embarked upon his entirely new profession at an age when most professional men, even now, are giving up their old ones and looking round for rest. He lived at a time when all rulers were practically compelled to exhaust themselves, and when real old age seldom if ever came their way. It is certainly no accident that the first King (or Queen) of England to reach the age of 70 was George II.

And so, about noon on the 14th May, 1219, the Regent of England died: not at all on the pattern of his feverish knight-errant days, but gently, seemlily. Before he went, knowing very well what was coming to him, he made his quiet dispositions, both for England and for himself. In April he had summoned all the great ones to his bedside at Caversham near Reading, bidden them farewell, and formally resigned the Regency. Then, the world renounced, he craved, and received, permission to take the mantle of the Templars, that proud military order which approached most nearly of them all to the ideals of Chivalry at its purest. The Master of the Temple came to the bedside, spoke words of comfort, and gently threw round the old warrior the far-famed mantle of white linen, with the red eight-pointed cross on the left shoulder: and William was once more, as in heart he had always been—Knight-Errant.

IV "COMPLEAT SEAMAN"

So the Regent is gone, his way of life and most of what he stood for: Knight-Errantry, warring barons; the Norman, even the Plantagenet scene, the very Middle Ages themselves. The story abruptly skips over three centuries, to land us in the early modern world, in 16th-century Plymouth: and anyone who finds no logic whatever in this violent switch may console himself with the reflection that there is *none—in terms of History; or indeed in any terms save those of my selection-formula. The only connection that I know of between William Marshal and William Hawkins is the fact that, in 1771, the Regent's 18-great-granddaughter chanced to wed the Seaman's five-great-grandson—clearly an event in which neither William had either part or parcel. But there it is. The child of this union, being my great-grandfather, beckons me to climb up both his parent-cords, and so to both Williams.*

THREE HAWKINSES OF PLYMOUTH

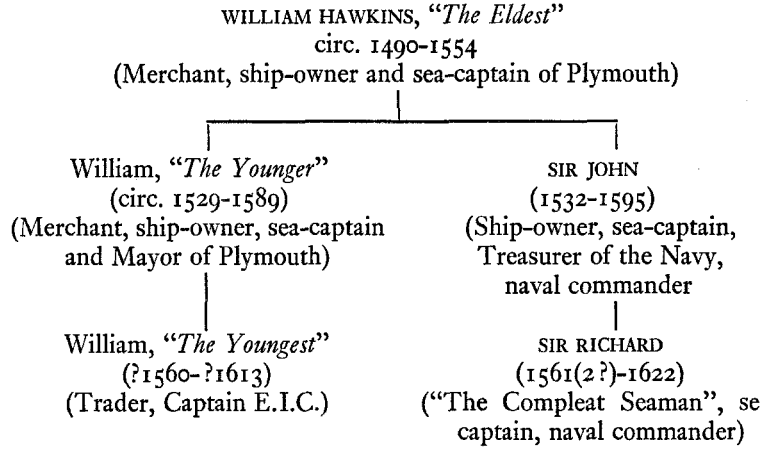
After my Record-Book has done with kings and princes, and, mostly, with the nobility too, the best-known name that adorns it is SIR JOHN HAWKINS, the great Elizabethan. Great he certainly was, and England owes him a tremendous debt, if only for one of the many things he did. He it was, much more than anyone else, who gave us the fleet which, in 1588, withstood the Invincible Armada. He did it, moreover, under very difficult circumstances, and so made many enemies among corrupt men whom he exposed: and the mud thrown by these unworthy people stuck, as such mud will, for a very long time.

He is now completely rehabilitated, and the credit for this achievement must go largely to Dr. J. A. Williamson and his two outstanding *Lives*;[1] which are indeed so admirable and so recent as to make any elaboration redundant: nothing more than dotting the "i's" and crossing the "t's". This does not mean, however, that he can be entirely neglected, because he is, and must remain, the link-figure between two somewhat lesser but still supremely interesting ancestors, his father and his son. Indeed it is essential to know

[1] *Sir John Hawkins* (O.U.P., 1927) and *Hawkins of Plymouth* (Black, 1949).

something of the whole family if we would understand any member of it.

First—at risk of insulting historians of the period—it seems advisable to record the Hawkinses in a simple family tree, if only because there were as many as five of them worthy of remembrance: and three of the five were christened William. It is not only in our own day that they have been confused. Sometimes their near-contemporaries were guilty too:



Of William the Younger little will be recorded here, and of William the Youngest little *can* be. During most of his life "the Younger" was a very big figure in his local Plymouth, her most prosperous merchant and Mayor for three separate spells, including Armada Year. He found time, too, to make voyages in some of his own numerous ships. But his fame never spread so widely as his brother John's, who was, for his last 25 years or more, a truly national figure.

The fame of the youngest William has faded even more; and that though eminent authorities have claimed for him a feat of wider fame—that, as captain of the East Indiaman *Hector*, he reached the court of the Great Mogul, won his confidence, and prevailed upon him to grant to the John Company its first factory. This makes a man called William Hawkins one of the father-founders of British India. But it is by no means certain that the Mogul's friend was the same person as William the Younger's son Otherwise, "the Youngest's" career is extremely shadowy.

These two Williams are collaterals and will concern us no more, leaving only WILLIAM THE ELDEST, SIR JOHN and SIR RICHARD, father, son and grandson, whose life-span approximates closely enough to the Tudor period: and they will be considered first together, as a Tudor family, highly typical of one very significant side of their period.

All through this 16th century, Money was beginning to talk more and more in England, as it has continued to do ever since. It was an age when, in a social sense, a family might "rise"; through deeds, yes, but through the possession of money too. The day of the great "commercial" families—the "Purple of Commerce"—was dawning: and it was to be a long day.

The Hawkins family provides a fine illustration of the process: but, for a long time, their descendants seem to have missed the true historic value of the illustration. About a century ago, for instance, Charles Kingsley, that popular and lovable novelist (if indifferent historian) described, in *Westward Ho!*, the scene on Plymouth Hoe on the eve of the Armada's arrival. His little pen-pictures make pleasant reading, because he has the novelist's art of delineation in a few lines. Here is one such:

> A burly grizzled elder, in greasy sea-stained garments contrasting oddly with the huge gold chain about his neck, waddles up, as if he had been born and had lived ever since in a gale of wind at sea. The upper half of his sharp, dogged visage seems of brick-red leather, the lower of badger's fur; and he claps Drake on the back and, with a broad Devon twang, shouts, "Be you a-coming to drink your wine, Francis Drake, or be you not?"

Certainly a man stands out. The only pity is that it is essentially the wrong man. For this purports to be John; and John was patently not at all like this. Had it been meant for William the Eldest it might have been nearer the truth (if still exaggerated) because it was William, not John, who founded the family fortunes; who brought the money into the family, being himself what we used to call a "self-made man".

John, however, was of the second generation of wealth, of prosperity, and beyond all doubt of *savoir faire* too, born of consorting with the great and the gentle. The age, for all its gradual emancipation from the toils of "class", was still class-conscious to a degree which would seem incredible to the mid-20th century. So, though very, very far removed from the tarry-breeked individual

of Kingsley's imagination, John was not even yet accepted as a Gentleman, as Howard of Effingham was accepted, or even Grenville and Raleigh. But this, probably, was more a matter of social convention than of ungentle "broadness" in the outer man. Take that "greasy sea-stained garment". It will not do. When John Hawkins went to sea, we learn, he was known to take 50 changes of raiment with him; to dine in state in his own cabin off silver, and even gold, plate, and to the accompaniment of his own choice orchestra. Or take that broad Devon "twang". Well, we must own, sadly, that we shall never hear any Tudor Hawkins talking "in the flesh"; and it would be rash to assert that no Devonshire dialect ever slipped from John's lips, especially when he was excited. It probably did; for "local" pronunciations were still due to hold their own for some centuries, even up to the coming of the B.B.C. and the so-called Oxford accent. Even the much more cultured Raleigh is said to have retained throughout something of the Devon "burr", though not the characteristics of Devon grammar, syntax and phrasing. But this cannot allow us to suppose that John Hawkins, less gentle and less "literary" than Raleigh though he was, could have moved for something like 20 years in polite—even in court-circles, and still retained such broadness: even if he ever had it. No: John Hawkins certainly dressed, wrote and (save perhaps for mere accent) spoke like an Elizabethan gentleman, even if many of the gentry were not prepared to admit him to perfect and equal intimacy.

It follows from this that, if the Hawkins family is running true to form, William will be a good deal less sophisticated than John; less readily accepted in polite circles: and that Richard will be the opposite—more acceptable, more sophisticated. And so, obviously, it is. William is the provincial burgess who has made good; a great man in his own town, but scarcely even on visiting terms with "the County". John, a "figure" in any company, can hold his own anywhere, even in the outward trappings of Gentility. But Richard—of the third generation—is clearly much more the Man about Town —London Town too: yes, and "about court". He is accepted as Gentle, even in those still-fastidious times, and by that still class-conscious caste, the Nobility and Gentry. For Sir Richard was unquestionably a well-educated, cultured person, compared even with his father. A single illustration will help to show how the wind was blowing. When, on his travels, Richard had cause to communicate with the Spaniards, knowing no Spanish he did his

communicating in Latin. It is very doubtful whether John could have done this, and virtually certain that William could not.

We are now ready to look a little more closely at the grandfather; and then, a great deal more closely at the grandson.

WILLIAM THE ELDEST

The Plymouth of the 1490's, where Old William first saw the light, would seem to our eyes a very insignificant place indeed; a little township rising steeply from a wharf or two on Sutton Pool to the church and castle above. The ships which used the wharves would seem insignificant too; and that not only to us but even to England's naval worthies who gathered on the Hoe on that famous summer day less than a century later. For meanwhile a great revolution had happened. England's seamen were no longer mere coast-crawlers confined at furthest to the Narrow Seas or the Bordeaux run. In no half-hearted way they had taken to the sea; even to the ocean; and the little township on Sutton Pool had been in the forefront of that revolution. Moreover, leading Plymouth on her revolutionary destiny, it is hard to doubt it, was old Mr. William Hawkins.

It is best to admit at once that, as a person, he remains obstinately in the shadows. Was he tall or short, thickset or thin, dark or fair? Who shall say? All we can do is to let his actions speak for him—the few of them we can still come by. Indeed, apart from incidental references in dry official records and other contemporary writings, the only real close up we have of him comes from that most wonderful of English travel books, Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*. Yet even to Hakluyt, flourishing towards the end of the 16th century, he is already so shadowy that this most indefatigable of collectors can only find the wherewithal to fill a couple of pages with his doings.[1] This passage is here quoted in full, as the only authentic account in any detail of William the Eldest in action. It concerns the years 1530 and 1532.

> Olde M. William Haukins of Plimmouth, a man for his wisdome, valure, experience, and skill in sea causes much esteemed, and beloved of K. Henry the 8, and being one of the principall Sea-captaines in the West parts of England in his time, not contented with the short voyages commonly then made onely to the knowne coasts of Europe, armed out a tall and goodly shippe of his owne of the burthen of 250 tunnes, called the *Paul of Plimmouth*, wherewith he made three long and

[1] *Principal Navigations* (Everyman's edition), vol. VIII, p. 13.

famous voyages unto the coast of Brasil, a thing in those dayes very rare, especially to our Nation. In the course of which voyages he touched at the river of Sestos upon the coast of Guinea, where hee traffiqued with the Negros, and tooke of them Elephants teeth, and other commodities which that place yeeldeth: and so arriving on the coast of Brasil, he used there such discretion, and behaved himself so wisely with those savage people, that he grew into great familiarity and friendship with them. Insomuch that in his second voyage, one of the savage kings of the countrey of Brasil was contented to take ship with him, and to be transported hither into England: whereunto M. Haukins agreed, leaving behinde in the Countery as a pledge for his safetie and returne againe, one Martin Cockeram of Plimmouth. This Brasilian king being arrived, was brought up to London and presented to K. Henry the 8, lying as then at White-hall: at the sight of whom the King and all the Nobilitie did not a litle marvaile, and not without cause: for in his cheekes were holes made according to their savage maner, and therein small bones were planted, standing an inch out from the said holes, which in his owne countrey was reputed for a great braverie. He had also another hole in his nether lip, wherein was set a precious stone about the bignes of a pease: All his apparel, behaviour, and gesture, were very strange to the beholders.

Having remained here the space almost of a whole year, and the king with his sight fully satisfied, M. Haukins according to his promise and appointment, purposed to convey him again into his countrey: but it fell out in the way, that by change of aire and alteration of diet, the said Savage king died at sea, which was feared would turn to the losse of the life of Martin Cockeram his pledge. Neverthelesse, the Savages being fully perswaded of the honest dealing of our men with their prince, restored againe the said pledge, without any harme to him, or any man of the company: which pledge of theirs they brought home againe into England, with their ship fraighted, and furnished with the commodities of the countrey. Which Martin Cockeram, by the witness of Sir John Hawkins, being an officer in the towne of Plimmouth, was living within these few years.[1]

From this, surely, we learn a great deal. Here, first, is the Pioneer; the man who forsakes the old well-beaten track and starts something new. He was not, of course, the very first Englishman to make trans-atlantic voyages: but he may well have been the first to do so with a single eye upon trade; and, even more probably, the first Devonian in the field. Next, it would seem that he was the inventor of that "triangular run", which became with those who

[1] Kingsley, it will be recalled, has his pen-portrait of Cockeram too—a much more convincing picture of an immemorially ancient man; senile, with nothing left but memories and a craving for sugar.

followed him, and especially with his own son John, the standard way to the New World and back. Course was shaped first for the West African coast, partly because the wind made it a good natural route to the Americas, partly in order to pick up a cargo suitable for the next leg of the triangle. (His principal trading commodity, we notice, was ivory: and here, we may feel, he was somewhat ahead of his more famous son, who also dealt in ivory; but black ivory—slaves. Though we should not blame John unduly for doing what all his contemporaries did, as a matter of course and without a thought for the ethics of it, we may still feel that *white* ivory was, by a very great deal, the cleaner and nicer commodity.) Thence he ran westward on the second leg, using the steady easterly Trades and so reaching South America, where he traded his African goods for the local ones. Then by returning considerably further north, he was able to avail himself of the predominant sou-westerlies of the North Atlantic. Hereby he showed real flair for navigation. It must be added, however, that the novelty of his journey lay in his first visiting Africa. The using of a more northerly course for the return to Europe dates right back to Columbus' first voyage.

Next comes Hakluyt's most striking contribution to our knowledge of Old William. Where the great geographer's information came from he does not say—perhaps Sir John, or even Cockeram himself. But it seems clear enough that the main thing he wishes to put across about his subject is that William was an honest man who believed in straight dealing with everybody: not only with his own compatriots but even with those benighted heathen from the other side of the world. Here is a quality so unusual in his contemporaries as to place him far ahead, not only of them but also of all his successors for many a year to come. We have only to consider how the Spaniards and the Portuguese treated *their* natives; or even, once the slave-ramp had begun, how the English treated theirs. Indeed it is almost fair to say that, to all white men indifferently, the native was such a "savage" as not really to be human at all, or, at best, of a different, and lower, order of humanity: so much so, in fact, that the European, of whatever race, though he might be, and often was, honest enough in his dealings with his own colour and kind, felt no obligation to extend his honesty to include the savage. And yet here is William the Eldest, the first (or almost the first) to trade with savages, treating them exactly as though they were men: not using his superior civilisation to get the better of them: not cheating them as a matter of course, but, when he

says he will do a thing, cheerfully doing it, even when it is not particularly to his advantage. It is true that, by such fair-dealing, he obviously prospered as a "tradesman": because the savages themselves trusted him, loved him, and acted fairly by him. But this in no way alters the fact that so amiable a quality was altogether exceptional in his day—and, it must be added with regret, it has never become anything like so universal as it should have become.

Yet—at the risk of being accused of gross insularity—may I dare to claim that this most estimable quality has, since William's day, been found more often—when found—among the Anglo-Saxon peoples than anywhere else? It is perhaps a bold, old-fashioned claim to make. But I make it: and I believe it. We are richer than most in our Livingstones, our Nicholsons and our Lawrences, and many others of their breed; of any one of whom, as of old William, Hakluyt might have written, "He used there"—in whatever land he found himself—"such discretion, and behaved himself so wisely with those people that he grew into great familiarity and friendship with them."

In passing, we should observe that his son John inherited something of this great virtue; only, like almost all his contemporaries, he was too prone to confine it to men of his own colour. He was, says Maynarde, a writer not over-inclined to judge others kindly, "merciful and apt to forgive, and faithful to his word". Here the father was much more to be admired than the son, in that—all things considered surprisingly—he extended his humanity to all races.

This said, however, we should be imprudent to paint the old Plymouth burgess too white. Only in this one respect does any comparison lie between him and Livingstone or the Lawrences. In all other ways he remained, no doubt, an infinitely rougher diamond. The impersonal scraps of evidence derived from local and national records seem to reveal a man of rather litigious disposition, out for his "rights". His name crops up several times as a party in lawsuits; and some of the causes are not by any means idyllic. In one, for instance, he is accused with two others, of beating up a fellow-townsman named John Jurdon, with what justification, or result, who shall say? Or again, he had more than one legal row with a certain Peter Grisling who was a "searcher" (that is, roughly speaking, a customs officer): and, though the facts are never allowed to come right out into the open, perhaps we may hazard a guess as to *one* cause of the Hawkins-Grisling feud. But another,

a later and more long-lasting bone of contention between them, might be called "local "politics; first, to decide which of them should be "boss" in Plymouth, and later, which should be paramount, Plymouth or Saltash. Very lively rows they evidently were, with not only lawsuits but also full-bodied abuse, not to mention blows. They were tough lads, these Plymothians, and they liked their leaders tough. It is clear that Old William came out top in the end: but this is only further evidence of his essential toughness.

Later still, and quite inevitably, he became more and more caught up in the business of Channel privateering which, from the time of the French Wars onwards, grew to be more or less endemic. Though, rather more often than not, clad in legal dress, the whole institution lent itself all too readily to lawlessness, and no doubt Hawkins overstepped the mark several times, being heavily fined once, and once actually inside a prison, though he soon bought his way out. Yet, if William the Eldest was no saint, he was certainly no sinner. Such little matters as those just described would emphatically not, in Henry's later days, cast any real slur upon the character of a respectable merchant; if only because sea-trade and privateering had, for so long and in so many ways, been identical twins, especially towards the western end of the Channel. Anyway Hawkins never seriously lost face with the Government. He was on good terms, for instance, with Thomas Cromwell so long as that unfortunate man lasted; and, when he fell, William did not fall with him. Evidently the King knew all about him and, on the whole, liked what he knew. Once, even, Hawkins made a spirited attempt to borrow £2,000 from his Sovereign: but that did not come off.

In fine, despite the paucity of evidence, Old William seems to emerge as a shrewd business man, with a good and successful eye to the main chance. Living in a day when business morality was doubtless a very elastic article, he is never, *in* that elastic set-up, accused of over-sharpness (except of course by Grisling, but that hardly counts): no sinner, but no saint either, save perhaps in that unlooked for enlightenment described above: rather, a fine example of a good type, to whom in her formative days England owed so large a debt: more, a very integral part in the process of forming. For Old William and his like were the pioneers who taught the Elizabeth seamen their trade.

Now we leave William the Eldest and, skipping but one generation, come to his grandson Richard. The change of atmosphere is astonishing. We are surely in a new world altogether.

Scene, a modern Christmas fireside. The family is tackling the general knowledge quiz in its favourite newspaper. It has reached the "historical" section, where Question I is of the "fill-in-the-blanks" type.

A. Land-battle fought in 1066 at . . . between the English under . . . and the Normans under . . . .

Too easy for everyone, even little Tommy, aged 10.

B. Sea-fight fought in 1594 off . . . between a strong Spanish fleet and a single English ship called the . . ., commanded by Richard . . . . ?

Too easy again? Scratch go the pencils, even little Tommy's. Down go the answers: not a blank left in the whole party—"The Azores; the *Revenge*; Grenville."

Marks awarded—NIL!

Be honest, you who read this. Did you leave the spaces unfilled? No! Were those the answers you gave? I dare swear that something like 90 per cent of you must answer, "Yes!". Moreover, but for one single figure—the "4" in the date—you would have been right. But, as it is, the answers are—"Off the South American Pacific coast; the *Daintie*; Hawkins."

Why is it that almost every Briton has remembered one Richard and forgotten the other, seeing that the stories of their respective fights are in so many ways all but identical? There are two distinct answers.

First, almost all the "heroic" trumps are in Grenville's hand. He fights most gloriously against impossible odds, loses—and dies: but not before kindly Fate has given him the inestimable opportunity of rising upon the enemy's deck (whither he has been carried a prisoner) and delivering his immortal "last words". But see how scurvy (relatively) is Fate to poor Richard Hawkins. He fights against odds just as gallantly as Grenville (and incidentally for four times as long); loses and, like Grenville, is borne half-dead to his enemy's flagship. But, since he fails to die—only just—he is denied the vast psychological asset of any "last words" at all.

Logically, of course, this should make no difference whatever; for both Richards were so sorely hurt that it was not in the power of either to influence events. Yet it *did* make all the difference because, instead, the younger Richard recovered, to endure some eight years of cruel (but essentially inglorious) captivity: a sad anticlimax, a fatally cold douche to all hero-worship.

The second reason why Hawkins never had his due is not far to seek: and it explains, not so much why he has been forgotten as why Grenville has been remembered. It so happened that two writers of real genius have immortalised the *Revenge* story, while our Richard never found a chronicler in the least comparable with either. It is not that he was neglected, still less disgraced, in his own day. On the contrary, he was praised by his generation and knighted by his sovereign when at length he returned. But meanwhile the war in which both actions occurred had ground to an inglorious halt, and, even then, another score of years was to elapse before anyone but himself and a few of his fellow-survivors knew any details of what had happened. Not so, however, with Grenville. Sir Walter Raleigh's superb account of the Azores fight—one of the gems of Elizabethan prose—appeared in the very year of it, and the elder Richard's fame was established for all time, even without the support it received from Sir Robert Markham's poem of 1595, and then Jan Huygen van Lindschoten's narrative of 1598.

But of course this was not all. Little Tommy did not get his information from "Elizabethan Literature", however good it might be. He had it from *The Revenge: a Ballad of the Fleet*, written nearly three centuries later by Lord Tennyson, dubbed (rightly or wrongly, who shall say?) the greatest sea-ballad in our language, and long since passed (rightly I think) into "Poetry for use in Schools". Let nothing in these pages be construed into disparagement of the older Sir Richard. He deserved his immortality. My only point is that the younger Sir Richard deserved some immortality too, and of exactly the same brand. But he did not get it, because he found no Raleigh, let alone a Tennyson.

This is not to say that no detailed account of our Richard's action ever appeared. It did; but only in 1622, and even then from the pen of the hero himself: who, when all is said, is about the worst chronicler of his own exploits that any hero can have the misfortune to choose. For if he is of the kind intent upon doing himself and his exploit full justice, he runs the risk of being accused

of bragging. But if (like Hawkins) he is modest, he will hardly do *himself* justice. Apart from this, too, no one will pretend that Hawkins, though no mean writer, is in the same flight with either Tennyson or Raleigh.

"The Observations Of Sir Richard Hawkins, Knight"

None the less, this book—and posthumous at that—is a great one: great enough anyway never to have been lost sight of.[1] It is a gold-mine both to students of Elizabethan history (especially naval history) and to anyone who aspires to write about the author. Without it, indeed, no biographer could very well start, because he would know, if possible, even less about Richard than we know about his grandfather: and, even with it, a volume devoted solely to his life would be a thin thing—which perhaps accounts for the fact that no one has attempted one. True, for the single year covered in the book, we know a very great deal about the man: but, of all other years, precious little, because Richard himself was not engaged upon an autobiography, and he had far too well-organised a mind to trail off into irrelevancies. Firmly he called his work *The Observations of Sir Richard Hawkins, Knight, in his Voyage into the Southern Sea, Anno Domini 1593*: and he stuck to it, though, fortunately, his "observations" often range widely through Time as well as through Space.

Later in these pages Richard's biography (in the accepted sense of that word) will be attempted. But, first, it chimes in better with my purpose to use his work in an attempt to discover the Man: and, if I have any success here, I shall also be nearer to answering another vital question—Why did his contemporaries, with one voice, acclaim him "*the Compleat Seaman*"?

The title, precise and accurate, is entirely characteristic of its author's precise and accurate mind. Its basis is a detailed account of the fatal voyage. But the word is "observation", not "narrative": and, throughout, the writer uses that word both in its more restricted sense of "seeing and recording", and in its wider one of "considering and commenting upon". There is therefore far more

[1] Most, but not all of it was reprinted by Samuel Purchas in *His Pilgrimes* (1625). It was the first volume selected for reprint by the newly founded Hakluyt Society (1848), and in 1878 it appeared again, edited by C. E. Markham, as part of his *The Hawkins Voyages* (again Hakluyt Society).

here than a record of things seen or done. He usually starts with these; but thereafter his observations radiate out in every conceivable direction until they seem to embrace pretty nearly everything which concerns the sea, its ways, its customs; the ships which sail upon it with all their appurtenances; and how, from all his wide experience, he concludes that seamen (and especially sea-commanders) should conduct themselves thereon. There is no bravado about it, no sign of self-praise or even self-assurance: no particular stress on what "I" do. It seems to be—was taken then to be, and has ever since been taken to be—a very modest, dispassionate statement of the point reached by his day in the art and craft of the sea: a sort of "last word", universally agreed.

To anyone wanting to understand the man himself, too, it is uniquely valuable. Both substance and method seem to reveal a being essentially straight, in deed, in mind, in soul; talented too, but with talents which somehow fall just short of genius: a careful, fairminded, humane person, remarkably knowledgeable, both of the contemporary world around him and of his own professional corner of it, withal a really well-educated man who has a trained mind and can use it—though whence the education came is not so clear, since he seems to have taken to the sea at a very tender age.

There is no striking similarity between the three generations. Both the older men, one feels, were cast in a distinctly more angular mould. Not that they were inordinately hard men (certainly not John), nor could Richard possibly be regarded as soft. But there is about him a sort of gentleness, sensitivity—almost spirituality—largely lacking in John and, so far as we can judge, entirely lacking in William.

Yet they retain certain traits in common. One is a very marked local patriotism, to be expected in William who always lived in Plymouth, and even in John who came to manhood there; but more unlooked-for in Richard who, though almost certainly born there, must have left the West Country for Town when a mere child. Yet his profound and lasting love of "home" is very evident. Watch his departure from Plymouth bound on his unfortunate voyage, all couched in that near-poetical prose which is such a feature of his work, as it is of so much Elizabethan prose:

> . . . all put in order, I looft[1] near the shore, to give my farewell to all the inhabitants of the towne, whereof the most part were gathered together upon the How, to show their gratefull correspondency to the

[1] Plied to windward.

> love and zeale which I, my father and predecessors have ever borne to that place, as to our naturall and mother towne: And first with my noyse of trumpets, after with my waytes and then with my other musicke, and lastly with the artillery of my shippes I made the best signification I could of a kinde farewell. This they answered with the waytes of the towne and the ordnance on the shore; and with shouting of voyces, which with the fayre evening and the silence of the night, were heard a great distance off.

There is something very pleasing, oddly civilised, in all this, and especially in this possession of no less than three sorts of "musicke". Yet it was quite normal for the Elizabethan commander, off on a long voyage into seas and perils unknown, to provide himself with what looks at first sight like mere luxuries: which, however, cost him but little, because his "musicke" consisted solely of his ordinary crew, who "made it" when not engaged upon their routine chores.

Another very marked trait which Richard certainly shared with his father was a religious strain of faintly puritan, yet never aggressive, texture. To the 20th century this very real streak of piety may appear stranger in John than in his son. We may find it hard to associate true Christian belief with our first slave-trader. Yet anyone who imagines that piety and "the trade" could not consort together, quite comfortably under one Elizabethan doublet, is badly out. They could, and they did. Indeed, one oft-quoted remark of the Great Queen herself seems to show that, of the two, it was she who had less real piety than John. Once, in reporting the failure to secure valuable prizes, he fell back upon the Scriptures as was his wont. "Paul doth plant," he wrote, "Apollos doth water, but God giveth the increase." Her tart comment was "God's death! This fool went out a soldier and is come back a divine!".

But John was no hypocrite: the whole tenor of his life proves it. Such turns of phrase were the norm just then among the more protestant of her subjects: but they were none the less genuine. A man like Hawkins did believe, profoundly, that the Almighty was wholly on the side, not so much of himself as of his Faith, his Country, his Queen and her cause—and it may be remarked in passing that the corresponding Spaniard held exactly the same view about himself and *his* cause.

Richard had this characteristic too; and its spirit informs the whole of the *Observations*. Only, as being a more sophisticated person than his father, his claims as recipient of Divine Providence are rather less bald; and therefore seem rather more genuine, though

it is doubtful whether they really were. At any rate, in the sample just cited, Sir John lays himself open to fine fun at the hands of the cynic, who will say that he was excusing his failure by inferring that it was in some sort the Almighty's fault: that, in fact God must take some share of any blame that is going! But Richard praises God, and freely acknowledges his debt to him, when that debt is not nearly so obvious: in fact, sometimes, so indirect as to be virtually non-existent. Two examples, out of many, will show the difference.

While the *Daintie* was still groping in the treacherous Straits of Magellan, the Almighty—he was certain of it—intervened again and again in the directest possible manner, and, of course, effectively. Once (for example) they were caught by a sudden furious whirlwind in a grim fiord-like channel, where

> necessitie, not being subject to any law, forced us to put ourselves into the hands of Him that was able to deliver us. We cut our cable and sayle all in one instant; and God, to show His power and gratious bountie towardes us, was pleased that our shippe cast the contrary way towards the shore, seeming that He with his own hand did wend her about; for in lesse than her length shee flatted,[1] and in all the voyage but at that instant she flatted with difficultie, for that she was long, the worst propertie shee had. On either side we might see the rockes under us, and were not halfe a shippes length from the shore; and if she had once touched, it had been impossible to have escaped. Magnified ever be our Lord God which delivered Ionas out of the whales belly; and His apostle Peter from being overwhelmed in the waves; and us from so certaine perishing.

In our second example we may fairly say that God has not directly helped Richard at all: not bodily, anyway. He has not put him in the way of worldly wealth, nor of thrashing the Spaniard, nor even of preserving him from drowning. He has merely shown him—a humble believer—what a glorious Being He is. Richard, with interest amounting to awe, has been telling of the birds on Penguin Island in the Straits and their wonderful economy; how they behave, nest and breed. Quite simply he ends:

> all which are motions of prayse, and magnify the universall Creator who so woundrouly manifesteth his wisdom, bounty and providence in all His creatures; especially for his particular love to ungrateful mankind, for whose contemplation and service He has made them all.

[1] Came round on her heel.

In this there is precious little of self-interest. Here surely is true and unsolicited praise. Here is every sign of a simple faith.

Such outbursts spring spontaneously from the heart. More often, however, what he writes comes from the head, and a very level head too. For Richard is thoughtful and practical. Moreover he designs to make his book interesting as well as instructive—one might almost say he "has his eye on the sales". So sometimes he tries consciously to attract the then extensive travel-book public. Of this kind is his disquisition on pearls and pearl-fishing; on the various wines they swallow (with a note on the deleterious "new" practice of drinking the fiery fortified products of Spain instead of purer French ones); the strange customs of the natives they meet; the islands, straits and coastlines they explore; the fruits they find and eat—dates, bananas, coconuts, prick-pears (artichokes); the animals they see—chinchillas, parrots, "cyvett-catts" and "munk-eyes"; the various fish they watch—the dolphin, bonito, shark, flying fish, swordfish and thresher; whales, and the breathtaking Indian methods of slaying them; seals and "sea-wolves"; and the albatross, one of which (shades of Coleridge!) they deliberately catch on hook and line. Then there is the new island they discover, which Hawkins christens "Hawkins Maiden Land"—most likely the Falklands, which, unknown to him, however, John Davis had found in the preceding year. Then there is gold, that never-staling topic: how the natives recover it by mining and washing:

> In Coquimbo it rayneth seldome, but every showre is a showre of gold to them . . .

This, however, is no traveller's tale: he instantly explains it away:

> . . . for with the violence of the water falling from the mountains it bringeth from them the gold.

In fact, on "marvels" as such he is not nearly so strong as are most of his contemporaries. But he does fall occasionally, as in his description of a certain tree in Fierro which, all by itself, supplies the whole island with water. Usually, however, he is above such superstitions; too sensible to believe all he hears and too honest simply to pander to his public.

Yet there was one superstition (for so, I suppose, it must be called) to which, not surprisingly, he did subscribe—the magic residing in ships' names. And no wonder, seeing that such a view is as old as the oldest ship and, in only very modified form, as new as the

newest. To all regular ship-users, they were, are, and doubtless always will be living creatures—always female and individually "lucky" or "unlucky". Richard clearly believes this, but evidently thinks that man may control the situation. He can at least give his ship a good wholesome name.

When he launched the *Daintie*, his stepmother, Sir John's second wife, asked to have the naming of her. Richard agreed, and she called her the *Repentance*, giving no reason why she chose "that uncouthe name". He acquiesced, but was not happy. His experience taught him—or so he thought— that ship names foretell the shape of things to come. As ever he cites examples. Look, he says, at the *Revenge*: a really ungodly name. Does not Holy Writ itself reserve to the Almighty alone the right to deal in Vengeance? And in plain fact was not the *Revenge*, all through her life, "ever the unfortunatest shippe"? In five short years, between 1586 and 1591, she had no less than ten near-fatal mishaps (listed); and of course, *in* 1591, a completely fatal one. Then there was the *Thunderbolt of London*, a sinister name but uncannily apt, seeing that she was struck by one off the Barbary Coast, was the victim of an unexplained explosion in Dartmouth harbour, and finally burnt to cinders in the river of Bordeaux. Or the *Jesus*, whose sacred name is too holy to be conferred on such a man-made thing as a ship. And everybody knows of course, what befel her ("with my Father on board") at San Juan de Uloa.

But the *Repentance*! What an ill-omen! Somehow it fastens upon a ship a pre-acceptance of guilt—one only repents after having done wrong. Fortunately, however, Richard evaded the unpleasantness of having to break his promise to his stepmother. Providence intervened. The Queen's Majesty herself, dropping down the river to her palace at Greenwich, was attracted by the ship's beautiful lines as she lay a-fitting off Deptford. She enquired her name, was full of scorn at the ineptitude of it, and herself christened her *Daintie* then and there. Naturally that was that. No one thought to disobey Her Highness in a matter like this: not even Stepmother.

Nowadays, no doubt, the perversity of calling a lovely ship *Repentance* would pass unnoticed: miraculous trees are long out of fashion: our eyes goggle no more at munkeyes, sea-wolves and prick-pears. Yet, so long as they did, the *Observations* was a first-rate travel book.

But it is much more than this. It is also a compendium, a sort of

encyclopaedia-in-little, of all sea-knowledge: not his, but everybody's. We soon find that he has developed a technique which, though varied in detail, is invariable. First he allows the subject at issue to emerge from his personal narrative. Then he discusses it as a personal problem: then, becoming historical again, he cites instances of it as they have arisen elsewhere, showing how other eminent sea-folk have tackled them. Finally he summarises the acknowledged fact, the "latest" views. And it is entirely characteristic of him that his final verdict by no means always coincides with what *he* did under like circumstances. The solid candour of the writer, from which nothing will move him, is fascinating, and entirely revealing of the man. Here are three examples out of many, stating certain moral problems of officers, mostly senior ones. The first is general, applying equally to his time and ours. The second applies more particularly to his, the third perhaps mainly to ours. Yet he covers all three with equal care and with equal effect.

(1) *Of fleet-discipline, experience and obedience to orders*

(a) *The case stated.* I sailed down-Channel with a party of Hollanders. Their fleet-discipline was superb. This the English taught them; but, to our shame, we often nowadays neglect to observe it ourselves.

(b) *Arising therefrom.* The reason is because we often appoint as Commander one who is ignorant of the values of obedience and experience.

(c) *Historical.* The right spirit. That fine man, Sir H. Palmer, appointed to a lucrative command off Spain, refused it simply because he lacked experience, having always served hitherto in the Narrow Seas.

The wrong spirit. The loss of the Burgundy fleet in 1592 was solely due to the indiscipline of its Vice-Admiral who, ordered to bring up the rear, chose to sail with the van. Again, in "my Father's" fleet off Spain in 1590, the Vice-Admiral, contrary to orders, stretched ahead during the night, and cost us at least eight prizes. (I saw it myself.)

(d) *Widening the discussion.* There are certain disciplinary obligations which every Commander *must* obey. One is his obligation not to desert those of his company who are ill ashore. This, then, being a first or basic duty, Grenville at Flores was perfectly correct in picking up his sick and accepting all subsequent risks. And he

would still have been correct even if he had not put up a fight so glorious to Englishmen.[1]

Further, the conduct, on the same occasion, of Captain Vavasour of the *Foresight* is equally worthy of commendation; with, however, a rather subtle reservation. The normal duty of an English captain is, under all possible circumstances, to support his fellows to the best of his ability. This Vavasour did, by casting about upon the whole Spanish fleet in order to give what support he could to Grenville: even though the general order from the Admiral (Lord Thomas Howard) was not to engage.

(e) *Conclusion*—(very wise, and surely surprisingly modern);

> Some do say, and I consent with them, that the best valour is to obey, and to follow the head [i.e. the Admiral's order] seeme that good or bad which is commanded. For God telleth us that obedience is better than sacrifice. Yet, on some occasions . . . it is great discretion and obligation judiciously to take hold of the occasion.

It would be far-fetched to suppose that, off Cape St. Vincent in 1797, Commodore Nelson was influenced by old Sir Richard's *Observations*. Yet there, in leaving the line of battle without his admiral's express orders, he surely gave the classic confirmation of the soundness of Richard's diagnosis—"*It is great discretion and obligation judiciously to take hold of the occasion*". Indeed it can hardly be denied that this thoughtful Elizabethan has, all by himself, probed pretty well to the heart of one of the hardest problems which confronted commanders—and which confront them still.

(2) *When to be obstinate*

(Applicable primarily to Hawkins' day where, owing to the absence of wireless and the general slowness of communication, the commander was, for very long periods, his own master, and arbiter of life and death to all his people.)

(a) *The case stated.* It is unwise in a commander, even if it be not quite impossible, for him *always* to persist in what he deems the correct course in face of the views of his subordinates, collectively differing from him. For, if he does so, he may well lose the most important thing of all, their confidence in him.

[1] Here, I feel, Hawkins is in some sort begging the question. He commends Grenville for picking up his invalids—an action for which no one has seriously blamed him. But he does not mention—what was almost certainly the fact—that Grenville could, had he liked, have both retrieved his men *and* avoided action.

(b) *Illustration.* There were at least three occasions during the voyage of the *Daintie* when this situation arose.

i. After failing several times to get through the Straits of Magellan, each failure accompanied by ever-increasing discomfort, danger and fear of the future, by far the greater part of the Company wished, vociferously, to turn back. Not to give up the expedition—oh no! Merely *reculer pour mieux sauter.* Now Richard's experience and knowledge of history (instances cited) told him that, in these circumstances, to turn back, even for a day, was tantamount to sailing home (if possible). He therefore refused categorically, urging his case as persuasively as he could. He prevailed. They accepted his leadership, not exactly willingly but, being at heart a very good crew, not too unwillingly.

ii. After this, they came very near success again and again, at one moment all but emerging into the Pacific. But—heartbreakingly—again and again they were forced back, tossed to and fro by winds and currents which seemed plainly diabolic. At length they came to anchor in comparative calm, with the gale howling round and over them. Here they remained for a while, shaken, confused. But then, quite suddenly, an inspiration amounting almost to certainty came to Richard—he attributes it, of course, directly to the Almighty. The gale still howled, but they must up anchor and away at once! Everyone on board was against him, even, for once, those most trusted of his officers who had hitherto always supported him. In spite of all, however, he insisted; and again prevailed—indeed, doubly so. Not only did they all obey him but his instinct was abundantly justified. Soon after they had weighed, the wind moderated, shifted, and, with no further crises, they sailed clean out into the Pacific. For the moment, of course, his prestige on board was immense.

iii. But soon came a reaction, natural to the point of inevitability. The Company's spirits rose at a bound from Very Stormy to Set Fair. Visible dangers lay all behind them. "Now", they argued almost to a man, "we can get down to what we came for, the delectable business of Prize and Pillage. Let's start at once!"

But Richard thought otherwise. Again his experience and knowledge of history stepped in to caution him. If they began operations now, he knew, there would be but little to take at so high a latitude. All that would happen would be that news of their presence would pass up to Lima and beyond so that, when they got there, the enemy would be ready and waiting for them. He therefore

said in effect, "Nothing doing before we pass Lima!" But this did not suit them. They would not take it. They remembered, as uneducated minds will, a part, but only a part, of what had gone before. They forgot, or did not choose to recall, that twice before he had been demonstrably right and they demonstrably wrong: they only remembered that he had twice opposed them.

They did not show signs of mutiny, and, he was bound to say, he was doubtful whether under any circumstance they would have gone quite to that length. (This is typical of Richard. He is not going to take the easy way out, and say, "they made me do it".) But it did seem to him that the point had been reached when the dangers of his always being in a minority of one (even though in the right) would, in its effect upon their mutual relations, outweigh the danger of giving way to them. He therefore did give way—fatally as far as the whole expedition was concerned, because once more he was right, and all fell out exactly as he had predicted. "It was our perdition."

The moral. In the light of hindsight, he considers that he was wrong—probably: for only the Almighty can say what would have happened had he persisted. But nothing is proved. It may well be that, by insisting, he would have earned an unenviable reputation for overprudence, if not for pusillanimity, none the less fatal to the venture for being undeserved.

This time, I would venture to comment upon Richard's conduct, though not to criticise it. If I had been Hawkins (instead of only his seven-great grandson) I suspect that I should not have had to face that last difficult choice at all. Much more probably, I should by then have been, at worst at the bottom of the Straits, at best well on the road to England. Yet I do think that I detect in his handling of the affair a certain weakness; not in deed, nor even in character, but in prescience. In fact, I do believe that he made a mistake, though it was one which he does not even mention. The really great leader—a Drake, for instance—would surely have foreseen the likely reactions of his men, even before they began to react: and he—a Drake—would have made up his mind, long before in the quiet of his own cabin, what line he would take when, or if, the demand was made. Having done so (and when it came) he would have been prepared with a firm answer, according as to how he had decided. It might have been, "Pillage, my lads? Aye, that's what we're here for. Off we go!". It might have been "Steady!

We'll take our time." But, whichever it was, it would have been perfectly clear. In either case they would think—a very healthy thought—that he was leading them, and not they him! As it was, however, or so it seems to me, he had the worst of both possible worlds. While letting them see that he would like to say "No", he said "Yes".

(3) *When to interfere*

(Applicable much more to the second Elizabethan era than to the first: to our own age of specialisation than to Richard's "salt-horse" days.) Right at the crisis of his affairs, when he found himself all but looking down the muzzles of a far superior enemy's artillery, Richard made the devastating discovery that he had been let down, totally and irredeemably, by the officer in charge of that department upon which all was about to hinge—the Gunner. That the man was a bad one he verily believed, that he was actually a traitor he suspected: but that he was a liar he was quite certain because, throughout the entire voyage, he had never ceased to boast of his complete readiness. At a moment's notice every gun, every cartridge, every shot, rammer, sponge, worm and scraper would be there just so. And Hawkins, who had always believed in a policy of mutual trust, in suspecting not the worst but the best of any man, until that man himself convinced him to the contrary: who had therefore always avoided wherever possible even the shadow of prying into the concerns of his departments—he, Hawkins, God forgive him, had believed the Gunner!

Instantly ghastly shortcomings stood revealed. The powder which should have been carefully measured out into its canvas cartridge-bags was lying in bulk below, untouched. The scoundrelly Gunner had vaunted his 500 cartridges all ready for use. However, as there were none,

> we were forced to occupie three persons onely in making and filling cartredges: and of 500 elles of canvas and other cloth given him for that purpose at sundry times, not one yard was to be found. We therefore could not avoid the danger to charge and discharge with the ladell, especially in so hot a fight.

Then there were the "brasse balls of artificial fire to be shott with slurbowes (whereof I had six bowes and two hundreth bals)", peculiarly important for the hand-to-hand work now about to take place, and which Richard was obviously proud to have provided:

> he had stowed them in such manner, though in double barrels, as the salt water had spoiled them all: so that, coming to use them, not one was serviceable.

Moreover,

> few of our pieces were clear when we came to use them, and some had the shott first put in, and after the powder.

To charge any artillery officer with so rudimentary a blunder as this last can only mean one of two things. Either the man was indeed a traitor, bent on delivering the ship into the hands of the Spaniards—and Hawkins does allege that he had once served in a Spanish ship—or else, in his wrath against him for his other incompetences, Richard was exaggerating.

Even so, however, though pardonably bitter against the man, he makes no attempt to evade his own share of the blame. On the contrary, he uses his own discomfiture as a warning to others:

> The griefe and remembrance of which oversights once again inforceth me to admonish all captains and commanders hereby to take advice, now and then to survey their officers and store-roomes, the oftener the better: so that their defects and wants may be supplied in time: never relying too much upon the vulgar report, nor giving too much credit to smooth tongues and boasting companions.

Here then is the bald account of the calamity, and the (in this case) obvious recommendation for avoiding similar troubles thereafter. But it is not Richard's way to leave it at that. There are deeper lessons still and he must discover them. How far, he asks, *should* a commander trust his departmental officers? If he overdoes his superintendence, he sees clearly, he will

> deprive the other officers of their esteemes, and of that that belongeth unto them, which were a great absurdity.

How right he is: how real the dilemma! I believe that there is no naval captain, past or present, who will not sympathise with him, and freely acknowledge the dilemma's existence. Not to seem to interfere, yet to know!

But still this thoughtful, painstaking man persists, until he produces an answer: and in that answer he touches upon what is one of the great officer-problems of all navies and of all ages; perhaps most of all the present, and the future. He proceeds,

> But my opinion is that he should be more than superficially instructed and practised in the imployments (of the various officers' departments):

that, in a word, he should know enough about *all* departments to be able to judge, approximately, what is going on in them.

But, he realises, he cannot be exactly a "specialist" in all of them:

> He cannot be tyed to the actuall toyle, or to intermeddle with all offices, for that were to binde him to impossibilities, to diminish and abase his authoritie.

His ideal officer, then, is one who, while too familiar with all facets of his ship's economy for any subordinate to be able to pull wool over his eyes, is still prepared, having summed up his officers' probity and efficiency, to trust them.

> Yea, I am verily perswaded, that the more absolute authoritie any commander giveth to his under officers, being worthy of it, the sweeter is the command, the more respected and beloved the commander.

But—Heaven knows—it was a sticky enough problem for Richard in his unicellular organism the *Daintie*. What is it for the modern commanding officer in his twenty-odd million pounds-worth of devices and gadgets; wherein any really intimate knowledge of only one in ten of them is clear outside practical politics! Here in fact is one of the most intractable problems facing modern navies. And here is 16th-century Richard anticipating and resolutely facing it.

We may now begin to see why his contemporaries dubbed him "Compleat Seaman," implying a much wider competence than is involved in the mere handling of ships. To them he was the man who had at his finger-tips the whole art of manning, storing, sailing, commanding and fighting them. And so he had: but to show in detail how right they were is impossible here. To do so would in fact be to attempt some account of all sea-lore as known at the close of Elizabeth's reign. We must summarise brutally.

All that is known about navigation is there: all the latest in the care and management of the seamen: how to recruit them, and to make them not only healthy but happy: how to tackle that most prevalent of Tudor sea-scourges, the Scurvy: how to load ships, and to protect them from fire, rats, and the insidious sea-worm, *teredo navalis*—every known specific, in fact, which made an Eliza-

bethan commander a good one; which made him "compleat".

No more can be said of his great book. When they had it—belatedly—between their hands, all his compatriots agreed upon Richard's "compleatness". Yet it is much to be doubted whether, even then, they realised what a superb man of action he was: what a terrific fighter. For, in the *Observations* he fails largely to bring the point out: and this is a feature in the man's character which must now be stressed.

The Last Fight of the "Daintie"

Let us have done, then, with Richard the Administrator, the Technician, the Theorist, the Scholar, the *Authority*, and view him simply as a leader of men, in his supreme hour showing himself the equal of any Englishman of his day, or of any day: in courage certainly, but also probably in skill. Yet we must still help him because to the last he will not help himself. His ingrained honesty impels him to report his failures as well, and as fully, as his successes. Only so will he receive his due. Was Drake never guilty of mistakes in battle? Of course he was. But, since he was no author—nor, let us face it, either so modest or so relentless a truth-teller—we seldom learn what they were. But Richard omits nothing, excuses nothing. Everything is set down plainly for all to read who want to.

Fine reading it is too, though overlong to report fully. Nor perhaps is a close report so necessary as it would have been had so many of us moderns not been brought up on the story of the *Revenge*: for the two tales are in most respects so remarkably alike that it will often serve to dwell upon the differences, taking the similarities for granted.

He was right again; the alarm of his coming outstripped him, and gave his enemy ample time to prepare an Armado to receive him. When first he met it, it consisted of six ships, most of them superior to his own in every way. But at this first meeting the Spaniards sadly botched their business through bad seamanship. The Admiral, Don Beltran de Castro, managed to snap his mainmast: the Vice-Admiral split his mainsail, the Rear Admiral cracked his mainyard. Only one enemy reached a station from which he could attack: and he thought better of it, hauled off and rejoined the three lame ducks. The *Daintie* extricated herself easily and proceeded northwards along the coast.

None the less, indecisive as this first round was, it boded ill for Hawkins, for two reasons. First, had it come to close quarters, he would certainly have discovered his Gunner's incompetence—or treachery—and he would have remedied things before the real clash came. This, of course, he was not to know till later: but another circumstance he did discover, and, to such a seaman as he, it must have seemed sinister indeed. All the Spanish ships, he found, could sail more close-hauled than he could; so that, theoretically, they would always be able to dictate the tactics of any future fight.

Here we come upon the first great difference between his action and Grenville's. The *Revenge* had the legs of every single unit in the "fifty-three"; so that, had Grenville desired it, he could have dictated the whole affair. But the *Daintie*, though to windward when the enemy was first sighted, soon found herself literally surrounded by the Spaniards, to windward, to leeward, ahead and astern. The *Revenge*, it is true, got into this position. But this hardly signifies. She need not have got into it: the *Daintie* could not avoid it. What this meant to Hawkins was that he must face the prospect of being boarded: and here indeed was reason to make the staunchest nerve quiver. For in the Armado there were "well neere two thousand men", while for effective fighting, the *Daintie* had—*75*.

For the moment, however, she was safely away, and Richard's narrative reveals but little sign of trepidation, in either commander or ship's company. The crew probably exaggerated the ineptitude of their foe, and Richard would be too wise a leader to scare them. Yet—more unexpectedly—even he seemed content to carry on as though no enemy were about. He simply sailed on northwards, looking into the ports he passed and chasing any sail he met at sea—again with significant ill-success: even the local merchant shipping could out-weather him and escape. He made no attempt to get out of it while he could: and indeed his only alternative to accepting battle would have been to turn south, out of sight of land, and to leave the Pacific altogether. Evidently he was not prepared to do this: nor, necessarily, would his people have allowed it. All the negative evidence points to the fact that such a way out never crossed his mind. In his very full disquisition he would certainly have mentioned it if it had. The more likely explanation is that he himself, though by now well aware of his inability to fight his ship on his own terms, thought, like his people, that the Spaniards had neither the seamanship nor the will to tackle him seriously.

He was wrong. Don Beltran was in fact a very determined man who, after his initial fiasco, was more determined than ever to bring the English interloper to book. That resolution, though Richard could not know it then, had been increased a hundredfold by the reception accorded to him and his men when they limped back, empty-handed, to Callao, the port of Lima.

> They were so mocked and scorned by the women as scarce any one by day would shew his face: they reviled them with the name of cowards and *golnias*, and craved licence of the vice-roy to bee admitted in their roomes, and to undertake the surrendry of the English shippe.

Such insults were not to be borne by Spanish pride, and Viceroy and Admiral between them made a very wise decision. They cut the Armado down to its two strongest ships and a pinnace, and into these they put all their best men, soldiers, mariners, gunners; all the best stores, artillery, ammunition; and Beltran led them out again to purge themselves of their women's scorn. Unquestionably the second Armado was much the more formidable of the two.

Let us consider for a moment this matter of odds. In contemplating the Azores fight, the mind is apt to be hypnotised by that famous "Fifty-three to one". But a little reflection will show that they were quite uselessly long for the Spaniards' purposes. If it was to be an affair of boarding and "hand-to-hand," as in the event both actions became, of what use were 53? In fact, as Raleigh tells us, 38 of them did not engage at all, while only two, or at the very most four, could conveniently board at one time. And, if it was to be a matter of broadsides, numbers were little if any more helpful, unless the enemy thought fit to fire indiscriminately upon friend and foe alike. In fact, if we come down to earth, we shall find that by far the leading part in the destruction of Grenville's ship was taken by one man, Don Bertendona, who was the first to lay his ship aboard the enemy, clinging on with wonderful tenacity and shattering casualties until the *Revenge* was enmeshed beyond hope. Anyway, in tackling the *Daintie*, Beltran must have felt that the odds were good enough. On his second sortie, his numbers were reduced, it is true, from 2,000 to a mere 1,300—"and those of the choise of Peru"—but Richard still had only his 75.

At length the day came; the Spanish led on by almost hourly information of the *Daintie's* whereabouts, the English making no attempt to avoid them. Battle was joined off San Mateo Bay on 20th June, 1594.

At first sight it may well be wondered why Richard failed—indeed hardly tried—to avoid a hand-to-hand encounter: for all our experience gleaned from the Armada action (in which Richard had played quite a prominent part) seemed to favour a gun-duel. There, the English, with guns of lighter shot but of longer range, had deliberately kept their distance from the heavier, shorter-range fire of the Spaniards: and—with reservations—the policy had paid. Also, the English in 1588 had been seriously outnumbered in man-power: and they were even more seriously outnumbered now. This too, one would think, would be a strong inducement to Richard to keep his distance. In fact, however, the special conditions prevailing now gave him but little choice. Everything conspired to force him into "push-of-pike," however much he might have preferred "long-bowls".

First, and foremost, he now knew that he *could* not keep the enemy at off-fighting distance, because of the superior weatherliness of their ships, where, in the Channel in 1588, the exact reverse had been the case. Second, though he was not outnumbered in guns to the same extent as in men, the enemy's artillery, he tells us, was still twice as numerous as his. He also informs us, it is true, that it was not, piece for piece, so heavy. But this almost certainly means that it was of longer range. Thus, with the Spaniards' superior sailing, it was they, not he, who could choose the range: which would be—if they were wise enough to avail themselves of Armada experience—within their own longer range but outside his shorter range. In a gun-duel, therefore, there was very grave danger of his ship being battered to pieces with no real chance of retaliation. This is in fact just what happened to the only Spanish ships which succumbed in battle in 1588. In a word, the "long-bowls" advantage had passed from England to Spain.

Apart from this, however, there was a third consideration, at the moment tragically cogent. Even as the enemy approached him, he discovered that, thanks to his precious Gunner, he was in no position at all for off-fighting. It may be, indeed, that this was the really decisive factor in his mind. It remains possible that, up to this last terrible moment, he had intended to keep the fighting open. Yet I think not. There is one passage in the *Observations* which, though a little obscure, perhaps reveals his real intentions. If this be so, his object would seem to have been to encourage them to board, and to hope that he could blast them to pieces as they did so.

> Had our Gunner beene the man he was reputed to be, and as the world sould him to me, shee [Spain] had received great hurt by that manner of bourding. But contrary to all expectation, our stearne peeces were unprimed, and so were all those which we had to leeward, save halfe one in the quarter; which discharged, wrought that effect in our contraries as that they had five or sixe foote water in hold before they suspected it.

His inference seems to be this: "I did not mind Beltran attempting to board me. I hoped he would; and I think I was right. For if those few guns of mine could so nearly do my business for me, what would have been the effect of my full battery—and a competent gunner? The Spaniards rash way of boarding alone might have given me the victory."

That, however, was not to be. They approached; were badly punished, but not stopped. They boarded.

Now Richard reveals yet another reason why he may have welcomed Beltran's attempt at a *coup-de-main*. It transpires that the *Daintie* was far better equipped than the enemy ships with "close-fights"—that is, deliberately prepared anti-boarder defences within the ship itself. She was in fact a tight little fortress, with loop-holed "cobridge-heads" (wooden bulkheads defending if not both forecastle and poop, at least the poop.) Within this perimeter the whole English crew could assemble, invisible to the boarding enemy and immune from all the effects of his hand-gun fire, the while pouring out quite murderous volleys from quite point-blank range upon the completely exposed attackers. We learn also that the Spanish ships were not so fitted, but that, whenever they lay close alongside the *Daintie*, the English were able, in next to no time, to clear their decks of anyone rash enough to expose himself.

Certainly the Spaniards lost heavily in this phase. But they were determined, and well-led. And it was just on such occasions that they were at their best. Here, of course, it was the soldiers who were bearing the brunt: and throughout the whole of Spain's great days, her soldiers —the "invincible" Spanish infantry—were by far her most formidable warriors.

None the less they failed. Twice they secured an entry: twice they were flung out. They retreated a little, cannonading their victim the while. But they soon returned for a third and even more determined assault. This time Beltran prepared to come in over the *Daintie's* weather bow, having previously tried to enter her from the leeward. (This, according to Richard, was at once unusual and

inept.) In this new scheme, his Vice-Admiral, to avoid dispersal of force, was to board his superior's ship on its disengaged side, so that all the forces at the Spaniards' disposal could pour into the enemy in one irresistible wave. But the Vice-Admiral, no doubt seeking the glory of conquering the foe all by himself, thrust in in front of his senior, and grappled the *Daintie* on her weather broadside. This disobedience not only spoiled the whole plan: it proved quite suicidal to the culprit, because his ship was

> utterly without fights or defences. What with our muskets, and what with our fire-workes, wee cleered her decks in a moment so that scarce any person appeared.

And this without his "brasse balls of artificial fire, his six slur-bowes with their hundreth bals"!

Indeed just then, he says, as few as a dozen Englishmen could have carried the Vice-Admiral. But he does not blame himself for not allowing it, because, with the odds as they still were, any such division of force would have been most unwise. He was doubtless right. He would inevitably have lost that precious dozen in the counter-attack even then pending from the infuriated Admiral. That sensible man, thwarted of his chance to reach the *Daintie's* weather bow by the great length of the Vice-Admiral which overlapped the *Daintie*, still lay just to windward. In fact, at this juncture, Beltran did the only thing possible. He boarded his Vice-Admiral on her free windward side, and extricated her from her predicament. His scheme, however, was ruined. His subordinate's casualties in both ship and men were too crippling for further immediate action. He ordered both his ships to haul off, and the great assault had failed, with losses which would have been fatal had the odds been shorter. At this moment, in his long uphill climb to safety, Richard was at the highest point he ever reached. The Spanish ships now stood off a little, and fell back upon gunfire for the rest of the battle. Beltran had had his lesson. He would have been wiser to have relied on superior range and sail-power from the first.

Here the first day ended, and the first phase. Let us return to similarities between the fights of the two Richards. At this stage, we may surely quote *A Ballad of the Fleet* verbatim, and yet report the *Daintie's* fight with complete accuracy:

> And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay round us all in a ring;
> But they dared not touch us again, for they feared that we still could sting.

There were of course differences of detail. The ring surrounding Grenville was, for what that is worth, much the more substantial: but Grenville, with longer-ranging and better guns than the enemy, was in a better posture to answer back, at anyrate as long as his supplies lasted. Again, Grenville was in his predicament, one might almost say, from choice; Hawkins in his from necessity. Still, whatever the cause, there they were, both untaken and—by boarding anyway—apparently untakable; but both so crippled aloft as to be virtually immobile. In both of them powder and shot were all but expended: in both the casualities were gradually reducing the survivors to impotence. At this point in the respective fights, in fact, the conclusion of the action was foregone: in both it was only a question of time.

Yet it is just here, *in* that question of time, that Hawkins gains a clear lead over the other Richard. Let us take up his story again and see.

All through the night the Spaniards kept up a desultory fire, which, from the prudent range of their choice, probably did no great damage: but meanwhile, naturally, the shorter-carrying English guns did even less. Then Beltran began to grow impatient. He was probably thinking of those horrid rude women at Lima. Besides, like all the Spanish sea-commanders, he preferred hand-to-hand to long-bowls, which seemed to him somehow ignoble. He was, however, sufficiently prudent not to persist in his first expensive policy, and he could hardly fail to see that he still held all the trumps. The English corsair was by now too damaged to run; and even if she could, had really nowhere to run to. But still he chafed at the delay, and, when dawn came, he sent in to parley, offering what under the circumstances, were quite generous terms: what Richard calls "*a buena querra*". This is "*en buena guerra*", involving surrender, but promising quarter and a fixing of suitable ransoms by agreement.

Just before the offer was made, however, the English had suffered certain crippling losses. The *Daintie's* Master, Cornish, a very good man in Richard's complete confidence, now "hadde one of his eyes, his nose and halfe his face shot away". Master Henry Courton, a volunteer and a firm friend of the General, had been slain; and, worst of all, the General himself—Richard Hawkins—had

> received sixe wounds; one of them in the necke very perillous; another through the arme, perishing the bone, and cutting the sinewes close by the arme-pit; the rest not so dangerous.

True, there remained the Captain, in personal command of the *Daintie*—Hawkins, as General, commanded the whole expedition. John Ellis was a good enough man, as events proved, but not quite of the timbre of that trio now so cruelly disposed of.

Hawkins himself does not say how he came by these hurts. But there survives a contemporary Spanish narrative by one Garcia Hurtado de Mendoza; and his account of what happened is so typical of the age that it is most likely true. As the second morning dawned, Don Beltram's flagship—presumably manoeuvring for a better position, not with any intention of further boarding—chanced to pass so near to the *Daintie* that to Richard, who was on her deck, there was suddenly presented an opportunity of being able to reach, and secure, that greatest prize of all, the Spanish Admiral's royal standard. Calling therefore for a running bowline, he neatly lassooed it—and tugged. This—in those times—was just the kind of swaggering gesture expected of a dashing commander: and we can only suppose that to Richard, in spite of his constitutional good sense, the temptation was irresistible. (*Autres temps autres moeurs*! Only imagine Their Lordships' faces on learning of a like spree on the part of their Admiral Cunningham!) Yet, on the whole, this lapse is somehow gratifying. The danger hitherto has been to make Richard appear too perfect a paragon.

Yet it was a suicidal risk to take: like thrusting one's hand, ungloved, into a hornets' nest. The reaction was swift and inevitable. Out rushed the most redoubtable of the hornets—

> Diego de Avila, Juan Manrique, Pedro de Reinalte, Juan Velasquez and others came to the rescue, and defended it valorously. The Englishman paid for his audacity by two wounds, one in the neck and other other in the arm, both received from gunshots.[1]

None the less, Don Beltran was Castilian enough to admire immensely the madcap gallantry of it. Doubtless it is exactly what he would have done himself; and, for ever afterwards, he held his enemy in the highest esteem.

Yet the English had paid too dearly—there was only one Richard Hawkins. He was carried below in great pain and, though thereafter he seems to have been conscious all the time, never relinquishing the command, he came no more upon deck.

[1] *The Hawkins Voyages* (Hakluyt Society, 1878), p. 345. This account, purely for Spanish consumption, differs so often and so widely from that in the *Observations* that I have made no attempt to reconcile them, but have been content, in the main, to follow Hawkins.

One of the first to visit him below was the Captain, Ellis, bearing Beltran's message of parley. The poor man was clearly shaken, perhaps through lack of sleep and by his leader's fall; certainly by what his own eyes revealed to him, the ever-growing damage to his ship, the mounting casualties among his men. He therefore recommended accepting the offer, especially as (according to him) the gentlemanly Don Beltran had made one very important concession well beyond the normal "*en buena guerra*" contract: he promised to send all the Englishmen home, the better sort only to pay ransom.

No one need be reminded what the other Sir Richard said when his story reached this point. It was simply (in effect), "To Hell with the b—— Spaniard whom you can't trust anyway! Fight on! We'll never surrender!" And now *our* Richard said precisely the same thing—only, rather unfortunately, when he came to write it down 28 years later, he allowed it to cover several pages. And indeed, a very eloquent, well-composed plea it is, including a Latin tag or two and several most apposite historical parallels. It is a great pity that he should have let his literary talents run away with him at this solemn juncture; for nothing could be more absurdly unrealistic than the picture which he contrives to paint. Himself in agony, and barely conscious; the dead and dying around him; the anxious Captain soliciting a prompt reply; the haughty don above importunately awaiting it—and Richard quoting parallels and precedents!

Yet, though the verbiage rings patently false, its gist is equally certainly true. The sequel abundantly proves it. Richard refused to consider any composition. We can only apply the acid test of results.

Here indeed the two stories which we have been following take very different turns; and they reveal with startling clarity the cardinal differences in the characters of the two Richards. With the headstrong Grenville, obviously, it was all or nothing. "Fight on! Fight on!" he cries, so long as such a course is in any sense feasible. But then comes the moment when, transparently, it is not: and Grenville, as resolute as ever not to give in, switches right over in an instant from "Fight on!" to "Sink her, split her in twain! If we can't keep her, by God Spain shall not have her!". But—since most men are not Grenvilles, nor even pale replicas of him—this is altogether too strong meat for most people: for his own Captain, for instance, and his Master. And at once two parties are formed, a "pro-surrender" party and an "anti." They argue it out: but the dice are loaded. The champion of the "antis" though undoubtedly much

the strongest personality on board, lies below immobile, in fact dying. His staunchest ally, the immortal Master Gunner, does his best, but cannot prevail against his superiors, the Captain and the Master who go round the Ship's Company canvassing for surrender. Inevitably they win. When invited to make the supreme sacrifice uneducated men, however brave, require a strong, and, above all, an undivided lead; and possibly Grenville, had he been on deck, could have provided it. But he was not there: the pros had a nearly clear run, and, as Raleigh puts it,

> [of] the common sort . . . the most drew back from Sir Richard and the Master Gunner, [it] being no hard matter to dissuade men from death to life.

So, early in the morning of the day after the fight started, they surrendered. They had been 15 hours at it, and had sustained the individual assaults of 15 ships for that period—with, of course, an unpleasant and unused "reserve" of 38 looking on. No one can, or should, be blamed, even the Captain and Master. In an age when a "fair composition" was quite honourable, the exception was not these men, but Grenville.

Hawkins's story, however, runs quite differently: or rather, perhaps, it includes at this point a phase which has no counterpart in Grenvilles's. For, *at* this point, where Grenville failed Hawkins succeeded: not because his was the stronger character, but because he was the more reasonable, the more perceptive, the more in tune with his people: and probably the more persuasive. He did not dramatise the situation. His was no call to heroic extremes. He did not say, "There's no other course but to die: so *die*!"—though very likely he thought there was no other way. He said, "Carry on with the fight. That is your clear duty as Englishmen". He held out no particular hope of salvation, but at the same time did not present them with no alternative but certain and violent death. He told the Captain, and through him the whole Ship's Company, "You have served me faithfully hitherto, and, to the best of my ability, I have served you. Don't spoil it all now, when you're in danger and I'm down and out. Go on serving me and your country. Both of them say, "Fight on!".

Here is the measure of his triumph. He carried the Captain with him, and, with the Captain, the whole Company. It does not really matter what words he used: it is what *happened* which counts, and that is certain. His conversation with Ellis must have taken place,

roughly, in the early morning of the second day, when his fight had been in progress—like Grenville's—some 15 hours. The Captain—and let us by no means under-estimate him either—departed convinced, and somehow contrived to convince everyone else on board: to such tune that

> in accomplishment of this promise and determination, they persevered in sustaining the fight, all this night, with the day and night following and the third day after. In which time the enemy never left us, day nor night, beating continually upon us with his great and small shott . . . the enemie being ever to wind-ward and wee to lee-ward, their shott much damnifying us, and ours little annoying them.

Note the profound difference between *Revenge* and *Daintie*. In the one, fatal division: in the other, complete unity: no parties, no "pro-surrenders". From now till the end there is apparently no whisper of defection, no looking-over-the-shoulder. Nor, during the whole of that time, was Hawkins once upon deck to hearten his people. Here surely is the truest manifestation of leadership: lacking no doubt, the heroic incandescence of Grenville's, yet not less, but definitely more, effective. From his bed of pain far below Hawkins retained control where, from his, Grenville lost it.

Let us, however, not lose sight of the fact that this two-days-and-a-night interlude is *extra* to the Hawkins story. After that, the similarities reappear. But it does speak volumes for both General and men: it certainly goes far towards obliterating Richard's regrettable literary lapse (of 1622) and firmly establishes him as a great battle-leader (in 1594).

But the thing was a partnership. Hawkins stands vindicated. What of its other half—the men? Richard has enabled us to watch them closely for a full year, and certain characteristics stand clearly revealed. They were very typical of the English crews of their day, and, for all their obvious limitations, they were very good: entirely uneducated; apt, sheeplike, to get silly collective notions into their heads and, mule-like, to relinquish them reluctantly: brave to the point of folly sometimes, full of superstitious fears at others; soaring to heights of confidence, quickly passing into abysses of despair: childlike in their simplicity sometimes, at others suspicious and grasping beyond belief: yet, evidently, leadable—by the right man—and, when so led, as invincible as does not matter. Richard had shown many times already that he was the right man; and this episode is the supreme proof of it.

His people's strengths and weaknesses emerge as the fight proceeds. They begin in a spirit of bravado, hardly restrained from doing the stupidest things: rushing at the enemy without forethought or preparation of any kind; "vaunting and bragging" of what they were going to do to him—

> One promised that he would cut downe their mayne yard; another that he would take their flagge . . . others into wishings that they had never come out of their countrey if we should refuse to fight with two shippes whatsoever.

Once the show started, however, and there was no time for boasting, they acquitted themselves like what they really were, true-hearted men. Once their blood was up, they had no equals.

This was during the boardings and the "close-work". But then came the pause, and the offer of parley. Blood cooled, odds were calculated and found to be (as in truth they were) all but impossible —and they clamoured for the Captain to go to the General and tell him so. Here I should greatly like to know more of Captain Ellis: for it was he who, once convinced by Richard, had to go back and face the people who sent him. We do not know what he said: we only know how nobly he succeeded; which in its turn can only mean that he too was a fine leader. Anyway, one somehow feels, he cut the quotations and the precepts to the bone: and, anyway, the immediate loyalty and co-operation which he secured was complete. For the moment morale was very high.

Gradually, however, a crack of quite a different kind began to grow in that morale. It was in no way due to any lack of loyalty towards their wounded leader: but it was due, almost certainly, to the existence of those wounds—and to the absence of the good Master, Cornish, and the trusted volunteer, Courton. Evidently the ship was now under-officered, under-led. Somehow—and obviously Richard was in no position to know exactly why—the drink began to circulate unduly, and true courage to degenerate to Dutch courage. Richard thus quaintly reports what happened:

> For after I was wounded . . . the pott, continually walking, infused desperate and foolish hardinesse in many, who, blinded by the fume of the liquor, considered not of any danger, but thus and thus would stand at hazard, some in vaine glory vaunting themselves, some other rayling upon the Spaniards, another inviting his companion to come and stand by him, and not to budge a foote from him; which indiscreetly they put in execution, and cost the lives of many a good man, slaine by our

enemies muskettiers who suffered not a man to shew himself but they presently overthrew him.

They meant well, poor souls. What they lacked was an officer who could be everywhere at once, controlling not their essential bravery but their senseless bravado.

As things stood, though, it was not good enough. Every single man who could stand was now worth his weight in gold: a war of attrition could end in only one way. Yet still the dwindling band stuck it out. For 23 out of the 24 hours, he says, the unremitting cannonade went on; and, from his mention of the enemy's musketeers, it seems certain that, as the English guns fell silent, either through damage or exhaustion of ammunition, so they could reduce their range, with guns of all sizes.

It could not last. Details may be perhaps omitted: indeed, the General, in his physical and mental hell below, did not witness many of them and does not report them fully. Yet, once or twice, as he discovered afterwards, the English were nearer deliverance than they knew. The enemy was having his crises also. Thus, some time before the end, the Spanish Admiral was all but dismantled. Two (in one place he claims three) of our roundshot lodged in his foremast, and

> had either of them entred but four inches further into the heart of the maste, without all doubt it had freed us, and perhaps put them in our hands.

But it was not to be. Maybe only four inches separated victory from defeat, but defeat at last it was.

> The third day, in the afternoone, which was the 22nd of June 1594,[1] according to our computation, and which I follow in this my discourse, our sayles being torne, our mastes all perished, our pumpes rent and shot to peeces, and our shippe with fourteene shot under water and seven or eight foote of water in hold; many of our men being slaine, and the most part of them which remayned sore hurt, and in a manner altogether fruiteles, and the enemie offering still to receive us *a buene querra*—

[1] Markham (*The Hawkins Voyages*, p. 343, note), seems to challenge this date, deciding that it ought to be 2nd July. Actually, however, Hawkins is perfectly right; for he writes "in our computation", which was of course, that of the Julian Calendar still used in this country: and it was ten days ahead of the Gregorian Calendar already used in Spain. Thus Markham (though wrong in casting doubt upon Hawkins's date) was right about 2nd July—or would have been had he stated that he was using the Gregorian (or Spanish) Calendar, which we all use today.

everybody on deck, officers and men alike, still with no dissidents, at length, and all together, gave up hope: and the sad truth had to be conveyed to the General, still lying below more dead than alive. It is significant, as it is certainly pathetic, that Captain Ellis, surviving yet, could not bring himself to this task, but sent down Richard's own trusted body-servant to break the news. When the truth was out, Hawkins, very low now and convinced of imminent death, still refused to give the word, but at last agreed to leave the final decision to the Captain: not as evading his responsibility, but because, whatever of benefit might accrue to the survivors, he was now convinced that he would not be one of them, and therefore felt that he should not impose upon them sufferings which he himself would never share. Then, of course, the Captain surrendered.

Clearly Hawkins lacked the berserk streak which shot through the fiery Grenville. There was never any talk here of wholesale immolation of ship and people together. But then Hawkins's Gunner was not of the calibre of Grenville's. Clearly ship-splitting was not his line at all! Yet, when the Captain "made his composition," the *Daintie* was worse off than the *Revenge* at her corresponding moment, even by the computation of the *Revenge's* surrender-party. To Grenville's last appeal they had replied that "the ship had *six* foot water in hold, three shot under water, which were so weakly stopped as with the first working of the sea she needs must sink". This is to be set against the *Daintie's* "seven or eight foote of water in hold" and "fourteene shott under water".

Yet, to the last, the older Richard had the luck of the Hero-Stakes. The *Revenge* did sink: the *Daintie* did not. But with neither of these results had either Richard anything to do. The *Revenge* went down because she was called upon, almost at once, to face a full Atlantic gale, and (had she managed that) to make a long ocean-trip to Spain: and she managed neither, having never been (as we have seen) noted for her sea-worthiness. But the *Daintie*, an admirable ocean-boat, had the much kindlier Pacific to deal with, fair weather, and a much easier and safer voyage. Even so, we learn, she would not have done it but for the superlative skill of one Miguel Anjel Filipon (Hawkins calls him Michaell Angel) an expert ship-salvager by profession, who for his outstanding services on this occasion was rewarded by King Philip himself; and who has no counterpart at all in the *Revenge* story. So it comes about that Grenville, fighting gloriously, dies appositely, and, though his

ship is surrendered, does not have to face the ultimate stigma of the enemy possessing her. But poor Hawkins, though he fights gloriously too, lives, not only to become a prisoner but also to have it recorded of him that Spain got, and kept, his ship.

In fine, let me repeat; I am asserting, not that Grenville received too much credit, but that Hawkins received too little. It should be clear by now that, in terms of endeavour and pure gallantry, there was not much to choose between their epic fights. If we give Grenville the palm on the ground of numbers of the enemy, and "on paper", there are still two considerable counter-weights on Hawkins's side. First, the *Revenge* was a "Queen's Ship", a true warship, designed from birth for war; bigger,[1] much more heavily gunned and (relative to the opposition) a far better sailer than the *Daintie* which, though a somewhat exceptional one, was only a merchantman. Second, where the Queen's Ship lasted 15 hours, the merchantman lasted at least four times as long.

Before and After the Fight

It is curiously difficult to envisage a *young* Richard Hawkins. This, primarily, is because almost all our knowledge of him reaches us through the *Observations*, which is essentially the work of a greybeard. But of course, not only was he once young: he was still young when he made his famous voyage: 31 or 32 when he started, 32 or 33 when he fought Don Beltran. And already most, though not all, of his active service lay behind him: most of that remarkable store of experience on which he draws so lavishly in his book. Certainly the Elizabethan seaman matured early and, no doubt as a corollary, seldom reached old age. Outside the *Observations* material for his life is quite exceptionally thin—a passing reference from other writers here, an extract from surviving public records there: a few—a very few—letters; virtually no *human* material. Even this brief attempt at straight biography owes much to incidental passages in that book wherein from time to time he fortunately ranges beyond his immediate affairs.

Thus, though we know that he was bred to the sea from an early age, and suspect that he learned his job under his father, we know of no specific voyage in which he took part before 1582, when he accompanied his uncle William to the West Indies: and we only

[1] The question of Elizabethan tonnage is a vexed one. We shall probably not be far out if we assess that of the *Revenge* at 500 tons, and of the *Daintie* at 350.

know this because he takes one of his "instances" from it, not because any outsider mentioned the fact. This, too, is why we remain in ignorance of how he came by his Latin, and his very real learning. Who schooled him? When and where?—for he certainly possessed it in a measure much greater than most of the famous seamen of his day, Drake, Frobisher, Grenville, or even his own father. Here indeed only Raleigh equals—and exceeds—him.

Next, we do know that he went with Drake to the West Indies in 1585, having the command (though a very small one) of the *Duck Galliot*. That is all—save, ironically enough, a snippet of news about him as the expedition returned. His minute craft—a mere pinnace, propelled probably by oar as well as sail—was driven into Mount's Bay by a storm, whence Richard, by a very swift journey to Exeter, contrived to be the first to announce the return of the expedition.

By 1588 he was considered worthy of the command of one of the Queen's ships, the *Swallow*, of 360 tons. Here, though no dispatch or letter mentions Richard by name, we can deduce a little. The *Swallow*—and therefore, presumably, her 26-year-old captain—was in the thick of it off Portland in the second big encounter; and, in the culminating action off Gravelines (as perhaps we should expect) in his father's own division and in close support of him. Each of these allusions amounts to an "honourable mention", so that at least we may safely affirm that he did himself credit—as again we should expect.

Towards the end of this same year that expedition which he deals with in the *Observations* was first mooted, as a joint enterprise between father and son; and it was then that the *Daintie* was laid down. But for reasons by no means clear the venture was held up, and in 1590 Richard was commanding the *Crane*, another small ship in his father's expedition to the coast of Portugal. No voyage is recorded between this one and his departure for the Southern Seas in June, 1593. But he may have been afloat again, for certainly the *Daintie* was serving off Portugal in 1590 and again in 1592 at the Azores. One thing, however, he certainly did during this interval: he got married, to one Judith Heale, who came of a west-country merchant family. When he left for South America, they already had one child, a daughter named Judith, born in November 1592 at Deptford where Richard was working on his ship. There were five other children of the marriage; but, for obvious reasons, there is a gap of more than 11 years between Judith and the next.

For the year June 1593 to June 1594 we know—by comparison—very nearly everything there is to know about Richard. But that will not happen again, because the *Observations* brings the story only to the moment when, a prisoner at Panama, he is in a fair way to recovery. He intended another volume, but it was never written; or, if written, never published and now lost. The result is that, once more, our material becomes scanty: some of it, indeed, little better than hearsay.

Enough survives,[1] however, to make it apparent that Don Beltran had nothing whatever to be ashamed of. He behaved throughout like the gentleman he was: in fact, he probably saved both Richard and his people from a shocking fate by quickly taking the only possible step. Soon after their arrival at Panama was known, the Inquisition made formal application for the bodies of the prisoners. It was a dangerous moment. They were "Lutheran", and therefore, unless they would publicly recant, liable to the stake. Beltran, however, anticipating such action, lost no time in introducing Richard to the Viceroy of Peru whose favour he instantly won by his youth, and gallant bearing in adversity. The Marquis of Cañete was, on his own territory, nearly all-powerful. But not quite. Even there he could not defy the Inquisition. But, fortunately for the captives, he too was a gentleman; in fact a highly placed nobleman. Further, being a Spaniard, he knew all about *mañana*. From the first he took the secular view of what constituted proper behaviour, and not that of the ecclesiastics. Richard's captor had included repatriation in the composition terms, and Cañete regarded that as conclusive. No one, not even the Inquisition, had the right to make a Spanish gentleman break his pledge. He therefore informed the Inquisition that, in this case of conflicting loyalties, his mind was not clear. He must write to the fount of all authority, His Most Catholic Majesty, and await his commands.

Here was a reprieve, and a long one. With the English and French corsairs about, one did not just send off a single courier with a dispatch. One waited for the sailing of the annual Flota: and the answer would come back by the same medium. In fact, all but two years had passed since the fight before the Viceroy received King Philip's commands; and, when they did arrive, they were thoroughly vague: quite vague enough anyway for Cañete to declare that the only thing he could do was to send Hawkins home to Spain.

The crucial passage in the King's letter is interesting. He was

[1] e.g. in *Hawkins Voyages*, op. cit., p. 348.

growing old, steadily working himself to death, and it almost looks as though he was losing grip. He begged the question entirely. "You understand," he wrote, "that he [Hawkins] is a person of quality. In this matter I desire that Justice may be done conformedly to the quality of the persons." The Inquisition, of course, interpreted "quality" to mean "state of soul": which, being heretical, was also damnable, and liable to the extreme ecclesiastical penalty. But Cañete said, No. "Quality" means "social status"; and therefore, Hawkins, being a gentleman, must have gentleman's justice. That is, any promise made to him is inviolable. Further, as a gentleman, he is ransomable, and should be sent home there to negotiate over that important matter. Further still, if we let the Inquisition reduce him to cinders, what about that other gentleman—a Spanish one too—the gallant Don Beltran de Castro who has been to such pains to capture the English gentleman? In short, burn Hawkins, and who is going to settle Beltran's legitimate bill—Hawkins's ransom?

The Inquisition protested: but against such relentless logic they protested in vain; and to Spain Hawkins went. On the way, another battle nearly engulfed him. As the Flota approached the Azores, it all but ran into the Earl of Essex, then conducting what, in our books, we call "the Islands' Voyage". Shots were exchanged, but the Spanish ships, carrying fabulous wealth on board, ran for it, and got safely into Terceira, where the defences proved too strong for the English to break them. Richard's luck was out again. All his captors had to do was to sit tight until lack of provisions drove the English home. Then they sailed unmolested to Seville.

Up till now, Richard's captivity had been quite mild. But there can be little doubt, that, once in Spain, his treatment was thoroughly dishonourable. He was now of course beyond the protection of Cañete: but there seems to have been no further squabble with the Inquisition, so that, on the secular point, there was no reason for any further delay in implementing the surrender terms. Only the amount of ransom remained to be settled. None the less, poor Richard was thrown into prison at Seville: not at first, probably, into the common gaol like any malefactor, yet certainly closely locked up. Now Don Beltran reappears. Hearing what had happened he protested, furiously and often: probably altruistically too, though no doubt he did want that ransom! But, great man as he doubtless was when walking his quarter-deck in the Pacific, in Spain he carried no guns to speak of, and his protestations were all ignored.

What follows is far from clear. Probably, Richard grew tired of his confinement and, in September, 1598, succeeded in escaping from the castle of Seville. But he was retaken, and, presumably to punish him for such a crime, he was loaded with chains and thrown into a dungeon. Here he might have languished for ever: but, somehow, in August 1599 he got a letter smuggled through to England; and, in 1600, another to France. In the first he wrote a pathetic appeal to Elizabeth, describing his plight, restating the services of himself and his late father, and imploring her to do something to help him. She almost certainly received this letter, but perhaps there was not much that she could do. Anyway, there is no evidence that she did anything. His letter of 1600 got through to the English Ambassador in Paris. In it, he begs him to try and move the Queen, giving him incidentally the news that all his people but himself have now been released according to the composition. But still nothing came of it. Richard had been removed to Madrid in 1599; but he was still a close prisoner, though no longer, probably, in a dungeon.

When the year 1602 dawned, he was still there. At last, however, a much more powerful advocate appeared. Someone—possibly the Paris Ambassador, but more likely the still-persisting Don Beltran—succeeded in catching the ear of a really important personage. Count Miranda, Viceroy of Naples and President of the Council, was one of the foremost Grandees of Spain, and when he thought fit to declare that the injustice perpetrated upon Hawkins was a blot upon Spanish honour, things began to move. Even so, however, there was delay, due this time (if we may credit a further letter from Richard to the younger Cecil) to even dirtier work on the English side: so dirty that we can only hope the poor prisoner was misinformed, or else, distraught in his misery, exaggerating. What he alleged was that Dame Margaret, his stepmother, was refusing to produce the sum of £3,000, left by his father for no other purpose than to ransom him. On receiving this letter, Cecil intervened at once: the ransom was paid, and Richard was allowed to come home.

The man who returned, late in 1602, was by no means broken in either body or spirit. He was still barely 40, and he must have been greatly heartened by his reception. He was knighted in 1603 by the new sovereign and, next year, became Member of Parliament for Plymouth. In 1604, also, he received a further token of the King's belief in him. He was appointed Vice-Admiral of Devon, an office which was then by no means a sinecure.

In that post, however, he was far from happy. In fact, he was

already beginning to suffer from the malaise which was now overtaking all the surviving Elizabethans. Like them, not knowing it at first, he had left his Age behind him, and, with it, its standards and ideals. The pacific King, in his eyes, was no sort of substitute for the Queen whom he and his father had so long and faithfully served. Indeed the Fates were unkind to all surviving Elizabethans, but particularly to Richard. His captivity had deprived him of almost everything: not only of nine of the best years of his life, but also of what was left of the Great Queen's reign, the last decade of the Anglo-Spanish War, and his greatest opportunity. For he was essentially a man of war, unlikely now to shine in a world of peace. Moreover, when he set out in high hopes in 1593, the world may well have looked to be at his feet. He was something very like the "coming man". The older generation of great seamen who had hitherto made the running were patently wearing out—in fact, as we can see now, dying out: Grenville in 1591, Frobisher in 1594, Drake and John Hawkins in 1595. They would need replacing; and why should not Richard be their heir?

Well, what we, wise in our knowledge of history, know now could not be known then—that successors of the calibre of Drake and John Hawkins never did quite emerge from the ruck to take their places. The new generation never quite "made the grade". Raleigh was too many-sided and perhaps too self-centred: Essex altogether too mercurial, unpredictable. Lord Thomas Howard hardly had his heart in it, and gave up the sea for politics: Mansell, Monson and Leveson were smaller men.

But Richard Hawkins did seem to have all the essentials—youth, courage, skill, judgment, common sense. With the experience in high command which would certainly have come his way if he had been available, would not *he* have made the highest grade? Who shall say?

And yet—but this of course is only one man's opinion—and yet, the more I look at him, and admire what I see, the more convinced I am that Richard would not have made it: not *quite*. There is always a gap, definable even when narrow, between talent and genius.

His sun, in fact, was past meridian even when he came home. We need not dwell on its setting. The times were changing, and they caught him napping even in his vice-admiraltyship. That strange and lawless union of Channel trade and privateering which his grandfather had helped to start was dying: indeed *had* died, though perhaps few realised it yet. Trade languished, Privateering was

already branded by law as Piracy. Richard seems to have been slow in tumbling to the new conditions. In his job he was charged with the duty of scotching the law-breakers, but certain suits in which he became involved indicate that he may have had a foot in both camps. There is no hint, as there was with Grandfather William, of his being piratical himself. Rather, perhaps, he was not being quite so zealous in bowling out malefactors as the Law thought he should be. After all, some of these new "criminals" were his lifelong friends.

After a time there came what looks like a pointer. He left the old Hawkins house at Plymouth, and went to live at Slapton, 22 miles to the east in the rural depths of the South Hams. Thus a significant link was severed. His father's death abroad and his own long absence had left the family fortunes stewardless, and they never fully recovered. At Slapton he passed most of his remaining years quietly but happily enough, fathering his five younger children. The eldest boy, a younger JOHN, did go to sea, but made no signal mark there.

Richard, however, was never entirely "on the beach". There was talk, more than once, of his leading another expedition through the Straits of Magellan under the flag of the East India Company, who had ideas about exploiting the Solomon Islands. These came to nothing; but in 1620 he did get a post, and a real one. He was appointed Vice-Admiral of a Royal fleet under Sir Robert Mansell, sent to the Mediterranean to punish the Algerians for their piracies. The expedition was ill-equipped and, in many respects, shockingly mishandled: and it failed miserably, though the Admiral was only partly to blame and the Vice-Admiral even less so. They returned to a sorry scene of cross-accusations and face-savings. There was no money available for paying either officers or men, and everybody was busy shifting the blame upon someone else.

Evidently Richard, now turned 60, ageing, weary, disillusioned, had had enough. He was summoned to London to attend one of the many Privy Councils where they were wrangling over these unsavoury topics. On 16th April, 1622, he reached Town and, in his Will, executed that day, described himself as "sick and weak in body but of perfect mind and memory". Next day, in the Council Chamber itself, he had a stroke of apoplexy and died almost at once—of sheer vexation, they said at the time.

Two months later *The Observations of Sir Richard Hawkins, Knight*

appeared: and now, for the first time, his countrymen could read the full story of the *Daintie's* last fight, and see for themselves how very complete, whether in peace or in war, their "Compleat Seaman" was. To the last Fate had its sport of him, because Richard, for all that he was as modest a man as one could wish for, would, I am sure, have liked to know what his contemporaries thought of him as a seaman. Well, if we had but half the faith he had, we should believe that he *does* know: knows too what their grandchildren's grandchildren have come to think of his hero-father, whom he loved and so consistently honoured. And that must indeed delight the old boy's heart!

V "PLATONIST"

My next subject was born four years before my last one died: so, in Time, the transition is small. In place, however, it is considerable, and in environment startlingly brusque. The scene shifts from Plymouth to Manchester, a far cry in 1618; and the child then born there certainly never contemplated anything half so sensational as warring and filibustering on the Spanish Main. Rather he sought the quiet of a Scholar's life, though, through no fault of his own, he was not to escape strife, subtler and quite as bitter if of a very different kind. Once more, the link between the old Seaman and the young Scholar is in no way historical: but the relevant genealogical splice is, this time, a very modern one. It is in fact my own parent-splice: which is but another way of saying that it was my Father who stemmed from Richard Hawkins, my mother from the Scholar.

CAROLINE AND CROMWELLIAN CAMBRIDGE

MANCHESTER TO CAMBRIDGE

JOHN WORTHINGTON was the son of ROGER WORTHINGTON of Manchester, who was probably in business there, where, we learn, he was "a person of chief note and esteem in that town". Already by 1618 Manchester had long ceased to be a sleepy country place. Already Camden had recorded that it "surpassed neighbouring towns in elegance and populousness": that it had "a woollen manufacture, church, market and college", and that, even before Henry VIII's day, it was turning out "stuffs called Manchester Cotton". True, in 1724, William Stukeley the antiquary could still call it "the largest, most rich, populous and busy *village* in England": but that unexpected noun really records little but Manchester's legal and civic status; and he goes on to say that it housed 2,400 families and "an incredibly large trade". Very likely, then, Roger was "in cotton"; or (to quote Stukeley again) in "fustians, tackings, girth-webbs or tapes". For though he was unquestionably of the gentle family of Worthington of Worthington in the Parish of Standish, his immediate forebears—"of Manchester"—were the junior of the five branches into which that old house had split. In

fact it looks as though they had come somewhat down in the world: at least, we know that Roger's third son Francis was later "a draper or taylor in the town"; and, with John a life-exile from Manchester, it was probably Francis who succeeded to his father's business.

By the same token John's mother, KATHERINE, was a Heywood of Heywood in the same county, with, probably, a family background very like her husband's. All we know of the pair of them is that they were both "vertuous and religious": and, if the son in any way took after them, we shall have no difficulty whatever in believing it.

He would almost certainly have been received, when quite young, into the famous Grammar School, founded a century before. In those days, whatever its quality, the *tempo* of education had to be brisk, as this extract from Roger's commonplace book shows:

> My son John Worthington went towards Cambridge 27 Martii 1632. He came thither 30 Martii 1632. He was admitted into Emanuel Coll. on Easter Eve.

He was just 14—about the normal age for entering the University.

When John set out that early spring day, he was taking a step most likely to be irrevocable. In 1632 Cambridge was unbelievably remote. That first trip (four days and three nights) was to be his record-best. Being very far from affluent, he probably walked a good deal of the way, with occasional lifts from kindly waggoners. He did revisit his home occasionally, it is true; but the first of such trips which he mentions was only after he had been up for four years. Let him record it in his own terse style:

> May 25 (1636), I went towards home. June 1, I came home. July 21, I came from home. July 28, I was robbed of some things at Huntingdon. July 29, I came to Cambridge.

Seven days out, eight days back, and one robbery! No wonder his visits were not more frequent. No wonder that, after a while, young John ceased altogether to be "of Manchester" and became "of Cambridge".

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY IN 1632

It seems reasonably clear that Roger, this "person of chief note and esteem" in wealthy Manchester, was notable only in his fellow-townsmen's esteem, not in his worldly wealth. Certainly John, the eldest of his sons to reach manhood, was sadly short of private means throughout his life. And there is an even surer pointer. John

was admitted to Emmanuel College as a "Sizar": and this at a time when no parent who could afford to do otherwise would have let that happen. For here was an occasion when titles were of vast importance: not only—indeed not mainly—a matter of what we now like to call "income-groups". Basic social status was at issue, because, in 17th-century Cambridge, there were not Disraeli's "two nations", but actually *four*.

There was first the *Nobleman*, a peer in his own right, or at least the son of one. He was the University's darling. He ate at the high table along with the Master, sharing, of course, the Master's fare. In the University church he sat with Heads of Houses and Professors. In the College he had precedence over everyone—at times, we hear, even the Master would hesitate about taking the *pas* of him on leaving chapel. He was allowed to proceed to a degree after six terms, and he could have it without any examination whatsoever.

Next came the *Fellow-Commoner*, in prestige and privilege (and of course in the size of his bills) only a little behind the Nobleman. He ranked, approximately, with the Fellows (as his name implies), ate at their table and, in church, sat with the Masters of Arts. Evidently, too, nobility and gentility had somehow got themselves equated with godliness: for the bright young men of both these groups were not required to attend nearly so many religious services as their social inferiors. Both classes, also, as befitted their station, had their own servants to wait upon them at table, and to valet them elsewhere.

Next came the *Pensioners*, who may best be described, perhaps, as the forerunners of all modern undergraduates. They formed the bulk of the whole body: they had their own fare, eaten at their own tables; and their parents paid ordinary undergraduates' fees for them. They could not proceed to a degree until they had been in residence for nine terms and they were not allowed their own servants.

This leaves only the *Sizars*. Their parents paid little, indeed often nothing: and, since even Sizars would have to eat, they seem to have lived on the broken meats from the other tables, especially the high table. Yet they did not get even this inconsiderable something for nothing. They had to work for it by waiting on the two groups entitled to be waited upon. In fact, though they could participate in all University curricula and so acquire their degrees, they really *were* servants. Not infrequently, indeed, the duties of such essential people as the College Butler and the College Porter,

were performed by Sizars. (Here, by the way, Oxford made no bones about it, but actually called its corresponding class "Servitors".) It follows from all this that there was a real social stigma attached to them. They did not normally mix much with the Pensioners, and not at all with the higher groups. How could they? By hypothesis they did not have the means.

This system, degrading as it may now sound, had then much to be said for it. It brought a university training within reach of young men from quite poor families. It did not mean, however, that anyone in the land could send his son to Cambridge. Illiterate people—labourers and the like—would almost certainly have illiterate sons; and, though there was no set entrance examination, quite a high standard of literacy was demanded before a College would admit a lad to a Sizarship. Indeed, on the whole, more talent was expected of a Sizar than of any of the paying groups, especially of the higher two, whose work, let alone whose supervision, was nobody's business.

A boy like John, however, would be nowhere near the lower limit of admission, either intellectually, socially or financially. His career proves, at every stage, his intellectual capacity, while what we know of his family background makes it a little surprising to find him among the Sizars at all. It is even surprising from the money angle because when, a few years later, his youngest brother Samuel followed him to Emmanuel, he was admitted as a Pensioner. Perhaps by then Roger's business had looked up or, alternatively, brother Francis's draperies could now take the extra strain.

However this may be, Roger was probably in no way exceptional in his attitude towards the University. In such a home, if any son showed intellectual talent above the average, or even if one of them showed no marked aptitude for any other trade or profession, he might well be sent to the University, to see whether he could be turned into a parson—the goal of a great majority of those who went there. The Church was recruited from widely different levels, and there was room for all. The "plums", of course—bishoprics, deaneries and fat livings—would tend to go, as ever, to the gentry, whose parents "knew the right people". But the Nobility and Fellow-Commoners, most of whom were up at Cambridge primarily to enjoy themselves, never provided nearly enough candidates. So there were plenty of openings for Pensioners, who might hope for medium livings or chaplaincies at great houses: and there were still many vacancies for the humbler Sizars, though they would,

no doubt, have to be content with poor, out-of-the-way country livings. Such facts serve as a measure of the ability and character of a lad like John. For one who started so low, he certainly climbed very high indeed, and remarkably fast.

Could a man of today walk the streets of 17th-century Manchester, or indeed of almost any town known to him, he would doubtless be utterly lost. But not in Cambridge. He would find it, of course, much smaller, pokier, smellier, and it would lack a number of modern landmarks—the Guildhall, the Senate House, the University Library. Yet quite enough would be there to orient him—the magnificent pile of King's Chapel, the gatehouse of Trinity, the older churches of St. Benet, St. Mary's and the Round Church, the older courts of Corpus, Queen's and Peterhouse; even, probably, the gracious Backs along the river-line. Indeed, in the old town south of the Cam, he would be able to find and name all the colleges then in existence—that is, all which now exist save only Downing, FitzWilliam House and Churchill—because every one of them (though much enlarged) still stands at least partly upon the site which it occupied then. So he could pass through their gateways and say, without fear of error, "This is St. John's, this Pembroke, this Emmanuel".

John's own College was fairly new in 1632; but for Sidney Sussex (founded 1596) the newest: so new that he must often have caught sight of its very first Master, Dr. Laurence Chaderton: who was not, however, still in office, being by now 96 years of age. But he lived in a house nearby and was one of the established sights of Cambridge when John came up. He had been put in by the Founder, Sir Walter Mildmay, when that wealthy knight had secured his charter from Queen Elizabeth in 1584: and (like the Founder) he was such a pronounced Puritan that, during his 38-year Mastership, he gave Emmanuel its strict puritan reputation. As the *Song of the Mad Puritan* has it:

In the House of Pure Emmanuel
I had my education,
Where my friends surmise I dazzled my eyes
With the light of Revelation.
Boldly I preach, hate a cross, hate a surplice,
Mitres, copes and rochets:
Come hear me pray nine times a day
And fill your head with crochets!

If he believed (as many writers in his beloved Old Testament did) that advanced age spelt advanced sanctity, the first Master of Emmanuel must have been quite a self-satisfied old gentleman before he departed, because he died in 1640, aged 104, and was buried in the Chapel, the dutiful John attending.

In the very year of Worthington's admission as a Sizar, Emmanuel had a new Tutor, and John was put under him. His name was Benjamin Whichcote. Born in 1609, and therefore nine years John's senior, he belonged to a gentle Shropshire family, in whose veins (though perhaps no Whichcote knew it) ran the blood of the Conqueror. (Incidentally he was due to be my eight-great-uncle; but he could hardly know that either.) He had entered the College when 17—late for those days—and was only 23 when made Tutor. To modern eyes this seems full young for such responsible work. But there was a reason for it which explains one of the greatest differences between his Cambridge and ours.

In 1632 very nearly everyone at the University, whether undergraduate, graduate or don, was much younger in his grade than he would be now. In terms of mere age, the average Freshman then would be a fairly junior grammar schoolboy now, not even a Sixth-Former; he would graduate B.A. at the age of a modern Sixth-Former or very young Freshman, and he might well be appointed Tutor when his modern counterpart was just taking his B.A. degree. In fact, the whole institution was, in some important ways, more like school than a University, though without the harsh discipline of the contemporary school. This would be true in its standards of learning too, and in the quality of its "staff"—the whole body of Fellows, who tended to be lecturers rather than teachers, and teachers rather than scholars in the modern University sense. Even the Dean, responsible for all such discipline as there was, would often be only in his middle twenties (see below, p.144). What was conspicuously absent was the older sort of "don" of today; a teacher rather than a lecturer, and a scholar as much as, if not more than, a teacher: one who, in age, may now be anything from still-young to nearly old, and who may well have been in his College, man and lad, for forty years or more.

By far the most important reason for his absence—then—may easily be told. It lay in the inviolable rule that no Fellow might be married, itself partly a survival of the monasticism from which all the older colleges had sprung, but also because all the colleges had

once been little more than hostels; boarding houses for the students where there would be no more accommodation for wives than there would be, for instance, in a "house" at a public school. In both the students lived an entirely communal life, sleeping, and often working, in large, bare dormitories. Such extremely spartan conditions, it is true, no longer obtained at Cambridge in John's time. The colleges now had corporate existence, local prides and traditions, and were much advanced from mere lodging-houses. Yet they were still far removed from modern conditions, though already gravitating towards them.

One solid advance in this direction had been fairly recently inaugurated. About the middle of the 16th century there had been something of a revolution in the office and work of the Tutor, who had, thereafter, gradually become at once the teacher and the moral guide—"in *loco parentis*"—of his pupils. He did not have many scholars to look after, but such as he had were now closely attached to him. All, for example, would live on his staircase, in chambers which served both as bedrooms and workrooms with from three to five in each. The usual arrangement was for all the beds to be collected in the middle of the room, with curtained "studies" round the walls. Sometimes—but by Worthington's day not often—the Tutor would actually sleep in one of his pupils' rooms, though not, of course, eat with them. Indeed he was still in many ways like the "Usher" of a contemporary school; a sort of Assistant House-Master, and not much more, perhaps, than a glorified pupil-teacher. Anyway, it is obvious that, under such conditions, he could not possibly contemplate matrimony.

In fact, this enforced celibacy meant that every don had to make his choice, sooner or later, between a bachelor Fellowship and a family home, involving (with only one exception) his leaving the College altogether and taking, probably, a living elsewhere. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that most of them, being but human, opted after a while for wife and home.

There was, however, that one exception. The Head of the House —the Master of the College—did not have to be young, for precisely the same reason, though in reverse, which kept his underlings young. He could marry and found a family, being, invariably, provided with a comfortable house of his own within the College precincts—the Master's Lodge. His status within his College, therefore, was faintly analogous to that of a Housemaster within his own house. Only he was much the more important of the

two because, unlike the Housemaster, he had no equivalent of a Headmaster over him. He was, in almost all respects, supreme within his College walls because, as we shall see, the College, not the University, was the real Cambridge entity. Indeed, all these considerations tended to aggrandise him even further. Not only did he rule his domain absolutely: he had also the power and prestige which invariably stems from continuity. He was the one Old Hand in a community of Young Hands, for in the nature of the case, and unlike the rest, he could retain his supremacy for a very long time. The conditions just described made it possible—even likely—that he would begin his reign at an age younger than that of a modern Master, many of whose potential rivals have been growing old with him: and yet, though he might later hive off into some rich Church preferment, he might equally well grow old in his Mastership, and even die in it, for there was no retirement-rule. The same conditions also tended to turn the Heads of Colleges into a somewhat isolated clique divorced from the rest, and consorting (they *and* their wives) with the other Heads and *their* wives, the only "university ladies" in existence.

We must return to this College Aristocracy later, when Worthington and his friends begin to join it. But first we must follow the fortunes of our new Tutor, Benjamin Whichcote.

THE CAMBRIDGE PLATONISTS

The University which Benjamin Whichcote joined in 1626 was thus a very different establishment from that of our own day. More apposite to our immediate purpose, however, is the undoubted fact that, in many striking ways, it was very different from the University which he left, only 34 years later: and this man's contribution to that difference cannot well be denied. It was not so much on the routine side that his influence was felt: undergraduates were to arrive as boys, Fellows were to remain bachelors, for a long time yet. It was rather in the department of scholarship that he left his mark. It was he, more than anyone else of his age, who gave to Cambridge a devoted group of scholars and divines which was to raise her theological reputation to new heights.

He was, in fact, the founder of the Cambridge Platonists.

He found the University buried to the neck in the arid sands of Scholasticism. The "teaching"—if that honourable word can be used in so depressing a context—consisted in forcing pupils to absorb mere dogma, with the dust of centuries lying undisturbed

upon it. Sheer memorising alone passed for talent. But Whichcote was evidently one of Nature's irrepressibles. He was not to be muzzled by what others, even his seniors, did or failed to do. Probably he scarcely noticed it. His preaching and teaching were simple, and full of extraordinary fire: and not hell-fire either, for that was always conspicuously absent from his philosophy. Indeed, far otherwise: he was notoriously gentle, courteous and patient, both in the pulpit and out of it; and, in an age when even minor religious differences roused furies and acerbities inconceivable today, he made very few enemies, even among his opponents. No one at Cambridge, probably, had ever seen or heard anything quite like Whichcote, at least not in living memory: and his impact upon University, College and, most of all, his own pupils was at once deep, vivid and lasting. For what he was teaching was simple, common humanity; expounding what, in his fresh young mind, he conceived to be the obvious relation between God and Man. He was just a breath of fresh air suddenly released into a stuffy room.

Among his pupils, as it chanced, our John was by no means the only lad of outstanding ability; and it almost goes without saying that all of them needed but little converting. The best known of them, besides Worthington, were John Smith, Nathaniel Culverwell and Ralph Cudworth, all of Emmanuel. And Christ's College, just down the road, furnished another, Henry More. They were all John's near-contemporaries and friends, and with all of them he corresponded while they and he lived. This is the group which, with others of nearly equal calibre—all, of course under their master Whichcote—constitutes the Cambridge Platonists.

It is perhaps significant that Henry More, the only non-Emmanuel man among them, was at Christ's (and shared a Tutor) with John Milton. But their ways of life and thought, apparently, kept them far apart even then; and thereafter separated them still farther. Milton, though first and foremost a poet, became the mouthpiece, even though he never went quite to the length, of the ultra-Puritans, and embraced, perhaps rather from circumstance than from choice, a public career in politics. But More, essentially a moderate, and steering as clear as possible from all politics, remained at Christ's almost without a break for 56 years, to become one of the mouthpieces of the Platonists, the essence of whose doctrines was to eschew all extremes. In passing, we may observe that he was exceptional in another way, as an early example of the lifelong "bachelor" don:

for he neither married nor became a Master. But it is time to see what these Platonists did stand for.

For this purpose it is better, perhaps, to study the message, not of the founder, but of one of his school. For the movement developed as it grew, and Whichcote was not the most subtle-minded or profoundest of them: nor was his by any means the last word. John Smith was probably the most naturally talented of them all. He was the brilliant theological philosopher who "died young", leaving little behind him but inchoate notes of his thoughts, lectures and sermons. It is just here, too, that Worthington steps to the front. Perhaps his most lasting service to the movement was his editing of John Smith, a brilliant piece of work without which Smith's contribution would certainly have been lost for ever.

John Smith enunciates "the Reasonable Soul". He postulates in it the requisite faith to *know* the existence of God, to *know* that men's souls are immortal, and that Christ came to earth to redeem them. So much accepted, the Reasonable Soul does not side-track itself by over-careful searchings into what are in effect mere trimmings as compared with these cardinal truths. It therefore eschews all dogmatic extremes which, it holds, only serve to distract and confuse a man in his search, difficult enough anyway, for a viable religion. Instead—with these few "fundamentals" always excepted —the Reasonable Soul lets *its own reason* guide it in that search;

> for indeed the chief natural way whereby we climb up to the understanding of the Deity is by contemplation of our own souls.

Or again, we can only think of God "according to the measure and model of our own intelligence". In contrast to those beliefs which are basic to every genuine Christian, all other beliefs—alleged by those who hold them to be inevitable deductions from the original beliefs—are not "necessary to salvation": and their holders should not insist upon everyone else holding them. Every individual Christian must have the inalienable right of applying his own human reason to his own religious problems.

To one who is no theologian this seems the core of Cambridge Platonism: and, if a single—a layman's—word can be applied to it, that word is "toleration". (Anglican commentators and historians give it the rather more technical name of "Latitudinarianism".) In terms of the mid-17th-century scene, what the Cambridge School was saying was: "Let Catholics and all shades of High Churchmen on the one hand, and Puritans and all "sectarians" on

the other, hold what views they will. If genuine, and within the basic beliefs, they are to be respected. But let neither side attempt to push a basic believer into forsaking his own reason and adopting someone else's. That simply does not make sense."

Heaven knows there was room for such a view just then. Prelates (of Christ's Church) were roaring that a high altar in the east end (candlesticks compulsory) was necessary for salvation. Ministers (of Religion) were screaming that this very thing spelt certain damnation. And both parties—when they could—were savagely enforcing their views. What was the poor laity to do—that immense majority of the whole people which, if left to itself and not noisily incited by those who should have been its spiritual leaders, would surely have shrugged its shoulders and said it didn't care a hoot?

What, it may be asked, was the ultimate impact of the Latitudinarians? Surely, in that essentially middle-of-the-road institution, the Church of England, sanity at length prevailed. To this day—*at* this day—there is room in that Church for a remarkable diversity of "non-fundamentals": room for the High, the Broad, the Low; for everyone from Anglo-Catholic to Evangelical. Insofar as our Platonists were instrumental in bringing about this state of things, they did not live in vain.

There was another thing they realised too. If, in the unholy theological wranglings of their day, they were to act as apostles of moderation, of "live-and-let-live", it behoved them to lead lives of moderation themselves: to show that, without forcing anything upon anyone, the good Christian who had the "essentials" was a real asset in the Church's fold, condemning no one in it because he did not browse in exactly the same corner of it, but showing to every occupant of it the same constant, neighbourly, helpful face: in a word, setting a living example of being good without being quarrelsome. This was probably their principal characteristic, as ordinary men living in a workaday world. Yet they were not complaisant. On behalf of the "essentials" they were for ever fighting, with all the force of their example and magnificent eloquence, to convert souls into "reasonable souls"; yet never fussing over them when once won, save when they had cause to fear that they might lose them again, nor for ever seeking to steer them into this or that "ism": and, above all, never squabbling fruitlessly with one another, although at no time did they see eye to eye on non-fundamentals.

There can be no better example of this way of life than John Worthington. His letters and his own diaries—his *Almanacks* he

calls them—never once show personal animus against any man. His correspondents range through all shades of Christian thought: yet no contemporary of his ever has any ill to say of him. Success and failure, joy and sorrow—and all came his way in abundance—seem alike unable to stir him either to vanity or to self-pity. He takes the liveliest interest in everything and everybody, rejoicing in his friends' little joys and consoling them in their afflictions, great and small. Throughout, too, he is the very negation of a self-seeker, never asking anything for himself and—at least in the sad, bad days of the Restoration—never getting anything. He was profoundly modest too. In his time he had a great reputation for both eloquence and scholarship. His sermons were widely sought, and as widely acclaimed. His editions of the works of former divines[1] were widely read and praised. Yet, to read his diary and his letters to his friends (though not those of his friends to him) one would never guess that he had a reputation at all, but would place him simply as a true man, and a true friend, whose love of God induced him to love all men—save perhaps himself. This is the John Worthington whom we left as a little Sizar of 14, and whom we must now briefly follow through life.

The Master—Rise

Here, in the almost monosyllabic words of his own *Almanacks*, is the bald record of Worthington's university career:

Date	*Age*	*Event*
1632–35	14–17	No entries.
11.5.1635	17	Kept my Act in the Sophister's Schools [Took B.A.]
–.7.1639	21	I commenced Master of Arts.
Ann. 1641	23	I was chosen Lecturer this year which was omen that I should be Fellow.
14.10.1641	23	I began to sit for the Fellowship.
16.10.1641	23	After dinner the election was.
4.4.1642	24	I was pronounced Fellow and admitted.
11.6.1642	24	I stood in the University for the Philosophy Lecture, which was for one year.
1.10.1644	26	I was chosen Dean.
25.6.1646	28	[Copy of his Ordination Certificate.]
28.6.1646	28	I preached at St. Maries [University church].

[1] Especially his critical editions of John Smith, of Joseph Mede, the expounder of the Apocalypse, and of Thomas à Kempis' *On the Immortality of the Soul.*

2.7.1646	28	I was admitted B.D. [Bachelor of Divinity].
10.10.1646	28	I was made one of the University Preachers.
6.2.1648	30	I preached at St. Paul's London before the Lord Mayor & Aldermen [the first of many times].
8.10.1648	30	I preached at the Great Chappell in Windsor [the first of many times].
14.11.1650	32	I was voted to the Mastership of Jesus Colledge.
–.–.1655	37	[Not in *Almanacks*] Made Doctor of Divinity.
4.11.1657	39	I was elected, and by a Senior Proctor was pronounced elected, Vice-Chancellor.

This was his earthly pinnacle. It was a phenomenal rise, the more so because entirely merited, owing nothing to external patronage. In 25 years the clever lad from Manchester had risen from the lowest form of college life to be *de facto* Head of the University of Cambridge.

So much for the *Almanacks*, and for what John tells us. But his very modesty makes some further comment necessary.

THE FELLOWSHIP

This was vital: the key which opened all subsequent academic doors. Without it he would have had to depart to a country parsonage. Yet things went far from smoothly. Nothing of this appears in the diary, but his editor[1] has assembled from his other papers a fairly full account of what happened. The electing body—the Fellows of the College—rejected him in favour of a certain T . . . H . . .[2], by six voices to five, the minority including the Master, his Tutor (Whichcote) and his distinguished fellow-Platonist of later days, Cudworth. These men instantly challenged the voting, on two principal grounds: first, that in the judgment of all the voters John was the better man and the better scholar: second, that the College statutes had been wrongly interpreted. These, it seems, laid it down that a native of either Essex or Northampton should be given the preference. But John's party discovered a further clause which apparently the opposition had overlooked—that the county qualification should operate only if the candidates were otherwise of equal merit. So all was well: but it must have been a touch-and-

[1] James Crossley, in *The Diary and Correspondence of Dr. John Worthington* (Chetham Society, 1847).

[2] This is entirely characteristic of John. He refrains throughout from divulging the full name because, by implication, he could not avoid being derogatory to the man in question.

go affair because the dispute had to be submitted to expert legal opinion, and it took six months to resolve.

DEAN

This selection of so young a man to control all College discipline proves that Worthington had already shown outstanding qualities of character as well as of scholarship.

PREACHER

The four entries for 1646, taken together, are quite startling evidence of ability of another kind. Ordained on 25th June, he was invited to preach at the official University church *three days later*. Only four days after that he was admitted Bachelor of Divinity, and only three and a half months later confirmed on the rota of regular University preachers—a signal honour, revealing beyond doubt his pre-eminence in the pulpit.

MASTER

This was the biggest step of all. A Master's position in his own College has already been described. A word must now be spared for his position in the University. At Cambridge there had always been—and there still is—a condominium, of College and of University. Both had their clearly-defined functions and limitations which made them, in most ways, separate entities. This is still largely true; but the relations between the "joint sovereigns" have gradually been changing. In John's day, and for a long time afterwards, the College was much the more dominant of the partners. It had its strong corporate life, its all-but complete self-sufficiency. The University had little of either. The College had sole charge of the scholars, their morals and discipline: it did all the teaching and some of the lecturing: the University only some of the lecturing. But, more important still in practice, the colleges (or most of them) were rich, endowed through the centuries with the benefactions of grateful alumni: but the University was, by contrast, poor, unendowed. Virtually the only things which the University did, and the Colleges did not, were to confer degrees and to regulate the relations between Town and Gown. Thus a Master's near-dictatorial rule in his own College, was virtually untrammelled from without.

His very importance meant that, if he were to be a success, he must have many qualifications. He had to be a good scholar: contemporary opinion insisted upon that, and would not elect a

man who was not. He was also expected to have a "presence" consonant with his high office, and character and tact in dealing with his subordinates. But a successful Master had to be something more—a good man of business. Though he might have a bursar, that officer tended to be his clerk rather than a personage in his own right. Yet here is John Worthington, at the age of 32 possessed, or reputed to be possessed, of all these qualifications: and that he fully justified his choice no one has ever questioned.

At the same time it should be recorded that at the period of his appointment there were a good many more vacancies than usual in Masters' Lodges. By reason of the troublous times many of the established Heads were falling by the wayside, being, as might be expected, on the losing side in the political and ecclesiastical controversy then raging. Very High was falling before the onset of Very Low. Thus in 1644 Dr. Samuel Collins, a robust old Royalist, once King James I's Chaplain, was evicted from the Provostship of King's College, and Whichcote took his place, at the age of 35. Similarly in 1643 Dr. Richard Sterne,[1] an even more uncompromising Royalist and High Churchman—as Laud's Chaplain he had actually attended him on the scaffold—was ejected from Jesus College. In this case Worthington did not succeed him immediately, a certain Dr. Young intervening, himself to be ejected in 1650. Meanwhile, in 1649, Cudworth had been made Master of Christ's College, this time on its Master's death. It would, of course, be quite wrong to deduce from these appointments that the "Platonists" were political time-servers, ready to step into anybody's shoes. The truth is that they spent their lives trying to steer clear of politics, which were so closely tied just then to that religious extremism which they detested. In the decade 1644–54 it was the evicted Masters who were the extremists, not their Platonist successors. Unfortunately, however, with the victory of the King and High Church in 1660, not even the known moderation of the Platonists could save them. Though no one called them Sectarians, they were Sectarian appointments; and out they had to go—most of them, including Whichcote and Worthington. Cudworth, rather a special case, survived.

VICE-CHANCELLOR

This was, and is, a University officer, selected from among their own numbers by the Heads of Colleges for what was normally a

[1] Laurence Sterne's great-grandfather.

two-year spell, the holder remaining a Master the while. John, for a reason only hinted at yet fairly clear, served for only one year, and then relinquished the post, almost certainly at his own request. He patently did not like it, or its duties. They were mostly juridical, looking into such cases as, by both University Statute and the Law of the land, came within the University's competence. These included inter-college relationships, ranging from first-class rows to petty spites, where some form of arbitration between rival despots was necessary: not usually pleasant because it is notorious that the referee often gets the most vicious of the kicks. More frequent, but little if at all more pleasant, were the day-to-day relations between the Town and the University as a whole. Here the causes commonly concerned on the one hand what was disreputable in the Town and, on the other, the moral disciplining of those *in statu pupilari*: the serving of liquor at unstatutory hours, for instance, and the suppression of bawdy-houses. Here the Vice-Chancellor's powers were considerable. He could for example—and still can—banish loose women from the town, forbidding them to come within four miles of it. With his customary conscientiousness and leaving nothing to chance, John spent long hours in the sifting of evidence, with, as he very well knew, all or most of the parties lying like troopers. His surviving notes on such cases exceed in length the whole of his own *Almanacks*. To cite but one instance, there was the business of an unpleasant family named Prisley whose daughters, Mary and Margaret, were accused of being *feminae de malo suspectae*. It occupies months of his time and pages of his manuscripts.

From the sordidness of transactions like these he evidently shrank. But even less to his liking, probably, were some of the cases brought before him by zealous Proctors, reporting rash or loose political talk by young students in or out of their cups. No doubt he smelt here rancour (either political or ecclesiastical) on the part quite as much of the accuser as of the accused: in a word, persecution, extremism—his *bête noires*. Anyway, he was glad to be quit of it all. "This further for thy joy," he wrote to his wife on 5th November, 1658, "I have to add that I am free from my burdensome office. Yesterday Dr. Bond was chosen Vice-Chancellor."

It is plain, in fact, that Worthington did not like being a Judge at all. He was not weak as a result—in the end, for instance, Mary Prisley had to go. He had to order that, his office and duty being what they were. Yet who can doubt that, while passing judgment,

he had constantly in mind what *his* Master had done when faced with a very similar judgment? John too, I feel sure, would have much preferred to stoop down and write with his finger in the dust until the last accuser had departed; and then, alone with the wretched girl, to dismiss her with the beautiful words, "Neither do I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more!"

In one case, only the "crime" is mentioned; not the punishment—if there was one. The affair pleasantly spans the centuries, reminding us of a truth often overlooked—"Boys will be boys."

> Nov. 5 (1657) That night after supper, one of the squibs or crackers, thrown about by those at the fire, broke the window & came into my study, which was matted, & burned severall loose papers that lay upon the matt.

It would be fun to know what the Master of Jesus College and Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University said or did to the bold delinquent when (or if) he had him on that scorched matt. Well, first, one feels that there would have been no sedulous witch-hunt after the culprit; who (if caught) would have had to face nothing portentous in either sentence or punishment. No soppiness either: perhaps a stern (but brief) homily on thoughtlessness as an insidious form of selfishness, closing with something surprisingly like a twinkle in the magisterial eye, and an exordium, reasoned but still brief, on moderation in all things. Yet a livelier alternative remains well within the bounds of possibility—a sound flogging over the breech with a birch-rod. The 17th century never spoilt the child by sparing that portion of its anatomy; and, after all, it was only a few years before, it is said, that his Tutor at Christ's had thus corrected the author of *Paradise Lost*.

But, if we have to guess how our John dealt with a mischievous lad, we are fortunately much better informed on how he could treat a good and pretty lass. That year of 1657, when he reached his academic peak, was the same in which he reached domestic happiness. We have seen how, for the last nine years, he had been journeying to Windsor to preach. Near Windsor is Frogmore; and at Frogmore dwelt Mr. CHRISTOPHER WHICHCOTE, not, like his brother Benjamin, a brilliant scholar, nor, like another Brother (Jeremy), a distinguished jurist; but a plain, though wealthy, "Spanish Merchant". John never enters into such details, but it is

fair to assume that, when in the Windsor neighbourhood, he often put up with his old Tutor's brother. Here, when first he came, he would have found among a bevy of young children a little girl of eight named MARY. There are many indications that he loved young people, so that doubtless he played with her; probably even romped, because there are never the slightest signs of pomposity in him.

Let him continue the story.

> July 28, 1657 I began my journey to Eton.
> Aug. 2. I preached at Datchet.
> Aug. 3. I began to speak with Mrs. M. W. about marriage.

(That is good—"Mrs." M[ary] W[hichcote] was now 17!)

> Aug. 9. I preached at Windsor.
> Aug. 16. I preached at the Temple (London).

(The moth and the candle? Well, it looks like it.)

> Aug. 23. I preached at Eton.
> Aug. 31. I made an end about marriage (all agreed) and I came to London.
> Sept. 4. I came out of London.
> Sept. 5. I came to Cambridge (*Laus Deo*). There were two robberies betwixt London and Ware, Sept. 3.

(Yes, and another at Frogmore. Someone had stolen John's heart!)

After three days John could wait no longer:

> These for Mrs. Mary Whichcote, at her
> father's house at Frogmore.
>
> Dearest Lady.
>
> The ambition of these lines is to present my most real & dearest affections: To do this in this paper-way is all that can be done at this distance of place; but I am & shall be passionately desirous to do this in person, before the end of this month. It is now a week since I left Frogmore, which upon other occasions is accounted no long time, but, to me, it is a week many times told. For ye present I please myself in the constant remembrance of your loves & sweetnesses, & all those your lovely & endearing perfections, both of body & minde, disposition, & deportment, not forgetting your musick. And I shall hasten to prepare for that happy time of enjoying your ever desired company, & the crowning of our affections; for love affects not delays. In the meanwhile I shall be exceedingly desirous in a few lines to understand your good health: which, with all the

happiness that may attend this life, & that to come, is entirely desired by him who is,

Madam, your servant,
John Worthington.

We are indeed in luck to be able to read John's first, and very likely only, love-letter. But more luck is to come. For Mrs. Mary graciously acceded to his pleading and—under cover, of course, of a letter from her father—she answered him:

For my honoured Friend, Dr. Worthington,
Mr of Jesus Colledge, Cambridge.

Honoured Sr.

Your welcome lines are come to my hand, than wch nothing but yourself could have been more welcome to me; in wch you have expressed a great deal of love to me, & that far above my deserving. I cannot but acknowledge the moving of my heart to you, that of all men that I ever saw, if I were to chuse of ten thousand, my heart would not close with any as with yourself, you having such knowledge, goodness, and a lovely disposition, wch you have manifested to me, & suitableness of temper, & in my eye no person so desireable. And if it be the will of God that we shall be united together, I desire your prayers unto him, that he would be pleased to enable me to walk to his glory in my place and relation, & that our coming together may be for his glory & our comfort. Love covereth a multitude of faults; and I am perswaded that your love, & wisdome, will cover my weaknesses. I bless God I have my bodily health, though weak otherways, yet am willing to be

Honored Sr, your servant,
Mary Whichcote.

Among all John's papers there is no other which in the least resembles this letter. But of course he kept it. Who would not?

Oct. 13, 1657. I was married by Dr. Whichcote to Mrs. Mary Whichcote, the daughter of Christopher Whichcote Esq.
Oct. 17. I came to Cambridge with her.

The thing was done in style—the Spanish Merchant could afford it. Someone wrote a "Pastoral Epithalamium sung at the Marriage of Calander & Chariessa by shepherds & shepherdesses, Oct. 13, 1657". This too the Doctor preserved. It has not quite the spontaneity of the letters, and it is on the long side. Here, then, is the final chorus only:

Great Love, the sacred bond of souls, we pray
Lock this pair fast, & throw the key away,
Where discontent, sad strife & jealous doubt
Or ought that lowr's may never find it out.
In mutual bliss let them like vines abide
Unto their elmes by chaste embraces ty'd,
And all yr life these holy nuptials keep,
Blither then kids & fruitful as yr sheep.

The prayers of the gentle shepherds and shepherdesses were answered. Though, for both, there were sore trials and griefs in store: though, on John's side, the idyll lasted only 10 years, an idyll it was. For all that he was 22 years her senior, it was manifestly a perfect union.

The Master—Fall

With the return of the King, John's material prosperity, or at least all the outward pomp and circumstance of it, vanished overnight. But pomp and circumstance never meant much to John. They were not—and this is one of the things which he *knew*—they were not "fundamentals": indeed, they were transient things, mere trivialities. So, when he learnt, in August 1660, that he was to be ejected from his Mastership, he took the news in his stride—he does not so much as mention it in his *Almanacks*. Nor did he raise a finger to fight the decision. There would have been only one way to do that, and this he would not take. His only chance would have been to abase himself before the "right people"; and they, just then, would be the kind of people he did not want to know: the political sycophants busy hitching their soiled waggons to the new Stuart star, and the merciless religious extremists howling for reinstatement and revenge. Moreover, even had he known them, and been prepared to solicit their aid, he would have had to pester them, blowing his own trumpet in a fashion quite alien to him. He neither could nor would do it, and he never even tried.

Mary felt just the same. Though still only a girl of 20, never for an instant did she sigh for the prestige of being the Master's lady, nor feel it as any sort of a come-down to be the country parson's wife. The pair of them never show themselves to better advantage than in the day-to-day business, described at some length in his letters, of handing over the Lodge, executing minor repairs, tidying up the garden, accepting their successor's goods for stowage, just

as it suited his convenience; leaving the place spotless, and at the earliest possible moment. It chanced that, just then, the apples in the orchard were a-harvesting. So Mary picked them herself, stowed them carefully in the apple-loft, and went out daily to look them over, lest the bad should infect the good. That would have been the careful housewife's chore anyway. But, this year, with how much more care than usual she did it, because the apples were no longer theirs. It speaks eloquently for the Worthingtons, and perhaps for the newcomer too, that, in a situation plainly calling for tact in both camps, never a cross word passed on either side.

Here, however, the identity of the newcomer helped. He was Dr. Richard Sterne, evicted from that very Lodge 17 years before. For much of that time he had been grievously maltreated; he had seen the inside of the Tower, and the dank hold of an Ipswich collier (under threat, it is said, of being sold into slavery). It would hardly have been surprising had he been a little crusty. But it does take two to make a quarrel, and only a much more curmugeonly man than Sterne could have turned nasty with the Worthingtons. For not only did both of them smooth his coming in every way: John went further. Cheerfully, and unsolicited, he declared that his ouster's return and his own deprivation were *right*. He believed it too. To him, the original ejectment of a fine scholar just because he held this or that view, political or religious, was a sad example of the extremism he loathed. In his eyes, therefore, Sterne was, and always had been, the true incumbent: and he, Worthington, though his conscience was quite clear about it, had been only *locum tenens*—a stop-gap.

His replacement by Dr. Sterne, then, is not perhaps a good touchstone of John's humility. A better was to come at once. No sooner was the new Master in occupation: indeed, before he was fairly settled in the Lodge—before, even, he had tasted the cider into which Mary had turned his apples—he was off again. The Chaplain of Laud the Martyr was now on the crest of Preferment's wave. He was made Bishop of Carlisle and, a few years later, Archbishop of York. So the Lodge was empty again, almost before John's last piece of furniture was out of it: and, this time, he did make an exploratory move to see if by any chance he could be allowed to return. But he made a miserably feeble job of pushing himself; was clearly much too slow about it, and, before anyone could—let alone would—exert any influence, the Bishop of Ely,

who claimed the advowson, had appointed a friend of his own. And this too John took without a murmur of resentment or recrimination, though it was a far more serious rebuff to his self-esteem than Sterne's appointment had been. When a friend wrote to commiserate with him, his reply, so natural, so devoid of either pique or mock-modesty, throws a wonderful light on his habitual outlook upon life. After referring modestly to his long experience on every step of the University ladder, he goes on:

> I have had desires to promote ingenuous learning, piety, peace and candor, and to maintain good order where I have had power and interest: and I thank God I have not so behaved myself in the places to which I have been related as not to be desired. But I hope that others may be found that are better qualified for such service.

He was never again to fill a post which was in any way comparable with his abilities. Yet he remained happy and cheerful, at any rate so long as Mary lived. John's private means were small and the work he did was poorly remunerated. Yet, even when suddenly thrown out of the Lodge, they were not faced with destitution: not only because their wants were small, but also because John already had a parish to fall back upon. Following universal custom, people of the standing of Heads of Houses (who of course were invariably clergymen) always possessed benefices other than their main ones, usually College livings. This was Pluralism—there could be no other word for it.

But there were pluralists *and* pluralists. Thus, in his day, Wolsey, had enjoyed the revenues of an archbishopric, four bishoprics, and so many other benefices, great and small, as to be unable to enumerate, let alone to visit them. Worthington, needless to say, was not that kind of pluralist at all. In his time he held several livings *in absentia*, but not more than one at once; and even the one was always situated so near to his ordinary place of residence that he could easily perform its duties. Thus, at the moment of his eviction, he was also Rector of Fen Ditton: and (since it lies but two miles outside Cambridge) by far the commonest entry in his *Almanacks* after he became so is "preached at Fen Ditton". If it was pluralism, it certainly was not absenteeism. He did have one bad moment, though. This was when the doubt arose as to whether he could keep even Ditton. Then, faced with the prospect of Mary having no roof to cover her, he went so far as to draw up a memorial stating his claim to the parish and his work there. It tells, simply enough,

how he had never neglected the good people of Fen Ditton for all his work as Master and Vice-Chancellor. He concludes:

> The people desire my stay: they are free from faction. Peace and charity I have endeavoured to maintain among them . . . I have layd out more upon them than had been done for 20 years before. A certain number of the poor I relieve every week, who come in yr turns, nine or ten every week. Ditton is my main livelyhood, & if this should be taken from me I have no whither to go.

There is no evidence that this memorial ever left him. Indeed it probably did not because, just then, Parliament decided that the present incumbent of a "dead living" should retain it. Fortunately he had been presented with Ditton upon the death of his predecessor and not upon his ejectment.

So to Ditton they went: and they were very happy there, for all that the parsonage needed a great deal doing to it "to make it more warm & safe," it standing "bleak & alone & therefore more obnoxious to the cold weather now approaching". On the other hand, it held for John two great advantages. First, his whole life had been spent in the company of books and of friends who loved them as he did. He could hardly live without them: and there was his beloved Cambridge still within easy, if chilly, walking distance. Second, he could find time, now as never before, to be a family man. One daughter had been born at the Lodge, but she had survived only three months. At Ditton two more children arrived who (perhaps as memorials of the last really happy days of his life) were always nearest to his heart: DAMARIS, his favourite daughter, and John, his only son.

In 1663 he moved from Fen Ditton to the parish of Barking and Needham in Suffolk. As the sinecure living of Moulton in Norfolk went with these, the combined stipend was a little higher: but his reason for moving was probably another threat to his holding of Ditton. The change, however, was undoubtedly for the worse. It took him from Cambridge and his books, and he never settled down there; indeed scarcely tried to. Evidently he felt that he had not enough work to do, to remedy which he took the surprising step of procuring a post as preacher (without a parish) at the Church of St. Benet Fynk in the City of London. He seems to have thought that he could combine both duties, and that without absenteeism. But the constant journeying between London and remote Suffolk, though he conscientiously faced it, was very trying, and soon

began to undermine his health. It is far from clear why he did this. The old lure of books and friends in Town had something to do with it, no doubt: but his principal reason, probably, was the feeling that he was hiding his light under a bushel. The obvious alternative of giving up Suffolk was hardly practicable because the City preachership was worth virtually nothing in money. Thus poised between two almost uncombinable posts, he did begin to try, in his gentle way, to find elsewhere a single benefice more suited to his talents. But he failed—he was no good whatever at that game.

Yet his failure at least enabled him to show the world the courage of true faith. Early in 1665 his two children, now with Mary and himself in a poor City house, both fell ill. He fell ill too, and at length found his dreary journeys to Suffolk impossible. He therefore did the brave thing. He resigned Barking and Needham, with the bulk of all his livelihood. Again it will be asked why he did not resign Benet Fynk and retire to Suffolk. The answer is entirely to his credit. It was now the summer of 1665: the Great Plague had his parish and all London in its grip. His friends with one voice urged him to leave Town, as almost everyone was doing who possibly could. Everything, they said, pointed that way—his own ill-health, his sick children, Mary nearing her time with her fourth child.

He would not stir. His poor sick folk, he knew, needed him. For the sake of his family, however, he was at last persuaded to make one slight concession. He took a house outside the City: but only at Hackney, within easy walking distance of Benet Fynk. And he missed not a single Sunday, tramping to and fro through the grass-grown streets: for during those steaming, pestiferous months London itself came to a standstill. Three weeks after the family arrived at Hackney, the house next door was sealed up and marked with a cross. But the Almanacks grind doggedly on:

> Jul. 9 & 12. I preached at Benet Fynk.
> Jul. 13. I removed out of London to Hackney.
> Jul. 16, 22. I preached at Benet Fynk.
> Jul. 24. Mr. Mawdrell, lecturer of Benet Fynk, died.
> Jul. 30, Aug. 2, Aug. 6. I preached at Benet Fynk.
> Aug. 6. About half an hour past ten, or less, my wife was delivered at Hackney of a daughter. Her labour began when I was to go to London to preach. [None the less] *I preached at Benet Fynk.*
> Aug. 13, 20, 27. I preached at Benet Fynk.

Aug. 29. My daughter Anne Worthington baptized . . . Damaris, John etc. fell sick of agues. Mrs. Angell died of the plague next door.
Sep. 6. (Fast Day) and Sep. 10. I preached at Benet Fynk.
Sep. 13. Mr. Lamb's maid died of the plague.
Sep. . . . Oct. . . . Nov. . . . I preached at Benet Fynk . . .

He did not disdain man-made remedies:

a little of conserve of wood sorrel and London treacle mixed together on the point of a knife . . . twice a day fumed the house with vinegar . . . amulets, done up in little silk bags to a string, and so to fall as to be under the left pap . . . they were of dried toad . . .

The last-named he and his family wore so as not to hurt the feelings of the kind friend who sent them. But he did not really believe in dried toad, nor even in sorrel and fumigation. All he really believed in was God's power to protect them all, if that was His pleasure. And—this time—it was so. All the household came through safely.

He did not really believe in dried toad. No: but he clearly did not quite disbelieve in it. It is most important to realise this, not only of John; not only of his fellow-Platonists whose attitude in this matter was very much like his own: but also of all the foremost thinkers of that day; those great men who, at that very moment, were founding the Royal Society and, with it, one might almost say, Experimental Science. They were all feeling towards one great truth—never take anything on earth for granted on the word of Authority alone. Look into it yourself: sift any evidence which comes your way and try to draw conclusions from it. They were bent, in fact, on learning to walk before they tried to fly: walk properly too, by the light of nature and experiment rather than by what had been handed down for centuries as "the accepted" way. For what indeed *did* they know of natural phenomena? Perhaps only one thing—the extent of their own ignorance.

It was the right attitude; the one which was to lead to real scientific progress. But it was slow work at first, and some of their descendants, who ought to know better, have been too ready to mock at them. Thus John's editor, secure in the smugness of the early Victorians who had come to believe that they knew all the answers, or nearly, waxes quite sarcastic over the "superstition" of Worthington and his friends. Surely, he thinks, they should have realised they were wasting their time in endlessly corresponding about the boy who was said to have been killed by a box on the ear

from a ghost: about the Derbyshire woman who, having acquired the habit of inviting the earth to swallow her up if she was lying, was one day swallowed up, by the earth and in the act of lying: or about the Kendal woman who—they heard—had fallen into a coma soon after the death of her child, and had remained in it for 15 years, as one dead yet palpably still alive? Miracles? Perhaps. But again, perhaps not. There *might* be more things on earth (perhaps even in heaven) than had ever been dreamed of in Scholastic Philosophy. All they sought was to make sure—as sure as possible anyway. This was far from mere superstition: it was the very reverse—enlightened enquiry.

Meanwhile, the Almighty was very merciful to him and his during Plague year, and he was humbly thankful for it. How would he respond if, or when, God's mercy was less apparent? Well, we are now to see that too.

> Sep. 2., 1666. I preached at Benet Fynk in the forenoon on Mat. v-2. There was no service in the afternoon. A great confusion in the City by reason of a dreadful fire which began in Pudding Lane. On Monday night & Tuesday morning it burned down our Church, and went through the parish, not leaving a house.

John's was not spared, nor the bulk of his worldly goods. Fortunately, he had time to get his family away; but with thousands of others striving, frenziedly and all together, to remove their possessions, the narrow old streets soon ceased to be thoroughfares at all: and John was certainly not the kind of man to use his elbows. Yet from first to last there is no word of lamentation for himself. In his diary there is no other word at all: but he does give quite a detailed account of those terrible days in his letter to a friend. He consistently minimises his own losses—even when he mentions them, which is very seldom. But he dwells sympathetically upon other people's, and firmly pins the blame for the calamity upon the shoulders where he thinks it belongs:

> I walked over part of the ruined City that I might be more sensibly affected: none can be, but by seeing it. And I think such a mortifying sight is worth a journey, that men may be the more convinced of the uncertainty and vanity of things below. I was afraid of some severe judgment when I considered that men were not bettered by the former judgment. God grant that this fiery Trial may purge and purify us from our filth and soil.

"*Us* from our filth and soil!" Others instantly fastened upon their pet scapegoats—the Government, the Dutch, the French, the Papists. They railed upon them, loudly demanding condign punishment—not so John. Whom, he asks quietly, does *God* blame? Whom is *He* punishing? *Us*!

Among the "us", of course, was John Worthington, who had now lost home, church, parish, occupation. But why worry? "God will provide": and, sure enough, He did. Out of the blue, as John saw it, appeared the slightly eccentric figure of William (later Lord) Brereton, who offered him a kind of private chaplaincy which he was hoping to found at Holmes Chapel in Cheshire. Brereton was a well known man in his day, and a prime mover in the foundation of the Royal Society. Like Worthington himself, he was exceedingly fond of music, with a considerable reputation as a composer: and the two of them had long been correspondents. But anybody who is temperamentally disinclined to believe that it was God who sent him to the afflicted John will have his work cut out to decide who did, because hereabouts both *Almanacks* and letters are strangely silent. All that can be done is to piece the story together from scattered hints. The monetary value of the chaplaincy offered was quite good; yet almost all his friends advised him strongly not to accept it. But he did accept it, driven probably by necessity: and his friends proved to be right. In the early winter months he painfully moved his family into Cheshire, and they arrived, it would seem, only after a terrible journey whose details are nowhere divulged. Nor is it clear what he found when he got there: but the implication is that Brereton let him down badly, though perhaps inadvertently. John probably discovered, but only after his move was made, that his would-be benefactor's finances were in the utmost confusion: and he concluded that there would be no work for him to do there, and certainly no livelihood. Anyway, after a few months during which not a penny of stipend had been paid, and apparently little or no work done, he drifted away, visiting his surviving relatives in Manchester—the first time he had been there, he says, for 12 years—and preaching up and down the country: for in that line there was still, as always, a great demand for his services. His family remained in Cheshire, living on who shall say what.

Meanwhile his wife's uncle Whichcote was growing anxious. Though now only a London vicar, he still retained much of his old influence over his former pupils; and he succeeded in obtaining for John the living of Ingoldsby in Lincolnshire, which was in the gift

of Dr. Henry More, the bachelor-don of Christ's. It was a poor, isolated parish but, as ever, John took it gratefully and happily. In the early spring of 1667, he once more moved his family and his now inconsiderable belongings.

He had been settled there, however, for only a few months when the greatest catastrophe of his life overtook him. For the last time let the laconic *Almanacks* break the news:

> Aug. 2, 1667. My wife was delivered of a daughter about 7 o'clock this morning.
> Aug. 4. I preached at Ingoldsby.
> Aug. 8. This day (about a quarter of an hour past 11) my dear wife, Mary Worthington, departed this life.
> Aug. 9 (Friday). She was buried.

And, at the same service, her daughter was christened Mary after her. She was only 27.

That John's whole earthly happiness was buried with her is only too painfully clear. On the day after the funeral he wrote to her uncle and his oldest friend. His very soul is bleeding, but his faith is unshaken.

> She was sooner gone than they thought, and expired like a young child. Nor did I ever hear her complain, in any murmuring or unbecoming way, when her pain was most grievous . . .
>
> I will bear the indignation of the Lord, for I have sinned against Him; I acknowledge and adore Thy justice and Thy righteous disposal, O Lord . . .
>
> It was His great mercy to me that He lent her me so long as He did, ten years it would have been on Oct. 13 had she lived . . .

I think he saw in her—and indeed she must have been—the very pattern of what John and his friends thought the Reasonable Soul should be:

> a follower of Christ in benignity and nobleness of spirit, in humility, self-denial and patience, in readiness to do good, with a particular care and delight to do good to the poor. She was constant, reverent, and serious in the duties of religion, conscientiously strict in her life but without any superstitious scrupulosities; humble towards men, perfectly humble towards God, in the sense of her own unworthiness . . She was affable, courteous and pitiful; of a free spirit (but provident), abhorred what was sordid . . .

On her tombstone, he chose for text—"*To die is gain*".

He could not be happy at Ingoldsby now. Its very isolation, he knew, had contributed to Mary's death. The nearest doctor lived at Grantham, some nine miles away by devious tracks which could hardly be called lanes, let alone roads: and before he could arrive she had gone. The district was unhealthy too, the parsonage house over-large, damp, draughty and cold. The four children, of whom the eldest (Damaris) was only six and the youngest a new-born babe, all sickened. The two older ones came very near death. John himself was stricken with "a lingering ague"—malaria, or some cognate fever. Between the 20th August, 1667, and the end of the year, the *Almanacks*, without a single comment, record no less than 49 fits of it. No wonder he could not shake it off. Only two chambers in the house had fireplaces. One, characteristically, he kept for guests, whose company he longed for. The other was occupied by his ailing children and the woman who looked after them: and after him too, as he lay alternately burning and shivering in his unheated room.

He was terribly lonely, starved of his books, mostly lost in the Fire, and cut off from his intellectual equals:

> I have nobody comes at me. The neighbours say they are not fit company, and they are abroad with their cattell.

But, most of all, he was pining for his dear dead wife. He scarcely ever says so in so many words: but the constant shadow is there. The faith within him was still strong. He did not complain: but in October he was reduced to trying for a pathetic solace. He wrote to a friend in Town, begging him to find an artist who would do Mary's likeness. He had often, he wrote, meant to have it done, but what with the Fire, their frequent moves, the illness of the children and her own modesty, no steps had been taken. Was it too late now?

> Her face was small and round and ruddy, in her nose was a little rising: her eye was a vivid grey . . . Perhaps Newman the Printer hath not forgot her face, and you may help his remembrance . . .

Vain hope! *Où sont les neiges d'antan?* The project is still-born.

He was certainly trying now to get away: to exchange his living for one nearer London, Cambridge, Oxford. At this time too he solicited the headmastership of his old school at Manchester; but, isolated as he was, he heard of it too late. Yet it would be entirely wrong to suppose that he gave way to despair or let his talents run

to seed though, once, he is fain to admit that he feels like the one-talent Servant of the Gospel. He could still do his duty by his parish, carry on with his voluminous correspondence, and devote himself to his children, as father, mother, nurse and tutor all rolled into one[1]. His only earthly honour at this or indeed at any time after leaving Cambridge, was the gift by the Archbishop (Shelden) of a prebendary stall at Lincoln. This, however, was a very small source of revenue and, even so, his right to it was fiercely disputed by the Bishop of Lincoln.

At length, however, he was offered a "lecturership" under the Vicar of Hackney, where he was already known. It was not "a living" at all, and its value was about one-quarter of that of Ingoldsby. But, after much thought, he accepted it, and in August 1670 moved house again. In every ecclesiastical and academic sense his new post represented a crashing fall for an Ex-Vice-Chancellor.

There can be little doubt, however, that he was as happy there as his now ruined health would permit. Apart from his constantly recurring agues, he had been suffering for some time from severe pains in the head and offensive discharges from the ear. But at least he could have access to the books he loved and the companionship of people like Whichcote. He could also preach again to people who were not all the week "abroad with their cattell", and teach scholars rather more advanced than little Damaris and young John. In fact, he could unbury his talent: and he was content.

Soon, too, another prospect dawned; and that pleased him mightily. Much to his surprise, he learnt that the church of St. Benet Fynk was to be rebuilt: and he had hopes, this time quite sanguine, that the benefice would be presented to him. True it was but a poor, small living, and as yet it had no church, nor for that matter a parsonage. But John had come to love Benet Fynk; and we find him, whenever he could spare the time, taking his old walk from Hackney to the City and anxiously watching the workmen's progress on the site. The thought of being its Rector undoubtedly cheered his last days.

For his time was almost come. In August 1671 he was engaged in getting rid of Ingoldsby, which he still held, though at a loss because, conscientious as ever, he was paying a curate more for ministering there than the living produced. In October he was still waiting, with

[1] "Damaris comes running to me and desires me to present her duty to you. She is my scholar, now almost out of the Testament, and will soon be ready for the Bible." (To Dr. Henry More, 8.1.1669). Damaris was then nearing eight.

exemplary patience, for an outcome to the long-drawn-out Benet Fynk affair.

> It was thought to have a Vestry on Thursday next to speak of these matters [the church, and the rectory, now all but his]: but I think it must be deferred, for I find myself indisposed . . .

Deferred it was, *sine die*. Just here letters and *Almanacks* cease abruptly. His last illness had begun. He died in his house at Hackney on 26th November, 1671. He was 53.

Certainly the Church had slighted him living. But, no sooner was he dead than she rushed to honour him. His funeral oration was delivered by one of her rising preachers, the eloquent, fair-minded John Tillotson, King Charles's own Chaplain, soon to be Dean of Canterbury and later its Archbishop. Apart from some of his great editing achievements almost all his works were published posthumously; and most of them ran into several, some into many editions. It is true that they are not much read now: but then neither is the more modern and eloquent work of Tillotson. After all, tastes in sermons—even *for* sermons—are quite as much matters of fashion as of merit. None the less, the Church of England still honours him for what he was—one of her apostles of moderation both in pulpit and lecture-room; both between calf-bound covers and in the habitations of men.

Postscript: Victorian Cambridge

By what looks like sheer coincidence, at almost exactly the moment when a Worthington left Lancashire for Cambridge, another family did precisely the same thing. Just as Roger Worthington of Manchester belonged to a younger branch of the Worthingtons of Worthington, so did a certain RALPH CLAYTON of Adlington descend from the Claytons of Clayton in the same county. As this Ralph was born in 1589, he must have been of much the same age as Roger Worthington. But there was this difference: where Roger lived and died in Manchester and only his son moved on, in the other family it was Ralph himself who moved. His reason for doing so is unknown. Probably, since he was by very much a younger son, with but little prospect of ever succeeding to a single Clayton acre, he merely went off to see what he could do on his own.

Be that as it may, however, he turned up in Cambridgeshire in the

early 1630's, bringing with him a wife and several, perhaps many, children. But the wife died in 1635: whereupon he married again and proceeded to raise a second large family.

Here, as elsewhere, there is no intention to follow the fortunes of these Claytons in detail. They are merely to be used, at present, as a good illustration of those social ups-and-downs which are such essential features of English family history. For Ralph's efforts to make good were presumably none too successful: at least, with two large broods to provide for, he seems to have failed in setting them all up as, no doubt, he would have wished. The result was that the younger sons of the second family sank in the social scale to become, in the 18th century, yeomen-farmers, if not mere tenant-farmers. Certainly Ralph's great-great-grandson ROBERT (of whom I possess an attractive if crude portrait) has "farmer" stamped all over him. Its date is about 1800.

Just then, however, the fortunes of the Cambridgeshire Claytons were beginning to mend. Robert had an enterprising son (also ROBERT) who sought to better himself by forsaking the farming line and "going to town". "Town", of course, was the county town; and there, before he had done, he had established a lucrative fishmonger's shop in Petty Cury, the heart of old Cambridge. I have his portrait too, a much more expensive one; and in it he contrives to look like, if not a fishmonger, at least a successful retail tradesman. He too followed the family habit of begetting a multitude of children. Yet, before he died, he had done two things for them, the one financial, the other social. He had by then acquired several businesses, and had made enough out of them to give a good education to any of his seven sons who could profit by it: and he had married a wife who was a distinct cut above himself. She was of a professional Ely family with prosperous connections in London—her sister, for instance, was in quite a good literary circle there and numbered the poet Southey among her friends. Mrs. SARAH CLAYTON'S portrait survives too, a companion-piece to her man's; and she certainly looks far less "retail" than he does. So the home in Petty Cury would be refined enough to make a passable nursery for intellectual talent: and events proved it.

Three of the boys took their opportunities. One became a solicitor in the town with a very good name and a profitable practice. The other two went further. They exchanged "Town" for "Gown", entered the University as Pensioners, and were awarded scholarships. The younger, named JONATHAN, took orders, and became

a Headmaster before dying young. His elder, Charles, rose to much greater academic eminence. He was one of the best classics of his time, won the coveted Browne Medal, was for long Tutor of Caius College, and, having established a nation-wide reputation as a preacher, ultimately succeeded that famous Evangelical Charles Simeon as incumbent of Holy Trinity, Cambridge. This Church, as it happened, lay a bare hundred yards from the bedroom over the fish-shop where Charles first saw the light. If we suppose that such metamorphoses could not occur in snob-ridden early-Victorian days, we shall be wrong. Yet, though no snob himself, he was made to suffer a great deal from contemporary snobs who could not forget that fish-shop!

He might have gone much further than he did: as far, in the world's eye, as Worthington himself. For, tradesman's son though he was, he was considered for many high preferments in the Church, including a bishopric. These, however, he made no effort to secure, and, in the end, got none of them. He never asked for anything, nor ever allowed any of his many high-up friends to canvass for him. When we examine the reason for such abstinence, we reach the very core of the man. His interpretation of "Divine Guidance" was remarkably literal. From the age of 19 he believed implicitly that the Almighty had "saved" him in one never-to-be-forgotten hour, as He had saved Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. We learn the day of his Revelation—24th December, 1832—but not, unfortunately, the nature or occasion of it. In that hour, however, he had vowed never to take any step in life of the least importance until, on his knees, he had laid it fair and square before his Maker, and received direct injunctions about it. He was, of course, by no means the only Evangelical of his day to believe in this procedure: but he was a more thorough, more relentless practitioner of it than anyone else known to me.

The 20th century may perhaps smile at my great-uncle Charles[1]:

[1] The 19th century did too. Utterly abhorring the "sinfulness" of dancing, he once preached a sermon against the time-honoured Bachelors' Ball, affirming in the course of it that the notorious poisoner, William Palmer, had fallen from Grace primarily because he had seen six clergymen engaged in that lamentable pursuit. This was altogether too much for merry young G. O. Trevelyan, then a freshman:

> I dreamed we both were waiting in the Hall,
> Serving refreshments at the Bachelors' Ball.
> There, gayest trifler in the throng of dancers,
> Was Clayton cutting figures in the lancers.
> (*The Cambridge Dionysia*).

but never let it sneer at him. If ever a man practised what he preached it was Charles Clayton. He was, through life, an excellent man, as lovable as he was cultured; gay, and with the sprightliest sense of humour which would break through, even though he held that every sign of levity was really sinful: superbly eloquent in the pulpit too, and, in or out of it, full of human sympathy: beloved by pupils, parishioners, friends and relations alike. And never see in this "inward voice" of his the least manifestation of hypocrisy. On the whole, it rode him very hard. True, when he was getting on in life it permitted—commanded—him to take the "golden rectory" of Stanhope in Durham, the richest living in England. But he makes it perfectly clear that neither the duty nor the stipend was congenial to him personally. The duty, of course, he discharged cheerfully: the difficulty of the stipend he overcame by having volume upon volume of his sermons printed, and distributing them gratis by the thousand.

On the other hand, however, his "Voice" lost him all higher Church preferment, a major sacrifice for one who, in the best sense, wanted to rise in his profession. But it did not prevent him from becoming the confidant of the highest in the land, all the Church authorities, from the Archbishop of Canterbury downwards, frequently consulting him on every sort of Church appointment. Further, his uncompromising view on Divine Guidance bade fair to wreck his domestic happiness—or looked as if it did: of course he would never admit it. As a young man he fell passionately in love with a sweet, happy creature named Jane Browne; and she with him. On his knees he sought the accustomed guidance: and the answer was —"No!" As ever, he obeyed, sick at heart yet without reservation or complaint. They parted, and lost touch. But both remained single, with Charles as eligible a bachelor as the Church contained; for, in addition to his qualities of mind and soul, he was strikingly handsome, and many were the girls who sighed for him.

At length they met again: perhaps by chance, perhaps (as Charles came to think) because God ordained it: but also perhaps—how angry he would be at the mere suggestion!—because, though a saint, he was so obviously, poor dear, a *man*: one whose heart, however hard he tried, had never been quite able to give her up. There followed two full years, in which he held out, wrestling in spirit. He had concluded, by his usual methods, that his Master was not averse to his taking a wife: and he wanted Jane. But, since God had said no to that, what was he to do? At length, his earthly love

persisting, he steeled himself, after long prayer and ruthless self-examination, humbly to enquire whether by any chance his Maker had had second thoughts. And, it seems, He had!

I am neither joking nor exaggerating. It is all down there in his journal, meant for no eye but his own. Now as ever I shall revere his memory. I shall say no more of his doubts, fears, painful outpourings of spirit which fill pages of his manuscript. But in my boundless admiration for him, I do not scruple to let others into the secret of his astonishing faith. Neither here nor anywhere else has he any doubts at all. He, Charles, must not expect to fathom the depths of the Eternal Mind. For some reason not vouchsafed to a poor sinner like himself, God's purpose in keeping him single must have fulfilled itself. All he can do—and does—is to thank Him, now as always, for His goodness: for—now—he has distinctly said "Yes!"

Charles wasted no time. Why should he? Instantly he wrote and proposed, and was accepted by return of post. Then he got into a train and hastened to her. It was a long journey, but he spent the whole of it on his knees in the railway carriage—in 1863, travelling cross-country from Cambridge to Clifton (change at Bedford, Bletchley, Oxford, Didcot, Swindon and Bristol) he could doubtless avoid rush-hour. Very soon, they were married, and happy. It would be profane to criticise the original interdict, and impertinent to wonder whether Charles had interpreted it right. But he was now over 50 and she but little younger, so that they could have no children. It somehow seems a pity: but there it is.

It would be gratifying to be able to claim this fascinating person as an ancestor. As it is, however, a second best must content me—all his ancestors were mine too, though (curious reflection) I have four times as many.

Let us return to the parallel between Worthingtons and Claytons. It is to be observed that the latter, in the persons of Charles and Jonathan, have just about risen again to the social level of the Worthingtons in the person of John, though they have taken some two centuries to do so. But there is a further reason for introducing Charles here, out of his true time. In many ways he and John were so much alike: both altogether admirable Christians, first-rate scholars, inspired preachers; both endowed with the liveliest humanity: alike at *heart*, that is, for all John's exceptional "broadness" and Charles's profound "lowness". In their careers, however, there were marked differences of timing. John rose early to his peak, both in worldly repute and in personal happiness. He was

a personage both at Cambridge and in England when still quite young, and he married his child-wife while still in his thirties. Then came eclipse and relative deprivation, which he endured with Christian humility and without bitterness. But Charles rose more slowly, deliberately eschewed his earthly chances, and was for long starved of domestic happiness. Yet, in the end, he lived to a tranquil and happy old age. His diary, covering in manuscript the last 50 years of his life, is one of my most treasured possessions. But it is, in one sense, the most misleading of documents. Anyone with no further source of information about him would deduce from it that he was the veriest kill-joy—the joy killed being, by the way, invariably his own. In it he has elected to portray himself as a phenomenon with no spark of humour whatever; a soul living in ever-present dread of falling from Grace, to such tune as to blot out most of life's kindlier offerings; grudging its possessor the slightest pleasure or relaxation. He is the servant, one must feel, of a Very Jealous God.

Fortunately, however, my Mother, who kept house for him when she was young and he already old, had a very different story to tell[1]: of the eye that twinkled even when chiding, the wit that sparkled yet never hurt; the love for all men which never faltered nor faded: the love for children too, and a lovely understanding of them, as tender and touching as Worthington's. A supreme example survives, not in that rather dismal diary, but in the heart of one little girl who never forgot it.

When my Mother was keeping house for him, her little sister Fanny came to stay. On the first morning she was quiet as a mouse at family prayers. But they were rather long, very earnest, and of course miles above her head. So on the second morning she brought her best doll in with her; the one with articulated joints, so that she could kneel it beside her and see that it behaved beautifully during the long prayers. When these were over, Uncle Charles called the child to him, set her between his knees, and said,

"Fanny, I don't *think* God likes little girls to play with their dolls during prayers. But, if you like, I'll ask Him?"

She considered for a moment. Then a thought struck her.

"Wouldn't that be telling?" she asked.

[1] So too has that invaluable if laconic work *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, which concludes its purely tabular notice of Charles with the words, "Well known in Cambridge for his *genial* character". Thus to describe the Clayton of the diary would be like calling coal white.

"No," said Uncle Charles. "You see, He knows already. He knows everything."

Partially reassured, she agreed; and Uncle Charles disappeared into his study. Once there, he kept his word, we may be very sure. After all, this was his ordinary practice with his own problems, and here was only another problem—of his own, because Fanny's parents were both dead.

Meanwhile Fanny, thrilled though still a little nervous, could hardly contain her impatience. All morning she hung about the hall, never letting the study door out of her sight. But it was only at dinner-time that Uncle Charles came out. She ran to him, snuggled against his sober black legs, and asked her question a little breathlessly.

"Uncle, what did God say?"

The tall straight figure did not unbend. Immensely seriously he replied:

"I was wrong, Fanny. He said that He doesn't mind at all when little girls play with their dolls during prayers. But He does like bigger ones to attend to Him, because He doesn't think that most of us can do two things at once."

Fanny's little hand crept up to his. "O-oh," she said, her eyes like saucers: and then, very softly, "Uncle dear, did He say I was a *big* girl?"

"No"—and the smile came at last—"No. He didn't say so. I think he meant you to decide that for yourself!"

And Fanny's doll never attended family prayers again.

When at length my great-uncle Charles passed into the presence of that rather awesome Creator before whom he had prostrated himself through life, tributes came from the great ones of the land, prince and peer, premier and prelate. But the finest tribute of them all (said my Mother, who saw it) came from the rough Durham miners who, in their hundreds, stood like black statues in the bleak cemetery, and, lest their weeping womenfolk should think them soft, blew a lugubrious Last Post into their best sunday handkerchiefs.

VI EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LONDON

"Big Business"—Skinners

For once I can carry straight on; not from Charles Clayton, who rather forced his way in out of due time, but from the Worthingtons. The setting, however, is changed, from 17th-century Cambridge to 18th-century London; from Scholarship to Business.

DAMARIS WORTHINGTON was only 10 when her father died. Though now orphans, she and her younger brother and sisters were by no means friendless. She had two prosperous uncles, a younger Benjamin and a younger Jeremy; not the sons of ex-Provost Benjamin of Kings nor of the jurist Sir Jeremy, but of her own grandfather, the Spanish merchant Christopher Whichcote. Also, though the merchant himself was no more, her great-uncle Benjamin was still living and was now Vicar of St. Lawrence Jewry in the City. So there was no talk of her going back to her father's people, the Manchester Worthingtons. She divided her time between the three surviving Whichcotes until, on the old Provost's death in 1683, she went to live with one of her uncles: who, as she was now grown up, was doubtless already looking round to find a suitable match for her.

One was found without difficulty. Her Worthington portion was small, but she was eligible enough. Whichcote and Worthington were still names to conjure with in the academic world; both ex-Heads of Houses and distinguished scholars and theologians; and both were entitled to bear Arms. Since this Chapter, then, concerns itself with certain social rises in 18th-century families, it may be prefaced by a few remarks upon one of the Coats—that of Worthington. Its adventures provide a good illustration of changes in heraldic outlook.

According to Richard Christie, Worthington's second editor, John's Arms were—well, not very inspiring: "Argent an annulet between three three-prong dung-forks sable"; and, for crest, "a goat passant holding in the mouth an oak branch vert, fructed or".

(Here was a typical heraldic pun—in 17th-century Lancashire a dung-fork was called a "worthing".) These arms appeared on John's commemorative tablet in Hackney Church: but age had so far obliterated them that, in 1878, they had to be cut anew: from which attention the dung-forks emerged as unmistakable *tridents*. This is a decidedly Victorian touch; but possibly more suggestive still is the fact that another herald of the 1940's, a descendant and admittedly an amateur, discussing what is evidently the same coat, has (whether by mistake or sheer misprint) turned those awkward dung-forks into *dining*-forks! These transmutations are somewhat symptomatic of what was happening in several of the families which now come up for review. Though they were not snobs, it was becoming the fashion to "look up": or, conversely, the passion for Arms was spreading downwards.

The non-academic connections of Damaris were factors in her favour too. By now she was no longer "of Cambridge", still less "of Manchester". She had lived in or near London ever since she was eight, and in circles which already begin to qualify as "big business". Her grandfather the Spanish merchant had evidently been well-off, and his sons, her uncles, were wealthier still. Though they had their "offices" in Town, they—or at least one of them—had a "country" place at Hendon: and it was there that Damaris was living in 1685, when she found her partner and was married to him from her uncle's house.

The man of her (or her uncle's) choice was NATHANIEL TURNER. He is described in Worthington's funeral certificate in the Herald's Office as "of Fleet Street in the Parish of St. Dunstan's in the West, London, Linnen Draper". But let us make no mistake. Francis Worthington, the Manchester uncle of Damaris, was a linen-draper too—"Wollin-draper" his headstone calls him. But this was perhaps the only similarity between them. Francis had his retail counter, and almost certainly served behind it. It is highly improbable that Nathaniel served behind his, even if he had one: and that, at the moment of his marriage anyway, is very far from certain. For by then he was a *Liveryman*—admitted to the "ffreedome" of the Worshipful Company of Skinners after a seven-year apprenticeship to another authorised Master-Skinner. He may well have been a Master-Draper too.

Here is no place to describe the great Livery-Companies of London, with their long histories of change and development. They were already immensely old. The earliest of the 12 Great Companies

(in which number both Drapers and Skinners figure) had received Royal Charters from Edward III, though they had existed for long ages before that: and they had had their distinctive liveries from much the same period. They were not all equally wealthy, of course, but it is fair to say that their average wealth was great. So was their prestige, both in London and far beyond it. These were the people who in effect ruled the metropolis, already perhaps the richest city in the world, or soon to become so. Thus our Nathaniel had many public-spirited occupations besides his main one of building a fortune. As well as Master-Skinner (and perhaps Draper), he was Citizen of London, Commissioner of Lieutenancy of that city, Common Councilman of Farringdon Ward, and a Governor of Christ's Hospital.

Nor was their gaze only turned inward upon London. The freemen of the great City Guilds were much more than the merchant aristocracy of London. We may promote them a good step higher, and call them the merchant-princes of England: and even of the world, because the Drapers, Skinners and Goldsmiths by no means confined themselves to draperies, skins and precious metals. They were often, as well, ship-owners and exporters in a big way, controlling a trade already ocean-wide and ever becoming wider.

In this class was Nathaniel Turner: at least, it would perhaps be safer to say that his descendants, for several generations, were very firmly established in it; but to add that, very possibly, Nathaniel was the first Turner to reach it. For his father, FRANCIS, was not "of London", but "of Woburn in Bedfordshire"—quite another matter. He may have had means, but was not, perhaps, noticeably "gentle". The very fact that his descendants know but little about him—and that not for want of trying—is evidence that he made no great stir in the world of his day. There is a further indication too that Nathaniel may have been "coming up". His elder brother William, we know, owned some property in Bedfordshire, whether acquired by his ancestors or his own exertions is uncertain. Before he died he became Deputy Lieutenant of the county: but it was only in 1704, when he was nearly 50, that he petitioned the Earl Marshal of England "to be admitted to the ranks of Gentility, and to bear a Coat-of-Arms." He was granted one, on behalf of himself and his two brothers, of whom Nathaniel was the younger. Later, in 1710, Nathaniel, himself now 50, struck out on his own, and was granted leave to "distinguish his, the younger branch of the family"

from William's. (It was now that he added Worthington quarterings, but apparently opted for a *millrind*[1] in lieu of a dung-fork.)

Indeed a dung-fork would have been but a poor emblem of what Nathaniel stood for. It is even doubtful whether he ever saw one, because he seems to have dwelt throughout over his place of business in Fleet Street, and never to have had a country (or near-country) seat elsewhere. Living on one's job was, of course, still the well-nigh universal custom, even of the most successful Londoners. But one result of the Great Fire had been temporarily to drive everybody out of the City proper: and though undoubtedly most of its wealthier inhabitants returned as soon as houses could be put up again, it does seem that those who could afford it had meanwhile tasted the delights of the purer air blowing on the heights of Highgate, Hampstead or Blackheath, or among the pleasant Surrey hills lying a little back from the South Bank: and they now began the practice of keeping up second establishments in such places. We have seen the Whichcotes doing something very like this at Hendon, even in the 17th century; and we shall soon see the later Turners doing the same thing elsewhere. Here perhaps is the first thin trickle, growing gradually into the flood which now empties the City every night and has long since turned the Citizen into the Commuter.

But this was not yet: and, when his time came, Nathaniel was laid to rest in the Church of St. Dunstan's in the West. His monument, on the south side of the altar, recorded that he had lived in the parish for over 50 years—with, of course, a testimonial for having discharged every conceivable Christian duty. Maybe he had. But epitaphs are not the safest kind of biographical evidence, so that they may safely be omitted. He was 77, and he had managed to outlive Damaris by 34 years. But then, she had been hard-worked too, having presented him with 13 little Turners at the uniform rate of one per year-and-a-half. The unlucky thirteenth proved too much for her, and lies beside her on the other side of the altar. Someone, either Nathaniel or his licensed poetaster, inserted an elegantly arithmetical couplet on her plaque:

> IN YOUTH SHE LIVED BETIMES Ye BEST OF LIVES,
> FOR 18 YEARS 5 MONTHS Ye BEST OF WIVES:

not exactly inspiring as poetry, perhaps, yet having the merit of very likely being true. After all, she was Mary Worthington's child.

[1] *Fer-de-moline*, the iron clamp supporting a millstone.

Nathaniel's eldest boy was JOHN, so named presumably after his saintly grandfather. Whether he himself may be numbered among the saints is questionable: but he does seem to have suffered one of the penalties which is often their lot. He was undeniably persecuted; not by Fortune, which unfailingly smiled upon him, enabling him to die worth a good deal more than his father, but by Misfortune, in the person of a misfitting wife. Her name was ELIZABETH PINCKNEY, and she was probably related to, if not actually descended from, that Leonard Pinckney who figures in the diaries of both Pepys and Evelyn. He held the minor post of Clerk of the Kitchen to King Charles II, was a confirmed Stuart admirer and probably a Catholic. Certainly Elizabeth was one, though John Turner was not: and she never let him forget the difference, even going to the length of hiring the local clergyman to pray for him from his pulpit: which must, to say the least, have made the poor man very uncomfortable. Perhaps he knew how to defend himself when living, but she won the rubber by outlasting him, thereby securing the chance of composing his epitaph. There she let herself go—or rather, perhaps, ostentatiously refrained from doing so. Where all his immediate forebears lie with their virtues emblazoned in stone above them, all poor John got was

HIC JACET JOHANNES TURNER

PECCATOR

Meanwhile, to point the moral for future generations, she arranged to have carved in the space immediately below, for insertion when the time came,

ALSO THE BODY OF † MRS. ELIZABETH TURNER

HIS WIDOW

And faithfully the masons obeyed her.

The marriage looks like a mistake from the first, because of the parties' radical—and twofold—incompatibility. When they were wed, he was 45, she only 20. John Worthington and Mary Whichcote had managed triumphantly to bridge a gap of 22 years, because they were Reasonable Souls who saw eye to eye on religious essentials. But Elizabeth Pinckney, an ardent proselytiser, young and unsuccessful, and John Turner, a middle-aged Protestant old enough

to be her father, failed altogether to make the thing work. John died in 1755, and it was 17 years before the Cross appeared under the PECCATOR in the churchyard of St. John's, Hampstead.

St. John's Hampstead, observe: not St. Dunstan's in the West, though John, like Nathaniel, was still "of Fleet Street" in that he still operated from there: and he was still Skinner and Citizen of London. Yet he no longer lived there, in the sense his father had done. Hampstead was his home, and "of Hampstead" was his normal designation. There he built a fine house which he called The Firs because (says the family tradition) he had already planted the well-known fir-plantation called "Turner's Wood", in order to give it shelter. Family tradition, of course, is not necessarily history; and it has been said that the Turner of Turner's Wood was a Fleet Street *tobacconist*.[1] But even if this be so, both Ogilvy and the tradition could still be correct, because the family does not know all the enterprises directed by John Turner from Fleet Street: nor, probably, did Ogilvy. Tobacco-importing could well have been one of them.

One more result of this seemingly unhappy marriage gives food for reflection. It produced unlooked-for fruit in future generations; and that in the one aspect of life which was the main cause of the unhappiness. No less than four distinguished clerics descended from the union, three Roman Catholics and one Anglican: from their youngest daughter Frances, the three famous Vaughans, the Cardinal, the Archbishop of Sydney and the celebrated preacher Father Bernard: from their eldest son Nathaniel, stemmed Charles Ellicott, Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol.

It was this Nathaniel who inherited the property at Hampstead, and indeed is buried there. But, as the eldest son of a wealthy father, he could afford to forsake the City altogether, turn country gentleman and emerge as "of Stoke Hall, Ipswich". It was John's only other son, another JOHN TURNER, who kept up the Fleet Street interest, was the Citizen and Skinner of his day, and substantially increased the family fortune. He had, however, to find a new equivalent to The Firs, Hampstead: and he did so, leaving the heights for the valley and becoming John Turner of Winchester House, Putney. There is no need to follow his career closely. It was, in a worldly sense, very successful. He seems at one time to have owned almost all the right bank of the Thames where Putney now

[1] e.g., Ogilvy's *Relics and Memorials of London Town*, p.243, Hampstead.

stands. The value of that property must now be quite astronomical: but—alas—it has not remained in the family: not, anyway, in that branch of it which interests the present author. He was also very much the Skinner, of which Company he became the Master. Indeed that worshipful body was so woven into the texture of his everyday life that he christened his third son Skinner: who, with his eldest brother Michael, duly became Master in his turn. So did the sons of both of them. First and last, in fact, the Turners provided some eight Masters.

I possess the copy of an exquisite miniature of this John Turner of Putney, done by John Dill Engleheart. It shows him in his prime, and in the height of contemporary fashion: a handsome man, looking as though born to command, yet not one, perhaps, at whose mercy one would like to be. The mouth looks somehow haughty and not a little hard; of a man more accustomed to taking than to giving.

He had a very long innings. When he died (to be buried at Putney) he was 89. This extended tenure of life and family power had one result which was unfortunate to his eldest son, to whom we now pass.

MICHAEL TURNER looked, on the face of him, as prosperous as his father. He too was very affluent, a Master of the Company and in very close relations with it, as is instanced by a pleasant custom for years prevailing among the Skinners. They had, and had long enjoyed, an annual and semi-ceremonial outing to Richmond; and the ceremonial barge which they used for the occasion was one of their oldest and most treasured possessions.

> The start was from Dyer's Hall wharf (or in later times from Waterloo Bridge) where the Company embarked about 11 a.m., and with 18 rowers proceeded with the tide as far as Putney: here the barge stopped at Mr. Michael Turner's,[1]

where a light collation was served and other Skinners embarked. The Putney Turners would be among them, and this might be quite a formidable reinforcement because, though John of Putney had only nine children, Michael of Putney had all but twice as many. Ladies were invited as guests, and, after the main meal had been taken at Richmond, they all returned on the evening ebb, the sonorous notes of their (always seemly) revels floating over the still

[1] J. F. Wadmore, London and Middlesex Arch. Soc. Trans. V., p. 128.

river. They drew in again as they reached Winchester House on the Surrey side, and disembarked those who had joined there. Whether a dish of tea was then served we are not told.

The fruitful lady who found the time and endurance to fill Michael's quiver for him was of a family interesting in its own right. When George II's Queen conceived the idea that England needed something better in the way of Botanical Gardens, the old King was certain, as ever, that the only experts who could be trusted to do justice to the project would have to come from his beloved Hanover. To that end, therefore, in his later days he imported a certain JOHN CONRAD FÜLLING who, with his son THOMAS, had a great horticultural reputation across the North Sea: and at length, in the very year of George III's accession, Kew Gardens were thrown open to the public.

The Füllings, who were competent and now prosperous people, settled down at Kew: and there, in due course, Michael met and married Thomas Füllings' daughter, MARY ELIZABETH. This lady was now to prove her competence in the role of wife and mother. Her performance was impressive—17 children (none of them twins) in 19 years and five months. As a breed, they were no weaklings either. True, four of them failed to reach their first birthday, and two more their 20th: but the remaining 11 lived to marry if they wanted to, and 10 of them did so, several of them competing strongly with their parents. Nine reached, and passed, life's allotted span: one lived to be 80, one to be 96. Nor did their mother show any sign of exhaustion, lasting for 20 years after her youngest was born. It was the father who failed—relatively—to stay the course, departing in 1828 at the age of only 58.

The situation was unusual, and perhaps a little pathetic. Michael lived all his days in his father's house, rearing there his vast family. But he never enjoyed the property, because John of Putney outlived him by three years. But there was another result. Even the Turner wealth could not take the strain of the division which now faced it. The late Michael's share was only one-ninth of his father's patrimony, which, rather unkindly perhaps, he distributed equally between his nine children: and now Michael's ninth had to be shared by his *11* surviving offspring: each of whom, therefore, would receive—theoretically—a bare one-hundredth of the original fortune.

Naturally, however, the estate was not in fact so mathematically divided. Michael's eldest son, John Fülling Turner, who was the

heir-at-law, rightly received Winchester House, though hardly enough with which to maintain it; and much of the valuable land was sold off "for a song". Yet John Fülling continued to prosper, and so did his next-but-one brother, who was that Skinner Turner already mentioned. The reason was that these two became the real "big business" heirs of their father. They carried on the tradition of being Citizen, Skinner, Master etc. In a word, they began the whole game all over again, and prospered. Yet here we leave them for good, having no more to say about the "Skinner" interest. There are two reasons for this. First, they have ceased to be my direct forebears, and become merely avuncular to me: and, second, they have left the 18th century, whose "big business" was to be my theme.

THE REBEL

Yet this book would be incomplete indeed if it ignored one last Turner. It shall not do it.

Between "big business" John Fülling, eldest son of Michael of Putney, and his next-brother-but-one, "big-business" Skinner, came the second son: MICHAEL TURNER too—"Michael Turner the Younger" to that vast nexus of cousins who part company with me here; but, to me, *the* Michael whose name my parents gave to me; and, for no other reason but that it was his, I am intensely proud of it.

From the first he revealed himself as *different* from all other Turners: a character, and an entirely lovable one. Not for him the pursuit of wealth which had filled the lives of so many generations of his forefathers. No. At the age of 11 he announced, quite firmly, that *he* was not standing for that kind of thing. He was going to be—clean outside all family tradition—a *sailor*. That was that: his father (to whom the odd son must have seemed almost expendable) soon found him a naval captain for patron, and to sea he went, in time to have a crack or two at Boney before our arch-enemy packed up, first for Elba and then St. Helena.

It would, of course, be mere wishful thinking to pretend that Michael had any decisive share in the Great Emperor's fall. But, until it happened—much to Michael's chagrin, be it said, because it unquestionably wrecked his naval career—he saw a great deal of fighting, and, without any doubt at all, acquitted himself nobly. But the fact that he was only 16 and still a midshipman when the end came means that none of the major naval chroniclers had much

time to spare for him. After all, historians have, or think they have, more important things to write about than such very small fry. Unfortunately it is true, though, that his naval life was full of frustrations, because he had joined up at quite the wrong moment: just when one of the most depressing slumps in our whole naval history was beginning.[1] In fact, in the historian's eye, his career afloat may be written off as a failure; and that through no fault whatever of his own. An officer condemned to spend at least three-quarters of his service life ashore and unemployed can hardly expect it to be a brilliant success.

None the less, he had chosen the Sea because he loved it. So it happened that, to his last hour, he was full of tales of it, and of his adored Royal Navy: how, in the heat of the fight with the *Etoile*, a newly rated Master's Mate, to calm his nerves, lit a cheroot over an open cask of powder; but old Neddy P.[2] who never missed a thing, spotted it from the Quarter Deck and roared at him like Old Nick to put it out: but, before he could do so, an obliging French round-shot did it for him, removing the glowing end from the cheroot but not the cheroot from the Mate's mouth: whereupon old Neddy solemnly raised his cocked hat, bowed to the *Etoile* and bawled through his trumpet, "*Bien tiré, Monsieur. Merci beaucoup!*". Or again, how a fellow-midshipman in the *Conqueror* had been drowned, and laid out on the Quarter Deck overnight, to be consigned to the deep at daybreak; how the raw Marine told off to watch the body thought he saw it move and, in panic, put a musket ball through the flag which covered the "corpse", missing its nose by the same margin as the Frenchman's roundshot had missed the Mate's; how something—perhaps the smell of powder so near it—tickled the dormant "reefer" into consciousness and into the laconic observation, "Miss again, lobster, and I'll report you to your officer for damned bad shooting!".

And countless others. True yarns? Who knows? Who cares—who cared? Certainly not my Mother, who adored the old man only this side idolatry, with feelings which put her admiration for Uncle Charles into the shade. For in his last years he filled his great rambling house at Southborough, between Tonbridge and The Wells, with youthful and mostly orphaned nieces and nephews,

[1] Anyone interested in that slump and its effect upon the careers of Michael Turner and the officers of his generation, is referred to the present author's *Navy of Britain* and *The Navy in Transition, 1814–1864*.

[2] Captain Edmund Palmer, R.N., commanding H.M.S. *Hebrus*.

great-nieces, great-nephews, and grandchildren, of whom my Mother, her brother and sister made three. These he called his Youngsters and, with the willing help of two or three old and tried domestics, whom he rated Petty Officer, he ruled over the whole party with what he was pleased to term "Ship" discipline. The very house was divided from roof to cellar into Poop, Quarter Deck, Lower deck, Orlop and Bilge: there were Ward Room and Gunroom, messes and action-stations, watches and hatches: and, though the régime was entirely innocent of that brutality which had marred the ship-life of his youth, he loved to pretend that it was not. He boomed at them in terms straight from Nelson's day; threatened the boys with the Cat and the girls with the rope's end, vowing to stop the grog of the whole lubberly crew of landsmen, wasters, loblolly-boys and sons of guns if they didn't jump to it—a glorious anachronism in the drab Victorian '70's, at whose slightest word they did jump, boy and girl alike, to do his bidding: not, as he affected to think, in terror of him, but in pure love and admiration: for, need it be said, the only rope they ever saw was the neatly-whipped end of the clothes-line, and the only cat old Tabby Collingwood sunning herself in the lee scuppers of the Quarter-deck.

I entered the world 16 years after he left it: but, through my Mother's eyes, I learned in youth to know the old sea-captain intimately—his lurid tales, his lingo of another and more heroic age; his generosity to others—himself quite a poor man—and his shining simplicity revealed in his clear sea-blue eye and his strong seamed face, framed in snow-white hair and beard. I have half a dozen pictures of him, mostly photographs in which he looks just like that. But in one, a silhouette, he is a dapper young officer in the 1820's, wearing his new lieutenant's uniform, and looking ripe enough for any fun or mischief. This makes the last of my collection all the more odd. Here, another of the Englehearts has painted an exquisite miniature showing the head of a three-year-old child with bright red-gold hair, but the same eager blue eye; and he has added a pair of diaphanous little wings, having decided, goodness knows why, to depict him as a Cherub. He thereby shows himself a fine artist, but an inept prophet. Michael Turner was no cherub, and no seraph either: but he was something which is an admirable second-best—a good and proper man. He fired my imagination in youth, and has ever since steeled my resolution: not to follow him into the fleet in which he served so faithfully and fruitlessly—

I was fitted for that neither by nature, ability nor opportunity—but yet to serve it in all humility in a quieter, more academic way; with pen rather than sword to honour it, and to keep green its memory—and his.

Like so many sailors of the Navy's golden age, he was a sincerely religious man, but without religious frills. His great-great-great-grandfather the Platonist would have found him, I am sure, a thoroughly Reasonable Soul; and he could earn, even from Uncle Charles (who, though no relation, was well acquainted with him) the epithet "dear"—an adjective reserved in that severe man's vocabulary for one who, by no means sure of salvation, was certainly not to be written off as a non-starter.

So, emphatically, he was not one to "have a wife in every port". Yet he was far from averse to wives, having in fact three, following each other at discreet intervals. But, unlike his father, he was not prolific in children. Only the single child of his first venture, a daughter, has any descendants left today. It was she who united the Turners and the Claytons by marrying one who has already figured in these pages in an incidental role—JONATHAN, Charles's younger brother.

Captain Michael turned his broad back on the whole business of money-making. But I can hardly follow him, because one of my objects is to study how the men of the 18th century did just that. I have now to examine, therefore, how another set of Londoners, not clad to start with in the Purple of Commerce, yet attained by their own exertions almost, if not quite, to that imperial colour. We have done with "Big business", and we come to relatively "little business"; passing from a world-famed Livery Company to another Company, obscurer, but no less interesting for that. Incidentally, we are passing again from my Mother's to my Father's people.

"Little Business"—Moneyers

THE PROJECTOR

In the latter half of the 17th century there were two families residing in Rotterdam, a Dutch one named Vander Esch and an English one called Atkinson. The connection of the last-named with Holland was quite transitory—I shall return presently to their English ancestry. But the Vander Esches were native to the country, and the first (I think) to be associated with England was

named HENRY, who was one of that not inconsiderable band which came over with Dutch William in 1688–9. While his dates are not exactly fixed, it may safely be deduced that he was born, in Holland, in the later 1650's; that he died in, or just before, 1734, and that he begat a son, in England, in 1691.

Again, we do not know what position in William's entourage he held, nor what service, if any, he performed for him. But there is every reason to believe that he stood well enough with the new King to receive from him a "place"—a modest, minor one in the Crown's gift. And it was in the Mint, then housed in the Tower of London. All this is deducible, not so much from his own career as from his son's; for of the younger man much more is known.

He too was named HENRY, and he seems to have been an English subject from the first. He had a very successful career, of which more shortly. For the moment the point to realise is that he was clearly able to enjoy a running start. About 1707–9, when he was some 17 years old, he too secured a place in the Mint, in which establishment he was to remain almost all his life, and to rise quite high in it. But such a "place" was by no means within the reach of everyone, especially of an unsupported foreigner. He would need quite strong internal interest; and it is only reasonable to suppose that this was supplied by his father, already intrenched as a Place-man.

It is not being suggested that young Henry actually inherited his father's job (as, centuries before, John Marshal had inherited old Gilbert's, and William Marshal inherited John's). That stage had passed long since. But the underlying principle of Heredity was far from dead, though now it had ceased to be a "right", and had become a "job"—in the hardly yet derogatory 18th-century sense of that word. Examples, far later and far more blatant, are easy to find. To cite but two: Sir Richard Haddock, having served afloat for many years, was in 1690 appointed Comptroller of the Navy, at the age of 61. This post he held until his death in 1715 when, at 86, he was quite decrepit: but not too decrepit to secure the succession to his son (also Richard). The younger man, then in his middle 40's, hung on to the job leech-like, even when so completely bed-ridden that an extra Commissioner had to be appointed to do the work. In fact the Haddocks, father and son, managed to monopolise the most important administrative post in the Navy for 59 years! Again, at a much later date and in the Mint itself, one James Morison, after holding for many years the office

of Deputy Master—by then in effect the leading executive in the whole establishment—grew weary of his work and secured its transference to his son, who kept the post for another 49 years. As the change-over took place in 1801, this transaction was actually a 19th-century one. The "hereditary" element is stressed here because we shall find that our story of the Vander Esch—Atkinson "Combine", now to be told, provides as good an example of 18th-century family jobbery as one can hope to light on.

This Combine lasted altogether through five consecutive generations, and some 160 consecutive years. In following it we can do two things—trace the fortunes of a London family which was rising like the Turners, but a good generation, or even two, behind them; and study the character and workings of a unique sort of Company in a unique environment.

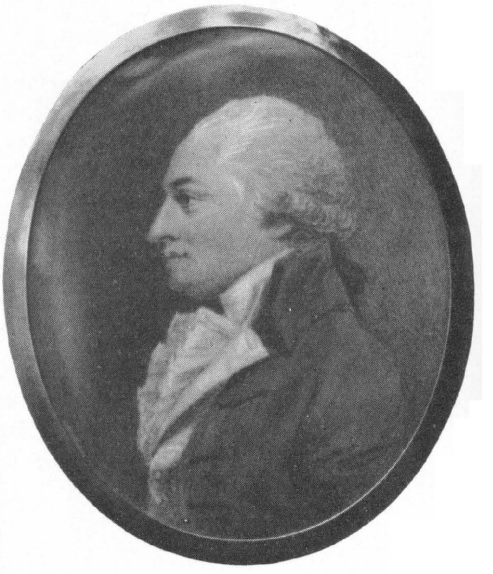
The first step in the story is the hardest, both historically and genealogically. It must be stressed that the first of the quintet (the elder Henry) never climbed high up the English ladder, either in prestige or wealth. The second (the younger Henry) passed him in both respects yet, even so, never really stood out. So, in the task of tracing them, it has not always been possible to distinguish between the pair, especially as the duties, and the labours, of the father seem sometimes to melt almost imperceptibly into the son's: for the labours of both were of a very similar genre, and the top rung which each attained was, in name at any rate, the same rung. We must now see how this came to pass.

The elder Henry, having secured his footing as William's nominee in 1690 (or thereabouts) had, by 1727, risen sufficiently in the Mint's hierarchy to be appointed to the office of Deputy Master —not yet quite so important a post as it afterwards became. Also, in 1730, he seems to have achieved a minor advance (probably in both prestige and pay) when he was appointed by the Crown to be a Director of the Royal African Company, founded to control the flow of that gold which was destined to become guineas. This was probably the summit of his achievement, because he died in 1734, or even a little earlier, having served in the Mint for some 45 years.

The career of his son is a good deal less shadowy. Born in 1691, and in England, he entered the Mint, under his father's wing, in or about 1708, and remained in it until his health gave way in 1762, well over half a century later. He did not, quite literally, succeed his father as Deputy Master: there seems to have been a brief

"KNIGHT-ERRANT": Effigies of William Marshal and his son in the Temple Church, London. From a photograph by A. F. Kersting

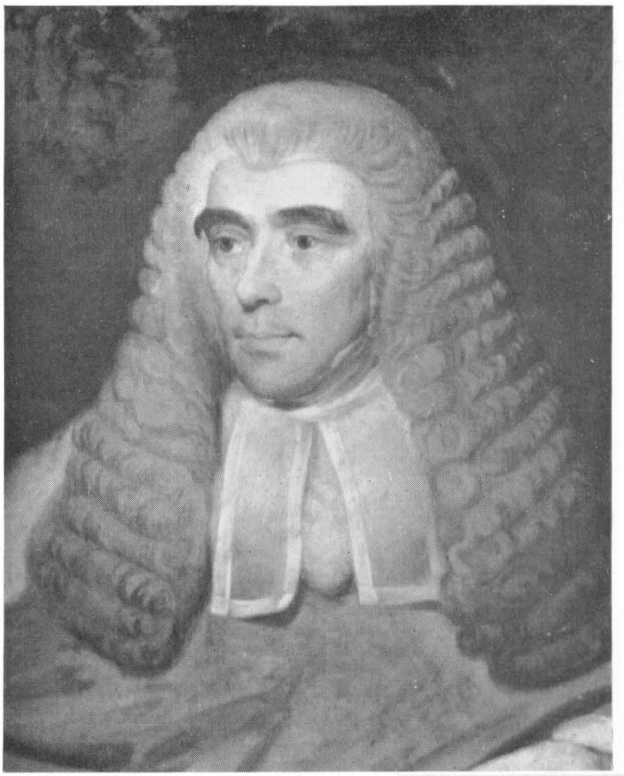
"COMPLEAT SEAMAN": 1561(?2)–1622 Sir Richard Hawkins. From *Plymouth Armada Heroes*. (My 7-great-grandfather) From the original in the possession of R. S. Hawkins, Esq., Wellington, New Zealand.



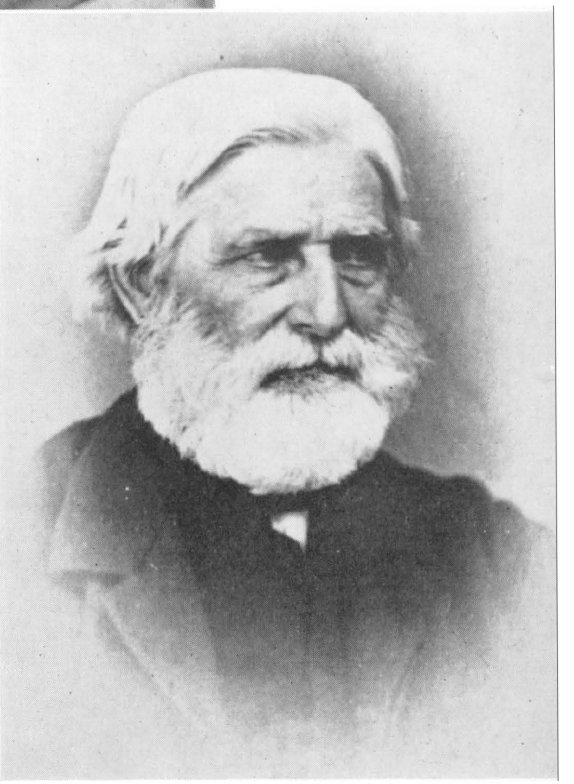
"BIG BUSINESS": JOHN TURNER OF PUTNEY 1742–1831 From a miniature by J. C. D. Engleheart in the author's possession (My great-great-great-grandfather)

"FARMER GILES": ROBERT CLAYTON (THE ELDER) 1752–1823 From a water-colour in the author's possession (My great-great-grandfather)

"DUTIFUL WIFE": MARY ELIZABETH TURNER (NÉE FÜLLING) 1775–1840 From a miniature in the author's possession (My great-great-grandmother)



"THE LAW": SIR WILLIAM ELIAS TAUNTON, M.A., F.R.S., K.C. 1772–1835. Judge of King's Bench and Recorder of Oxford. (My great-grandfather)



"THE REBEL": COMMANDER MICHAEL TURNER, R.N. 1799–1873 From a photograph in the author's possession. (My great-grandfather)

"LITTLE BUSINESS": SIR JASPER ATKINSON, THE LAST PROVOST From an oil-painting in the Royal Mint (My great-great-uncle)

THE SEAL OF THE CORPORATION OF MONEYERS

"PROVOST'S PERKS":

(1) H. W. Atkinson's book-plate (Note the Atkinson "pheons")

(2) Medal commemorating the golden wedding of Henry W. Atkinson and his wife Susanna

interregnum of about three years when someone else held the post. But he obtained it in 1737, and kept it for the next 25 years. The office, however, though gradually growing in importance throughout his tenure, clearly did not satisfy him. He developed a number of other side-lines, and he made them pay. In his obituary notice in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (of December, 1768) he is called an "Ingenious Projector", by which the 18th century meant something rather like a "speculator": one anyway who does not let such capital as he possesses lie idle, but is constantly seeking ways of making it breed. Thus he was in his time Purveyor (as well as Deputy Master) of the Mint, and very likely Master's Clerk of the Mint too. He was also Purveyor of Newspapers to Public Offices (though this activity may have been his father's, or even inherited from his father). He was also, from 1733 to 1741, Master-Keeper of Ludgate Gaol, and he was a J.P. for the Tower Hamlets. Most of these "places" were "posts of profit under the Crown": individually not very profitable ones, yet in the aggregate quite worth holding. We must certainly not picture him as trotting round with the newspapers or acting as turnkey in a City lock-up. He drew the emoluments: someone else, for a mere fraction of them, did the work. But such posts would hardly earn him the 18th-century title of "projector". He must have had more considerable, and more "commercial", irons in the fire, though what they were we do not know. They were probably quite numerous, and fairly money-making or the gossipy (though not always exclusive) *Gentleman's Magazine* would hardly have noticed him. He came nowhere near the Turners, of course, but he had made his mark in London, and was quite well-to-do when he died.

The main thing to notice about these two Henries is that, once the father had got his foot into the Mint door (c. 1689) there was *a* Vander Esch on the premises for the next 73 years; and that, for about half that time, the increasingly important post of Deputy Master was a Vander Esch perquisite. But, chronologically, this is less than half of the story. This family connection with the Mint can be traced onwards for another 89 years; though, during most of them, the relevant surname has changed—from Vander Esch to Atkinson. So we must return to the Junior Partner.

If, during the 18th century, the Vander Esch half of the Combine was pushing up in affluence and "gentility", the other—the Atkinson half —had come somewhat down in the world: in station though perhaps not in wealth. The first member of the family of

whom we become conscious in this Mint story was one JASPER, born in 1724 and in middle age still known as "merchant of Rotterdam". Unlike the Vander Esches, however, his forebears were not only English: they were also distinctly "county", he being in fact a scion of the Atkinsons of Yorkshire, already armigerous by 1663 at least, and probably much earlier. These people were originally "of Little Cattall" near Wetherby, which they had held certainly since the 1400's. In the 16th century one of them—CHARLES—suddenly emerges as "of Fountaines Abbey"; and the inference is that he—or perhaps his father—had acquired his share of the monastic lands which were going so cheap in Henry VIII's reign. This Charles lived to a great age—he was still alive in 1612. His son, GILBERT, was probably a younger child, because he inherited Fountaines but not Little Cattall. On the next generation yet another younger son is to be deduced, because he appears, not as of Little Cattall nor even as of Fountaines, but "of Newark", just over the border in Nottinghamshire. Here he founded a new, and junior, branch of the Atkinsons—"of Newark". His son, ROBERT, also "of Newark", as a young man commanded a troop of royalist horse in the North. For this service he was, in 1663, granted by the Restoration government the Atkinson Arms, with a "difference"—"Ermine in a Fesse argent, three Pheons sable". (The pheons—much like the well known "government broad arrows"—are characteristic of all Yorkshire Atkinsons.)

Robert's son—another ROBERT—is still called "of Newark". But with *his* son—another THOMAS—there comes a considerable change. He is "of London", being no doubt yet another of those younger sons who had to forsake country life to earn his bread in Town and in business. And *his* son was the above-mentioned Jasper who, probably, was a younger son too, who extended his father's London business overseas.

This is a typical "younger son" story, with several generations of enterprising cadets who refuse to be down-graded by their bad luck, but who start afresh, in each generation, to carve out for themselves an adequate competence. And they partake sufficiently of the characteristics of our "nation of shopkeepers" to make good in their new milieu.

The sojourn of the Atkinsons in Holland, however, was not destined to be a long one. For Jasper returned to England in his middle age, settled in Chelsea, and died there in 1804, a man of some substance.

But what is more important for our immediate purpose is the undoubted fact that, in 1751, Jasper married ANN VANDER ESCH, daughter of Henry the Younger, still (among other things) Deputy Master of the Mint; thereby—for certain—establishing the Vander Esch-Atkinson Combine.

Very soon their first son arrived. He is to figure large here; but, before he is introduced, we must explore more carefully the ground over which the Combine was to operate. This means an excursion into the history of the Mint itself, especially during the period 1689 to 1851 wherein the quasi-comedy of the Combine was being enacted.

THE MINT

The London Mint—*the* Mint to Englishmen ever since it ousted its rivals long ago—had been situated within the walls of London's fortress from time almost immemorial; certainly since 1299 and probably earlier. There it was destined to function until 1811, when it moved a few yards eastwards to approximately its present site. Until then, all its day-to-day business of coin-making was conducted in various parts of the Moat, under what now would be considered appalling slum conditions. Even the few top people who had official residences inside the Tower itself seldom actually lived in them, for the very good reason that they were usually barely habitable ruins.

The whole complement of Mint workers (with certain overlaps to be described presently) may be divided into two separate and essentially antagonistic groups.

(1) *The Mint Officials*

These people were, and always had been, paid servants of the Crown, drawing fixed basic salaries from purely official sources; though often, as occasion allowed, enjoying a bewildering variety of perquisites, some quite outside the Mint itself. There will be no attempt here to define the limits of their respective functions and authorities. Even a bare catalogue of their official titles would be a formidable undertaking, especially in the 18th century, when most of them had deputies, and some of them deputies' deputies too.[1]

[1] All the worst of these complications are elucidated in Sir John Craig's illuminating work *The Mint : a History of the London Mint. A.D. 287 to 1948*, (London, 1953). It is essential reading for all who would follow a typically English evolution of many centuries' growth.

Indeed, it is not the intention here to dissect the "official" side. Our true quarry is the other one. All that need be stressed is that the personages who had day-to-day supervision of the establishment during the 18th century were not the people with the obvious titles like "Master of", "Warden of" or "Comptroller of". These gentlemen did exist, but they were drawn from the very highest circles in the land—and were drawing incredible emoluments in salaries, fees and percentages for doing, most of them, literally nothing. The following examples (taken from Craig) are representative of many:

(a) *1769-84.* The Hon. Charles Cadogan, M.P.
(i) *Salary* £500
(ii) *Master's Fees* (at 1/10 per pound of gold used) £4,200
(iii) *Profit on "melting" fees* £960
(iv) *Fee and profit on copper coinage* £162

per an. £5,822

(*b*) *1799-1801.* Lord Hawksley (then Foreign Secretary and later—as Lord Liverpool—Prime Minister).
Flat rate, including salary, fees and profits £3,000

(*c*) *1791-1811.* Spencer Perceval.
Surveyor of Meltings & Clerk of the Irons; of which posts he was still drawing the salary when (as Prime Minister) he was assassinated. Though naturally much too busy ever to go near the place himself, he cleared £240 per an. after paying his deputy—his coachman who, however, dared not show his face there for fear of arrest for debt.

The people who did count—who even did quite a fair proportion of the work, though by no means as much as might be expected—were the *Deputies*: and of these the most practically important, though by no means the best-paid, was the Deputy Master. His *salary* was often quite comically low. In fact, when Henry Vander Esch senior held the post, it was *nil.* His "official" wage (£25) was paid to him as Purveyor (scheduled duties, "to buy clay, charcoal & oddments, and care for the office garden"). He was Deputy solely because the reigning Master (John Conduitt) had invited him by word of mouth to deputise for him. It must not be supposed, however, that people like the Vander Esches deputised for nothing. That would have been quite contrary to all known 18th-century form—and, in particular, Henry Junior's. His boss would certainly have to give him something for his pains, or at least extensive

promises of favours to come. The trouble is that, in so hole-and-corner an affair, anything like exact figures of what Henry was really making are quite impossible to assess. All that can safely be said is that £25 bore no relation at all to his real income, which was probably larger than *all* his salaries, *plus* any "consideration" which came from Conduitt, *plus* the fruits of his external "projects". But this brings us to the second category of Mint workers.

(2) *The Moneyers*

So far we have been looking at the people who—roughly—*administered* the Mint—or better, perhaps, those who drew salaries for so doing. No mention has yet been made of those who did the *work* there: the sole work for which the Mint existed—coin-making. The duty—and privilege—of performing this very central task belonged to a different sort of person altogether, differently recruited, differently organised, differently remunerated.

These persons were the *Moneyers*.

The very word is redolent of the deep Middle Ages. "Officials" might provide the necessary metal; and, when it had been turned into coins, they might assay them, weigh them and (if they could) see that no one pilfered them. But all the processes of actually converting raw metal into pieces of money were specialised skills; which fact alone made the coin-making business a "craft", a "mystery": and it was inevitable that, sometime, sooner rather than later, the people with the requisite expertise for the work should combine themselves into a Craft-Guild. Here we have a typical one, small, but highly specialised in both work and purpose: just "to cut and size blanks, and anneal and strike coins".[1] "Hand us the raw materials," they said in effect: "even mix them if you like.[2] Then we will do the job, and hand the finished article back to you."

Here, however, we are to describe not the craft but the craftsmen —the "Corporation" (or, as it was more often called, the "Company") of Moneyers.

When and how it began it is hard to say: but it is easy to be specific about when it stopped—in the year 1851: how and why will be shown in due course. But first it must be recorded that, during the centuries of its long life, it was very far from remaining

[1] Craig, op. cit., p. 113.

[2] The mixing was "borderline", undertaken at some periods by the Moneyers but usually not.

static. Like any other man-made institution it kept pace with man and his other developments, though always rigidly within its own self-imposed frontiers. This feature is all-important. The Company always kept itself, very jealously, separate from everybody else. Having contracted to deliver certain goods it invariably showed intense pride (as well as skill) in doing so, but would stand for no interference whatever from without, above all from the Mint Officials, the Crown's nominees. It even provided (until nearly the end anyway) its own equipment and tools. It relied upon no one, but clung fiercely to the traditional differences which existed between the two camps, of which the principal one was that, whereas the "Officers" were wage-earners, no one in the Company was paid a wage at all. The whole corporate body always exercised the ageless right of being remunerated from a percentage on the value of all metal brought into the mint, which was invariably handed in a lump sum to the Company, and never to an individual member of it. The distribution of that sum was nobody's business but the Company's. It had indeed its own very decided views and very strict rules on the subject: but it never saw fit to let anyone else into the secret—or indeed into any of its secrets. This was the essence of a "mystery".

When, in mid-19th century, this relic of mediaevalism at length met its fate, the opposition was none other than the State itself, bent on turning everyone who worked directly for it into that modern, but essentially respectable phenomenon, the Civil Servant. Yet still the Company stood fast, rather pathetically, upon its prepared and entrenched position, refusing categorically to assist its executioners as they tried to probe into the heart of its secrets. The Company vanished, of course, but it never revealed them, and they too would have vanished had not the Commissioners somehow unearthed a copy of its 1571 laws, thus saving them from oblivion.

This document[1] reveals the tightest of tight guilds, every member —called a "Fellow"—bound closely to every other, and to his own guild-elected head, called "The Provost". Every Fellow swears to be true to his Sovereign: to make money only of the standard appointed at the time, and to inform on any counterfeiting which comes to his notice. These were his "outside" commitments: the rest were all internal. He swears to keep the Company's secrets and to be "dutiful and obedient" to the Provost, elected "by common consent". This Provost is a father-figure, with powers succinctly

[1] Printed in the *Report of the Royal Commission of 1848*, p. 145.

laid down. He swears to maintain the Company's interests: he may fine, and even suspend, members; and he may rebuke them "but without stripes".

The constitution covers the members' every act, moral no less than physical. That word "Fellow" is to mean exactly what it says:

> Fellows are to be all of one assent and will . . . and continue as brethren: not to revile or ridiculously rebuke each other, but every Fellow to cherish and help the other; and not to side with any other person against his Fellow or Fellowes: [not to] . . . molest, arrest or sue [any of them] in any court, spiritual or temporal without the Provost's licence.

"Should a Fellow provoke another to wrath", he must pay a fine into the "common box"; and the same should he reveal the Company's secrets. "Young Fellows acknowledge and give place unto the elder Fellows. Every Fellow must discreetly and reverently behave himself with the Provost, as well abroad" as in Mint premises.

> When the monthly bill for defaults is read, or other business opened by the Provost at a meeting, there shall be no crowding, clustering or boisterous repair unto the table's end: but every Fellow to sit in his own proper place, keeping silence until he have opportunity to offer his opinion; and to speak to the Provost and the rest bare-headed.

The rules covering sickness and absenteeism are strict, but on the whole generous. In illness or infirmity a Fellow shall continue to draw his full share of the profits. For absence on private business he can take only one day's share, however long his absence. For absence without leave or excuse he is liable to expulsion altogether. Should he die impoverished, he shall be buried decently at the Company's expense.

The recruiting regulations are strict too, as no doubt they had to be. Each Fellow might take, in theory, one apprentice, to serve him for seven years before being admitted to the Corporation. But there were three conditions. First, no Fellow could take an apprentice until he had himself been a Fellow for seven years, so that 14 years passed before his first nominee reached full membership. Second, he could even then take the young man only with the Provost's approval. Thus the Provost could both veto individual applicants who failed to please him, and control the number of Fellows at any given moment. This gave him very real power. Third, every Fellow

swore that he would take full responsibility for training his recruit throughout his whole apprenticeship. Nothing must be allowed to let the standard down.

During the 17th century the Corporation took a course common to almost all such concerns. Superficially things remained unchanged, but in fact a revolution was occurring. Gradually Private Enterprise arrived, to oust the old, tight Craft-Guild. There appeared, in fact, those same "two nations" which seem inevitable in businesses of this kind. There were now Aristocrat and Plebeian: Employers—Provost, Fellows and Apprentices—and Employees—an unprivileged body of paid labourers hired for peak occasions and turned off out of hand as soon as the rush was over. We are not often allowed to assess relative numbers: but occasionally we can. In 1696, for example, there were 21 on the "Fellow" level and 500 labourers.

If we regard the Moneyers, then, as being, by 1700, a self-contained, labour-employing Company, working inside the Mint and interfered with scarcely at all by the "officials", the Fellows may be described as the Board of Directors, the Provost as the permanent Chairman of the Board; and, under these, the real *work*-men, varying greatly in number from time to time. The Company's gross profits (percentages on all incoming metals) having been handed in a lump to the Provost, the Directors' duties were to pay the men's wages, the upkeep and other running expenses, and then to declare a dividend out of the net profits remaining, sharing among themselves according to rules unknown to us but certainly known to them.

It all sounds quite a pleasant and remunerative business. But there was one snag which was not nearly so pleasant—up to 1700 anyway, and rather beyond. It was like a whaling-company all equipped to catch whales but, sometimes, unlucky enough not to fall in with any. The most abiding characteristic of work at the Mint was that it was quite alarmingly spasmodic. In some years—those in which considerable re-coinage operations were decided upon by the Government—the work was tremendous, alike in bulk, hours of work and, of course, remuneration. Intense activity prevailed. Labourers for the less skilled processes were recruited in great numbers: occasionally, even in the late 17th century, the Fellows themselves still had to "take their coats off". But then, the rush over, the whole Mint subsided again into what one might almost call a "peace-footing": such in fact as invariably hit the

Navy between-wars. For a whole year—even years—work, employment and remuneration might all but cease.

The piece-worker (as opposed to the wage-earner) is always at this disadvantage: and throughout the 17th century the Moneyers had occasionally found themselves in such a predicament. Already, more than once, they had been forced to swallow their pride and humbly petition for temporary relief. Government always accorded it too; not (of course) out of general benevolence, nor out of pity for poor starving moneyers. It was because these people, the only repositories of technical "know-how", were indispensable to it. It could not afford to let them drift away to other jobs and so, very likely be lost to it for ever. Nor could it keep them by force, having really no hold on them at all. Meanwhile the Moneyers, had they so desired, could have been taken on as whole-timers. But they were astute enough not to want this. They always intended to evade the subservience implicit in the receipt of a formal salary, determined, while accepting temporary help when they had to, to preserve their complete independence from Government against the day when the going once more became so very good. At much the same time too, they began to appreciate the fact that they ought, in their own interests, to keep their numbers down. It was obviously more profitable to divide net profits, whatever they were, by (say) 10, rather than by 40. The figures showing their numbers in various years are not always available: but there can be no doubt about the general pattern. The really big drop seems to occur about the middle of the 17th century. In 1546 there had been 46 of them: in 1653 they had risen to 59, the highest ascertainable figure. But by 1668 they were down to 15, and two years later to 10. They rose again in 1693 (a heavy coinage year) to 17, and in 1696 (an even heavier one) to a new peak of 21. But they were back again to 10 by 1729, and thereafter never reached double figures. In the 19th century, while they lasted, they stood uniformly at five or six.

In these figures lies the secret of their later prosperity. Through their own acumen they were gradually working themselves into the comfortable position of "Heads I win, tails you lose". Provided for (though not too lavishly) in bad times, they could now afford to hang on for the inevitable boom years, when percentage-money and fat dividends would accrue together. Nor was this all. They had already begun to accumulate Corporation funds with which to eke out the lean periods. It was just about now that an entrance fee was first exacted from apprentices. It was only £100 at first: but it was

symptomatic. They were conforming to the widely-established practice of their age: confirming the transition, already noticed, from a real Craft-Guild to a tight little Private Company, having been careful to retain control of entry, as to both quantity and quality. True they had a little bother now and then with the Mint officials, who made no bones about trying to secure a share in the lucrative monopoly now emerging. On the whole, however, the Fellows kept the interlopers at bay, relying as ever upon their monopoly of expertise, their own continuity, and the tendency to absenteeism of their rivals.

One proof of their little game is the reiteration of the same few surnames among the Fellows. From 1680, and up to 1859 there was seldom a moment when there was not a Nicholl among them: the Brands (or Braints) were nearly as persistent, while the Atkinsons and Vander Esches (who were all one family for this purpose) had a sequence which remained unbroken for the last century of the Company's life; and, for the last 29 years, they provided the Provost. Let us return to them and see how they did it.

Henry Vander Esch the Younger, we recall, was in the "official" camp. There is no evidence that he was ever a moneyer himself: yet he must have been very well in with them, if only because he managed to succeed where other officials failed. He worked his own son into the Company, and at just the right time. His name was Winde William Vander Esch, and he was made a Fellow at the earliest possible moment. By then, however, the Company was approaching its halcyon days when to be a member at all meant, by itself, a good livelihood. He did not, therefore, like his father, have to indulge in so many and varied "projects". Though nothing but a Fellow-Moneyer, he seems to have been a very well-to-do man. He is a vital piece in our Combine jig-saw, being the third of the quintet, and necessary in order to avoid a tiresome hiatus. For Henry, the Deputy-Master, had to retire in 1762, when his Atkinson grandson (aged only 10) was too young to preserve the continuity. As it was, however, the timing was perfect. Winde William was installed in the Company well before his father left the Mint, and he lived quite long enough to see his nephew installed beside him on the Moneyer side of the house.

(3) *The Provost*

It is this nephew, the fourth of the Quintet, who now demands attention. HENRY WILLIAM ATKINSON, we recall, was the Atkinson-

Vander Esch child: Henry after Grandfather Henry the Deputy-Master, William after Uncle Winde the Moneyer: true heir to both families—heir-at-law to the Atkinsons, business-heir to the Vander Esches, because Henry had no son but Winde, and Winde no son at all. Thus the Dutch family name died out.

He was on top of the world, his position and prosperity fore-ordained. He entered the Mint in 1770 as Apprentice, was elected Fellow in 1777, and remained in the Mint for the rest of his long life. He actually died *in* the Mint in 1834, when he had been in the game, boy and man, for 64 years: and, for the last 14 of them he was Provost of the Company. He was not to be the last Atkinson Provost either. His second son Jasper—*Sir* Jasper later and the last of the Combine's quintet—also had his career ordained for him from his birth in 1790. What should he do but enter the Mint (at 14) and serve there for 47 years, succeeding his father as Provost in 1834? And when the Moneyers innings was declared closed, he was "not out"—the last Provost and the last Moneyer.

During the whole of Henry William's time the Company was on the rise. The great re-coinages of the 1770's were a big windfall. These came so soon after he had joined that he probably did not make a great deal out of them at once. But the Company did, and that not only by reason of the amount of work which came in. The shrewd "Directors" (now only six in number) had contrived, in anticipation of benefits to come, to secure a higher percentage-rate on incoming metals; so that, in the boom years themselves, (1773–6) their declared profits soared, reaching, in 1775, an average of £2,558 for each Fellow. Nor, of course, did this represent anything like all their takings. They had in addition the interest on their accumulated funds, their "private" work, both inside and outside the Mint;[1] and some of them, probably, their salaries as officials on the administrative side.[2] Further, the figure quoted above is strictly "average". Senior Fellows had always enjoyed a bigger share than Junior Fellows, and the Provost had a larger share still, though what it was no one knows, for such details were

[1] An example of inside private work is this: in 1729 the Mint officially refused to strike halfpennies for the Isle of Man, but gave leave to the Gravers and Moneyers to do any quantity they liked as "private work". Such concessions recur throughout the century and beyond.

[2] e.g. in 1774 a new "office" was created for the making of "master" specimens of coins struck, with a salary of £200 per annum and £20 for an office outside the Tower. The post was probably a political one, specially created for someone's son or nephew. Anyway, when it fell vacant in 1788, it was transferred with all its emoluments to the Provost of the Company of Moneyers.

never divulged. It should also be recalled that the Provost and at least one other Moneyer were allowed rent-free official residences, still, in the 1770's, in the Tower itself. True, the beneficiaries seldom if ever inhabited them because of their chronic state of disrepair: but it is instructive to learn that they were not too bad to be let to complete outsiders at substantial rents.

Henry William's rising prosperity can be measured by his living arrangements. Becoming a Fellow only in 1777, he presumably missed the best of that particular boom. Yet his movements soon after that date would seem to show that, by now, even "slump" years were becoming merely relative. He was much too junior, of course, to qualify for a Tower residence, and, for the first few years of his Fellowship, probably lived either at Chelsea with his father, once "of Rotterdam" but now "of London", or at Wandsworth in Surrey. But, by 1780, or at latest 1781, he found himself in the position of, say, John Turner of Hampstead half a century before. He married and moved out to the pleasant village of Dulwich where he set about founding a country residence (called Ryecotes and still standing) and a considerable family. He now lies in the old college burial-ground in a Vander Esch-Atkinson vault under a very handsome tombstone.

Dulwich, however, was not his only residence. In due course he became eligible for a Tower house, though probably he let it out and never lived in it. But when the new Mint was erected, and occupied in 1811, he was allotted one of the official residences incorporated in the building: and this he did occupy. In 1820, when he became Provost, he would receive one of the best of them, in the central block. They were spacious premises—"flats", extending along one floor and containing as many as 18 rooms. As usual, the "perks" were generous. Painting, repairs and even window-cleaning were included with the free rent: so was stabling. But if one had reached the status of a coach (as Henry William had), the coach-house was one's own responsibility. The residents beautified their respective domains with window-boxes and climbing plants—until the Office of Works took over and removed the lot—and the well-kept lawn in front was reserved for the august feet of Deputy Master, Assayer—and the Provost. There were teething troubles in all this finery, mainly on the plumbing side. Thus we learn of the indignation of the Deputy-Master when his drawing-room was invaded and his furniture ruined by the outflow of the Assayer's laundry on the floor above. But the

aggrieved official was pacified when, at public expense, the offending laundry was given a slop-proof carpet of zinc. Still, it was not so comfortable as to tempt the Provost to give up his salubrious "week-end" place in the country, and he appears, about the turn of the century, to have moved out as far as Maidenhead. But the very fact that he could now afford two large establishments, not to mention a wife and nine children, only shows the comfort of being a Moneyer.

We return, briefly, to the Company and its last and most prosperous phase. The extent of that prosperity is best exemplified by a remarkable new rule, made at the close of the boom in the 1770's. The entrance fee for Apprentices was suddenly raised at one bound from £100 to £1,000. Could anything be more indicative of success, present and anticipated? Moreover, it was still "heads I win, tails you lose", for those safely inside the magic ring. If the Apprentice happened by any chance to be from "outside", then his thousand pounds was a nice little augmentation to the common pool. But if (as was by now almost always the case) he was a Fellow's son, nephew or cousin, all that was really happening was that they were paying each other £1,000 for the privilege of providing a life-career for a relative. In effect, by the beginning of the 19th century the Company's very nature had changed again. The Fellows were no longer a Board of Directors with a permanent Chairman in the Provost. They were sole Partners in a strictly private Family Concern with the Provost very much the Senior Partner.

As the 19th century grew older, the Company's business and prospects grew ever better. The number of Fellows did not rise—they had learned wisdom—but the amount of work did: and, with the introduction of steam machinery in 1810, (the fees being as ever based upon percentages) much more metal was handled annually, more easily, more quickly: and the profits soared. Moreover, the London Mint's clientèle was widening. Orders for coins, hitherto largely domestic, were now arriving from abroad. The Mint was becoming the fashionable coin-maker of Europe, if not of the world: and the Moneyers' percentages were levied on all the metal that entered, whatever the resulting coins' destination.

Yet our experts deserved their growing reputation. So far, perhaps, we have overstressed their money-*spinning* attributes: but we cannot deny them a high competence in money *striking*. In fact, it is just in such a set-up as the Moneyers' that we may look for the

best kind of professional pride: that old pride, all too often gone now, which lay at the heart of the mediaeval mystery-craft—and of the old-established Family Firm too. Certainly the Moneyers possessed it; and a good Provost or a good Senior Fellow did all in his power to foster it. Occasionally we can still see them actually at work, as, for instance, in the case of that talented engraver, Thomas Wyon the Younger:

> H. Atkinson, one of the moneyers of H. M. Mint . . . who was always on the watch for ability, immediately visited him and . . . gave him an order to engrave dies for two copper coins ordered by the East India Company.[1]

Wyon was just dead, and he was only 25: yet he had already been for two years Chief Engraver of the Mint—an "official" post, but almost certainly procured for him by Henry William, wise, experienced and trusted after 48 years of service. And, when his own time came, the *Gentlemen's Magazine* could truly say of him that "for nearly 65 years he had most conscientiously performed the arduous duties of his very responsible position".[2] So, if his earnings were high, it is fair to say that his deserts were high too.

After his death, when his son Jasper reigned in his stead, it may well be that these soaring opportunities went to the Moneyers' heads. Perhaps, with the new machinery piling up their dividends with little or no exertion of their own, they should not have asked for, and obtained, a still higher percentage-rate, as they did (for the last time) in 1840. This smacks of covetousness or, at lowest, of short-sightedness. Birds in such golden plumage stood a very real chance just then of being shot down by officially-appointed marksman: and, sure enough, in due course they were.

A number of Royal Commissions were appointed in the 1830's and 1840's to review the whole coinage problem. The Mint in general and the Moneyers in particular successfully dodged several of them. But the Commission appointed in February, 1848, under the chairmanship of a man known to be inimical to the Company, proved fatal. The Provost, representing the Corporation, was called before it and cross-examined with a minuteness at times almost savage. But Sir Jasper was formidable, and fought back boldly and doggedly. His inquisitors got no confession, no admission, nor even any basic figures out of him; and, in the end, had to fall

[1] *Gentlemen's Magazine*, Feb. 1818.
[2] Ibid., 13th Sept., 1834.

back upon their own estimates.[1] We may think that the line he took—this oysterlike clamping-down on all information—was not of the wisest. He was legally justified in taking it, but it did not improve the atmosphere. Probably, however, he knew as well as anyone that his cause was foredoomed anyway. The Company's real crime was not that it had been making too much money, but that it had become an almost laughable anachronism. The modern Civil Service was coming in with all the irresistibility of the rising tide: and here was a tight little Corporation, private, monopolistic and three-parts hereditary, sitting pretty at the heart of an indispensable State Department. Of course—in the name of Progress —it had to go!

The last Provost's superb rearguard action was not altogether in vain. Evidently his pluck, if not his generalship, earned him much sympathy, even from a Commission essentially hostile. He secured more, probably, than any of the partners expected: for the older Fellows generous pensions; for the younger ones and the two Apprentices[2] a choice between smaller pensions and re-engagement under the new management—an alternative turned down by one and all. Sir Jasper himself went out into the cold world with a life pension of £1,000, *plus*—no one has any idea. Nor can that world of retirement have been so very chilly after all. Jasper was already a numismatist of international repute, and a knight. He also owned a fashionable town-house in Portman Square, and an extensive country seat near Tonbridge. His last action was to sell to the Government all such "Company" gear as would be useless if carried away: which, one must suppose (though perhaps not with complete confidence), really belonged to the Company. Everything else—records, rules, and of course funds—departed with him and was no more seen. But no: not *quite* everything. His portrait, returned to the Mint by his granddaughter, is still there. It reveals a striking, silky-whiskered face, not exactly sly but—well, enigmatical.

Surprising little glimpses of the extent and variety of the ex-Company's assets keep popping up. Thus, as well as what Sir

[1] Of which, quite the most striking is that, during the last seven years each Moneyer had averaged £3,500 from the item "percentages" alone. The Provost must have made quite half as much again: say £5,200 as a minimum—about 2½ times as much as a contemporary Admiral of the Fleet in employment!

[2] In addition to the Provost *Atkinson*, one of the other Fellows was named *Nicholl*, and one of the Apprentices *Brande*!

Jasper coyly calls "some private capital, and captial to carry on the business"—he is never more specific than that—it would appear that it owned a landed estate worth at least £300 per annum, and at least two other houses: though where situated, of what value and how divided up—well, my great-great uncle Jasper was not the telling kind!

That Henry William during his long rise to affluence rose also in society hardly needs recording. This aspect of his life is perhaps best exemplified in the next generation. Sir Jasper was not the only son to be dubbed knight. He had a younger brother whose christian names—Henry Esch—need no elucidation. This Atkinson joined the Navy four years before poor Michael Turner, and therefore had four years more to make his mark before the peace destroyed his chances. He did a little better than Michael, but not much. He became a Commander and a Retired Captain, was knighted, and ended his service days as Governor of the convicts in Van Dieman's Land.

Meanwhile several of his sisters married well, and none better than Henry William's third daughter, MARIA ATKINSON. She secured a rising young barrister, and also rose to the dignity of a title, because her man became SIR WILLIAM ELIAS TAUNTON, Judge of King's Bench. This is only the second time that the name of Taunton has appeared in these pages, though in my own Record-Book it looms large. The Judge was one of the Tauntons of Oxford: and the fact that there is an admirable book about them (see p.15 above) must serve as excuse for treating them so cavalierly here. Coming originally from Cornwall, they moved rather before the middle of the 18th century to Oxfordshire, producing a series of prosperous if not particularly exciting people: some doctors, a parson or two, but mainly folk in the legal line. The Judge's father, for instance, (also SIR WILLIAM ELIAS) was in his day Clerk of the Peace of Oxfordshire and Town Clerk of Oxford. Out of his makings at the bar, which were considerable, he had bought himself an estate called Freeland Lodge near Eynsham in the same county, in whose Dower House—but nearly a century later—the author of this book was born.

VII "WELSH GENTRY"

The daughter, then, of my grand old sailor—himself the son of "Big Business"—married the young brother of the brilliant, if self-tormenting Cambridge don. My Mother was their child.

Meanwhile, the daughter of the Provost of Moneyers, who had graduated from "little business" to "big business", had wed the legal luminary who hailed from the rival university town of Oxford. It was their daughter, CAROLINE JULIA TAUNTON, who married . . .

Could anything reveal more clearly the nature and scope of my genealogical investigations? Here we are embarked upon virtually the last chapter of this book which some people may have regarded—wrongly I hope—as egotistical; and it has not yet so much as mentioned its author's surname! But it must be done now.

My Lewises are "of Carmarthenshire": but this, of itself, is far from helpful because most Welsh Lewises (as opposed, say, to Hebrew Lewises) do stem from that county; or, if not, from its neighbour Brecknock. They are not, mostly, people greatly distinguished on the wider stage of Great Britain; nor even, to anyone but myself, my family and perhaps other Welsh genealogists, particularly interesting. They therefore fail to qualify for any considerable notice in these pages where, it may be recalled, distinction or interest are compulsory qualifications. This is why they are allowed no great space here: *not* because I am ignorant of their ancestry. I am not. Being nothing if not pure Cymru they were, nearly all of them, among the devoutest of ancestor-worshippers. Indeed, there is hardly a Hero-Prince of South Wales from whom they are *not* descended, lineally and often several times over.

So, when you notice how little space I have reserved for such people, do not fall into the error of thinking that I despise them. I would not for worlds belittle them, nor what they stand for. They were—and, in their own land, still are—the representatives of something old: something which has lingered on, clinging to its ancestral haunts, its lovely hills and vales, long after its like has vanished from the eastern and more superficially progressive parts of this island. I mean, the lesser Welsh Gentry.

The noisy little Afon Crawnon comes brawling down the steep but fertile Dyffryn Crawnon to join the wide vale of the Usk at Llangynidr, between the county town of Brecon and the country town of Crickhowell. The dyffryn is a blind alley, its stream gushing abruptly out of the bleak range which separates the Usk from the mining valleys of Glamorgan, in a spectacular "cirque" surrounded on all sides but the north-east by the dark circle of the slate-bearing hills. Yet in the valley itself the soil is black and rich, yielding excellent crops.

Here, for longer than I can tell, dwelt my Welsh progenitors in their small gentleman's "mansions": gentlemen in their own eyes every one of them, proud, unmixing and even touchy. To the more sophisticated English visitor, the residences may appear mean, more suited to the habitation of yeomen-farmers. But—two centuries ago anyway—their occupiers, to both themselves and their neighbours, were *not* yeomen-farmers. They were one distinct grade higher. And so it is over vast expanses of rural Wales. They had neither the wealth nor the outward show of comfort which characterised their opposite numbers in richer England, where centuries of enclosure had gradually converted the country gentlemen into estate-holders affluent enough to live on a gracious scale, the social equals, in all but acres, of the great landlords, and even the aristocracy. But this rise in the social prestige of the more fortunate English gentry, reducing the less fortunate layer below them to the status of yeoman-farmers, or even tenant-farmers, did not happen in Wales. Here the old race, still by tradition and upbringing gentle in its own right, remained much as before. And so, in England and in Wales, the ways diverged—in England large estates and some considerable wealth, but in decidedly smaller numbers: in Wales straitened circumstances on small, but freehold properties—with often indeed real poverty not far away—yet as numerous, and as cultured, as they always were.

Their ordinary occupation was farming. But—look you—they were *gentlemen* farmers, with pedigrees, jealously nursed, as long as your arm, and they were passionately conscious of the fact. Not one of them but could trace his line up to Davy Gam or Owen Gethin; Bleddyn ap Maenach or even Brychan Brycheiniog himself, Lord of South Wales in what were virtually the Dark Ages. These old names were—are—very dear to them, almost a part and parcel of their lives, and a warranty of the purity of their blood.

Near the top of the dyffryn stood—stands—a "mansion", in the

17th century the home of the Lewises of Pirgad. They lived, loved, worked and died in Crawnon, tilling their acres yet finding time to lead lives of real if rough culture, with their own Welsh furniture, solid but seemly, their own well-guarded liberties, their own immemorial literature, their own bards, their own poetry and their own distinctive pride of race. The scale, the pretensions, it is true, were limited, but what they represented was none the less genuine for that.

There was just one more mansion above Pirgad, nestling under the cirque by the sources of the Crawnon. It was called Cefn Crûg, and here dwelt THOMAS LEWIS, a cadet—indeed I think the younger son of the then current JENKIN LEWIS of Pirgad.[1] The nearest church to both mansions is at Llangynidr, six miles away at the bottom of the valley; and here, whither they rode down every sunday to worship, the graveyard is full of all that is mortal from both mansions.

Basically, I say, they were all farmers: but, occasionally, one son varied the routine, went "abroad", and, finding his way to Oxford, there took a degree and was ordained to holy orders. Such folk left the valley, of course, but seldom the district. One was EDWARD THOMAS, son of LEWIS THOMAS, himself (owing to the local practice so baffling to genealogists) son of Thomas Lewis of Cefn Crûg. He went to Worcester College at Oxford, and returned to live and die Rector of Cwmdû, the fine tower of whose church is visible from the Brecon—Crickhowell turnpike, but on the opposite side of the Usk from Pirgad. This reverend gentleman, riding one day beyond the confines of his moorland parish, crossed the western ridge of the Black Mountains and reached Cwmyoi, perched on a bold spur overlooking the lonely valley of Llanthony—just such another dyffryn as Crawnon—with its lovely abbey lying in lush meadows. Hence, about the middle of the 18th century, he returned to Cwmdû with, as bride, ANNE, daughter of the REV. THOMAS JONES, Perpetual Curate of the parishes of Cwmyoi and Llanthony and, in his own way and day, a character.

For Thomas Jones also was a gentleman: in fact, in our English sense, more of one than Lewis of Pirgad or Thomas of Cwmdû. He bore arms in his own right. I think he must have been a good man, as he was certainly a humble one, because, for 50 years, he faithfully discharged his "perpetual" cure, patiently threading the vile lanes between his two parishes on his old cob, though they are

[1] The present owner of Pirgad (1964) tells me that the proprietors of Crawnon are still all of one blood, though no longer Lewises.

six miles apart. It seems also that he did not *have* to do it, for he was a man of some means, and a pluralist, enjoying for almost all that long time the much more civilised and lucrative vicarage of Eardisland in distant Herefordshire: which, so far as I can see, he visited only once and of which he never signed the registers, installing a curate to do the work. Yet he was never an absentee in his own cures of Cwmyoi and Llanthony, where his ministry is highly spoken of by his great friend Howel Harris, the famous Welsh revivalist. This man, virtually the founder of Welsh Methodism, is constant in his praise of "Brother Jones of Cwmyoi", the first of the local church clergy to join the movement.

Now our Perpetual Curate died in 1772, at the good old age of 84; so, like the Founder of Methodism himself, he remained an avowed member of the Church of England. His friend Howel Harris, on the other hand, was far "lower": in fact, the Church he helped to found was Calvinistic. How far his views influenced Jones I do not know; but certainly not enough to impel the Perpetual Curate to resign his cure. Anne's husband, however, the Rector of Cwmdû, was never what the contemporary Church called "tainted". They had a son, another clergyman called EDWARD, who in due course had a daughter; who, in due course married yet another clergyman of the Church of England named—again—THOMAS LEWIS.

Whether this new Thomas Lewis was a descendant of Thomas of Cefn Crûg I do not know. I think not: for, when he turns up in the very early 1800's, he has changed his ground, indeed his county, having somehow crossed the border into the neighbouring shire of Carmarthen, where he has close affiliations with its county town. But, anyway, he was essentially the same type of "gentleman" as Thomas of Cefn Crûg, Edward of Cwmdû and Thomas of Cwmyoi. He was an admirable man too (of whom, as it happens, I know a great deal). But, unlike them, he was rather wealthy: wealthy enough, anyway, to be able to build a big church, a rectory and a flourishing school in his own parish of Llanstephan, Carmarthenshire.

Whence came his money? Not, we may be very sure, from Llanstephan parish, nor from the Dyffryn Crawnon, where any wealth which existed was in culture, not in cash. No. The true answer is surprising. It came from the leading inn of Carmarthen Town where his father, JOHN LEWIS, was for long proprietor of the Half Moon in Dark Gate.

Have we then, when we follow the Rev. Thomas's people upwards, left behind our small Welsh gentry, and got on to something more in the tradesman line? Oddly enough, I think not. His father John, it is true, married off his daughters to leading Carmarthen tradesmen, but I believe that the innkeeper himself was as much gentleman (in the Welsh sense) as any of the Lewises, Thomases and Joneses whom we have been discussing. For one thing, in a day when people seldom deceived in such matters, he described himself as "Gentleman", and no one contradicted him, as—at a time when the appellation still meant something—someone certainly would, had he merely been unwarrantably upgrading himself. And we see him following exactly the line of the gentry-class in the matter of his only son Thomas, whom he sends to Oxford and puts into the Established Church, still—in Wales—very much the prerogative of gentility.

Indeed the profession of inn-landlord in the Principality of the period, and especially in a typical county town like Carmarthen, was by no means necessarily a "trade". The inns, particularly a leading one like the Half Moon, played a very important part in the town's contemporary political life. There were "Tory" inns and "Whig" inns, and they were controlled by the leading families of the Tory and Whig interests. For instance, the Half Moon belonged (I think) to that influential (and Tory) family of Lewis of the Golden Grove, who would give the life-lease of it to someone whom it could trust to support its political interests there. When the parliamentary elections were on, for instance, in the very limited franchise which then obtained, every vote was important, and a known Whig who came into town to vote might well find himself the victim of grievous bodily harm: for these contests were often conducted with no holds barred. If he tried to put up at the Half Moon he would probably not be admitted: but if he insisted he might well find himself, on polling day, forcibly restrained under lock and key: or he might find himself so lavishly entertained as to be unable to go to the hustings, being blind drunk. And all this demanded some considerable share of *savoir faire* and expertise on the part of the landlord who was—if we may borrow the title from a later age—something not unlike a Parliamentary Agent, his premises—both at election-times and others—being something in the nature of Tory (or Whig) "Head Offices".

Now John's father (whose christian name was DENNIS) may possibly have been a collateral of Lewis of Golden Grove, though

I doubt it. More likely his son John secured the lucrative lease on the score, first that he was a good Tory and second that, as a "gentleman" (if less affluent than the Golden Grove lot) he could be trusted to play their political cards aright. John, we do know, was a fourth son, so that he would not inherit the family mansion, or cultivate the family acres. He would not, therefore, be able to follow the normal avocation of gentleman-farmer; and he was not, perhaps, quite suited to the secondary "gentleman's" role of parson. Yet—for these small Welsh gentry invariably had an eye to the main chance—here surely was Dennis's opportunity to make a worth-while addition to the whole family's prospects, and that without any fatal loss of "caste".

Certainly John cut quite a considerable figure in the Carmarthen of his day, and certainly he made—relatively—"a pile": to such tune that his only son and heir, the Rev. Thomas, could go about building churches, rectories and schools: redistributing—generously and usefully, for he was clearly a benevolent man—the wealth amassed by his father at the Half Moon.

The Rev. Thomas Lewis was educated at Wadham College, Oxford, and, though still a thorough-going Welshman, was—like most of his parson-gentlemen contemporaries in the early years of last century—English-speaking too. He held several cures—mostly, alas, at the same time—and all in Carmarthenshire, or just across the Cardigan border. He died in his own mansion at Sarnau, near the county town, and was buried in the churchyard of his own parish of Llanstephan.

He was the last of my ancestors whom I can properly call a "Welsh gentleman of the old school" because in the next generation most of his family left the Principality. He had three sons, two of whom followed him into the Church, while the third remained all his life a country doctor practising in Wales. The parson-sons both went east. The elder—Edward—came indeed as far as London, where he was for a while Rector of Bethnal Green; but, developing a weakness in the lungs, had to go abroad, and died, in his early forties, at Funchal, Madeira.

The youngest son, ARTHUR AUGUSTUS, also came east, though he never penetrated very far into England. He held many cures of souls in his time, yet, being a shy, self-effacing sort of man, would never take a living of his own, but acted as Perpetual Curate in many west-country parishes from Plymouth to Lindridge in Worcestershire: a humble, modest soul, a poet and a great naturalist.

But—from the point of view of this book—perhaps the most important thing he ever did was, when quite a young curate, to meet, and marry, CAROLINE JULIA TAUNTON, the Judge's daughter, when she was on one of her rare visits to Brecknockshire; and so to become the father of my Father. He died at his "mansion"—not rectory—at Lindridge, a few months before that long-awaited, yet insignificant, event which may legitimately bring this book to a close—my birth.

VIII "INTERIM REPORT"

So here we are, standing in the snow one foul night in January 1890, peering at a lighted upper window in the Dower House at Freeland near Oxford. Behind that window, our frozen ears inform us, another puny scrap of humanity has just arrived to join us. We can hear him loudly heralding the fact himself, no regular supply of herald angels being, it seems, available. There is no celestial choir—perhaps the easterly blizzard (gale force) has blown its dulcet notes away. There are no comets in the sky: but then the sky itself is obliterated in the snow-wrack. The three Wise Men (viz. two old shepherds and Don, the Dower House handyman) are demonstrating their wisdom by preferring the bar-parlour of the Taunton Arms to the drive of the Dower House—which also explains the otherwise unaccountable absence of the Shepherds. In fact the whole affair is banal to a degree: essentially unimportant.

Yes, the *affair* is, but not, I submit, its implications. You who have read so far, can you deny the existence of a large and varied assortment of cords, none the less real because you did not trip over them in the drive, running unbroken from that squalling infant to all the principal characters in this book: yes, and further—right up to the x-great-grandfather of Pithecanthropus (or if you prefer it, to Adam)? Alternatively, supposing you feel disposed to challenge the validity of some of the individual cords, you still cannot deny that corresponding cords run from the said infant straight up to *contemporaries* of the same characters: yes, and to contemporaries of Adam (and/or Pithecanthropus's x-great-grandfather).

Or view it from the other end. Can you deny that all these life-lines, meandering through extensive geographical areas and whole millenia of time, have all converged with the inexorability of a tax-collector upon this one named (and for the moment contemporary) specimen of *Homo Sapiens*: one which, as it happens, interests *me* rather specially, but which might just as well have been *you*? For you have just as many ancestors, of whom the oldest are just as old as mine, and many of them, probably, the same ones. Thus viewed, these are not so much *my* cords as everybody's.

Moreover we shall many of us go on from here, and, biologically, keep going on, with cords twisting, straightening, interweaving, ramifying, *multiplying*, through centuries unborn and unknown—unless, of course, some *Homo Insipientior* sees fit to wipe us all off in a series of big bangs. And, even in that case, who knows but what some chance-surviving amoeba, following its instinct (which, full and by, is yours and mine) will not begin the whole thing over again; and then perhaps again, until the earth comes to a slow halt, and the sun goes black?

And after that . . .?

I know—and, if you have followed me, so do you—how my Great-Uncle Charles would have taken this question—in his stride (or, to be more precise, on his knees). And there, depend upon it, he would have had his answer. Well, I could never bring myself to see eye to eye with him on many things that matter: but this time, I feel, his solution would be not only the wisest one, but the *right* one: the only one which makes much sense, anyway.

Acknowledgments

Material Aids

I am, as I confessed, a very amateur genealogist; and I am neither qualified, nor do I intend, to turn this book into a *Vade Mecum* for would-be ancestor-hunters. Should it prompt any reader to indulge in that pastime (as I hope it will) he ought, if he means to tackle his forebears really scientifically, to join one of the recognised societies (like the Society of Genealogists) who will provide him with an immense amount of aid, both in their periodicals and in their most extensive and specialised libraries. Yet he will still have his rewards and his recreation if he sticks more literally—as I have—to his amateur status. So here I propose merely to outline a few of the more obvious genealogical aids used in this book.

So long as one is confined to fairly modern times, pride of place should probably go to the ordinary Parish Registers. They are, of course, immensely voluminous, and they vary enormously in completeness and date of starting—and in legibility. But here things are growing much easier for the amateur all the time. When I first began hunting some half a century ago, the ordinary form was to go, in person, to the church where one suspected the desired information to be, and to *look* for it. But now there are many short cuts. Every year more and more church registers are being *printed*; and, in more and more localities, they are being taken from their original parishes, and collected in public repositories of one kind or another, where they can be more readily consulted and more easily read. For instance, in London, most of them are now housed at County Hall (and some at the Guildhall) where expert archivists decipher them, edit them and (most important of all, probably) *preserve* them from rot, damp, rats, or any other hazards to which old paper and leather are heirs. In other large towns the same thing is happening: but in smaller places, and in country parishes, it is often still necessary to go oneself, and *search*.

Next, I think, I would name public repostories of documents, like Somerset House with its Births, Deaths and Marriages and its vast accumulation of wills: or again the Guildhall, or the various Consistory Courts, or—for the Principality—the National Library

of Wales at Aberystwyth. Nowadays, too, most cities and counties run to their own admirable archivists who exist (among other things) to be consulted by ardent amateurs, and whose patience with them is beyond all praise.

Then there are monuments in churches, and tombstones outside them (or occasionally inside). And often, for the last century or two, there is the Family Bible. There are also—sometimes very useful—old almanacs (corresponding to the modern Whitaker), and commercially-sponsored periodicals of other days with a social bias, like the *Gentleman's Magazine* or the *London Magazine*.

These, and scores of other similar sources, give one a start, and may bring one back, at any rate, to the 17th century. But then, as I hinted before, they practically all peter out—save, perhaps, for a few Wills. And there, I personally, should inevitably have stuck had I not, in several cases, stumbled into fairly well-known and well-recorded families. And here become available those unique sources of genealogical lore, the *County Visitations*, now increasingly supported and supplemented by the Transactions of innumerable Antiquaries' Societies, and the magnificent series of County Histories. (For long a work like Theophilus Jones's *History of Brecknockshire* has been practically my bedside reading.)

Finally, descending to a little more detail, I will record, though briefly and sketchily, the *kind* of authority from which came the information in my various chapters, beginning at the last.

The "Welsh Gentry" of Part VII are, of course, my Father's people. I had virtually no "oral" family-help here, because I never knew my Father. But Parish Registers—mainly—got me going and brought me safely to Carmarthen, and the Llanthony and Crawnon valleys. In the former I stuck fast, but Crawnon brought me out into accredited Welsh genealogy: for the Lewises of Pirgad link up with half the families of South Wales: and one can (if prepared to take one or two liberal pinches of salt) soar straight back to Brychan Brycheiniog and all that.

The "Provost" party—the second section of Part VI—was a very different matter, involving a great deal of work, in which I was manfully aided by my son. The very start was simple enough, because I always knew that my Father's mother was a Taunton of Oxford. But when we got above the Provost himself, we found ourselves in the comparative underworld of 18th-century London, among odd characters like "the Projector" and his obviously Dutch

forebears. We have not quite extricated ourselves from that maze yet, though we hope, one day, to do so.

The "Turners and Skinners" of the first section of Part VI—as earlier more monied, and therefore more "respectable"—were by so much the easier. Here the search was largely a joint-operation between myself and my dear Mrs. Charles Barton, a cousin on the Turner side. It was based primarily upon Parish Registers, church monuments and wills: but, just before they fade off upwards, and out of our ken, we had the good fortune to hitch on to the Worthingtons and the Whichcotes (of Part V). And here my task was made much easier by the existence, in print, of Worthingtons' journals and correspondence, published over a century ago by the Chetham Society.

(The last section of Part V, by the way, being of a much later (a 19th-century) date, is something quite different—oral family tradition derived in the main from my Mother. So is that part of the Turners which deals with the naval Michael.)

But here (largely) we leave pure genealogy behind us—except in the earlier stages of each quest—and we come out on to the plains of English History, where, of course, the Hawkinses of Part IV, all three of them, belong. To reach them, however, I had first to tread the paths of genealogy. And here I enjoyed the greatest stroke of luck which ever came my way. This was that little book *The Tauntons of Oxford, by One of them*, already acknowledged in the text. The man who wrote that book was clearly a prime genealogist, and a regular tiger for work. Where I should have got to without him I should not like to say—possibly as far as I have, but only after an infinity of labour. True he did not take me direct to Richard Hawkins: but he did take me to *a* Hawkins, a late-17th-century Sergeant-at-Law, whose sister—*via*, oddly enough, a *Dewe*—afterwards mingled her blood with that of Taunton. And the Sergeant led me on up to the Seaman; mainly, for once, *via* Heraldry, that art (or science) which is so clearly the handmaid of Genealogy. So I reached History—at a point where it was rather up my street, as The Tudor Navy has always been a speciality of mine on the purely historical level.

And now for the incomparable William Marshal and his rather nasty father (Part III). Well, this is History again, and, once more, my invaluable Taunton of Oxford piloted me into, up and over the difficult 16th century and into the 15th: back, in fact, to that John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, who clashed so gallantly,

pertinaciously and fatally with Joan of Arc, but whose adventures I have not followed here. At this point the requisite cords and splices branch off upwards, through a complicated pattern of female lines, yet keeping among people well enough known to the chroniclers of the time to be easily followed; and behold, in the early 13th century, one line comes out at the Regent's daughter.

So we have merely to "span the Conquest" (Part II): and this too is purely historical—I having (again by my accommodating Taunton of Oxford) been safely hitched on to Edward I and the Royal Line.

All this, I know, makes the whole thing sound much easier than in fact it was. It almost makes it seem as though I discovered all these facts, stumbled on all these clues, made all these deductions at approximately the same period of my life. I did not. The characters and careers of Uncle Charles and Great-Grandfather Michael probably came to me the first in time. I sucked them in, as it were, with my Mother's milk 70 years or so ago. But the latest—Henry Vander Esch the Elder—I found only after this book was written, and tucked him in where he belongs.

The whole thing is indeed the marriage of Genealogy and History.

HUMAN HELPERS

But I should perpetrate an immense injustice if, having discussed material aids, I were to remain silent upon *human* aids: which indeed, at almost every stage of the quest, have been of inescapable importance, as well (as I began by affirming) as lending to the whole subject one of its inalienable charms.

I have, all through my life, had the privilege of a host of helpers, of all grades and of all professions. Indeed, they say, "all the world loves a lover", and the adage would seem to hold true though the lover in question be only an ancestor-lover. I have constantly been surprised by the genuine desire of complete strangers to help in matters which could, by no stretch of the imagination, be described as their business: in which there could be no reasonable expectation of material reward. Sometimes, no doubt, there may have been a sort of fellow-feeling about. My helper was, perhaps, already an ancestor-addict who, recognising another of the breed, was prepared to put his whole heart into the matter, just as though I was going to find a progenitor of his, however impossible that might be. Often, however, even this motive was absent, and still my helper helped, I can only suppose from innate kindness. Yet, whatever the motive, such people are good to meet; and, in the distinctly hard-boiled

world which we have now to inhabit, it is a real joy to know that they still exist.

I thank them all, remembering in particular three classes of them. There are first the archivists, librarians, curators etc. in institutions great and small—and the actual size of their establishment, whether a three-piece museum in a country town or the Great B.M. itself, seems to make no difference. The cynic, ever seeking to belittle goodness in others, may say that such people are paid to answer the kind of questions I ask or to unearth the kind of material I want. Very true: but there is a world of difference between even a conscientious working-to-rule and the cheerful, intelligent help invariably tendered. I could name (but will not) many "officials" who have worked overtime on my problems without ever being asked to: yes, and then taken them away as "homework".

The next group is the clergy, whether of quiet country rectories or of busy town parishes. Invariably they have searched their Registers or let me search them, always willingly, often eagerly: and though I believe that they are entitled to charge fees, I cannot recall one that did so, unless or until I made it perfectly clear that the gift was for the church box. Two such men remain particularly clearly in my mind. Again I shall not name them. They would not like it. Indeed, I think I never knew the name of one of them, and the other is, almost certainly, no more. Let me pay my belated tribute to this one first.

He was the incumbent of a country parish in Cambridgeshire, a middle-aged man nearly half a century ago; intelligent-looking, with quiet grey eyes that looked at one not quizzingly but with gentle humour. Upon hearing my wants, he instantly adopted them as his own. I was young then, not long down from Cambridge, with but little experience of the world, and even less of a man like that. For the strange thing was this: though at the time I came to the not unwarranted conclusion that he was himself a keen genealogist, I found later that he was not. He had none of that kind of fellow-feeling at all. I can only conclude that the working of his mind went something like this: "Here's a young fellow who is very keen: and what he's so keen on may not be outstandingly good. But it might be much worse. So I must, and will, help him".

This is how he did so. We were complete strangers when I called one morning and asked to be allowed to see his Registers. They were voluminous, and well-cared-for like everything else in his church and home. He gave me the run of them, now leaving me

while he attended to other business, now looking in to give me a hand or a word of practical advice. Lunchtime came: he insisted upon my staying to share it and to meet his lady, who was just what one would expect such a wife to be. Teatime came: the task was long and not nearly done. I stayed to tea. Supper came: I stayed to supper, after which it was just taken for granted that I should be staying the night. I refused—for quite a while. But I was too inexperienced to get away from such unassuming and kindly pressure: and I stayed the night. Indeed, when I was shown to my room I found it already provided with a pair of the Rector's pyjamas, shaving-tackle and a spare new toothbrush: two hot-water-bottles were already airing the bed. I stayed most of the following day too, but at last, towards evening, I managed to dig in my toes and go, the pressure to stay—still, for aught I could see, as warm and sincere as ever—being relaxed only when the good couple realised that I was becoming embarrassed.

I visited them several times afterwards, the Rector in the meantime doing, unasked, much valuable work on the Registers of neighbouring parishes. Soon, however, the 1914 War came, and somehow I lost touch with him—a regrettable circumstance for which I feel myself seriously to blame. But such things happen, and it is much too late to remedy them. Why did he behave as he did? Is there room for any but the one answer—sheer Christian charity?

With my second parson-friend I had much less protracted dealings. I was a great deal older; the episode occurred soon after the Second War, and I was now quite capable of knowing when to go. So, this time, that sort of question did not arise. He was the Vicar of two (if not three) parishes in the depths of rural Wales, and a much older man than my Cambridgeshire friend: a tall, slim figure wearing a threadbare black cloak, frail and weary-looking but erect, and informed with a fire in both eye and speech which age and weariness had not begun to quench: withal with a simple yet hugely dignified humility, all-pervading yet entirely innocent of servility. Right from the start he put me in mind of one of my favourite characters in all literature—Chaucer's Povre Persoun.

> Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
> And in adversitee ful pacient . . .
> He coude in litel thing han suffisaunce

(as, for example, patched uppers to his boots)

Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer a-sonder
But he ne lafte nat, for reyn ne thonder,
In siknes nor in meschief to visite
The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lyte,
Upon his feet, and in his hand a staf . . .

(only *my* old parson, as some concession to the century he lived in, used an elderly push-bike).

He sette nat his benefice to hyre
And leet his sheep encombred in the myre
And ran to London, un-to seÿnt Poules,
To seken him a chaunterye for soules.

(He was mildly interested when he heard that I came from London.) He had he said, never been there, adding—with, however, no note of regret or envy—"and I think I will not be going now"

He wayted after no pompe and reverence,
Ne maked him a spyced conscience,
But Cristes lore and his apostles twelve
He taughte, and first he folwed it himselve.

I met him trudging up the road to his vicarage one wet, chilly April day. He led me to his church porch for shelter, and I stated what I wanted. He said he would be delighted to help: but the church in which the required Register lay was unfortunately between four and five miles away. "You will be just passing by," he added, "and perhaps cannot wait. But I will go at once. I have my bicycle and shall not be so very long. Meanwhile you could sit in my vicarage . . ."—and there was real anxiety in his voice lest I should decide that I must move on.

The shower, half sleet, was at its sharpest as he made to leave the porch; and if that old cloak was ever rain-proof it was obviously so no longer. Yet such was his offer and such his intent—a nine-mile bike-ride and the certainty of a soaking, simply to satisfy the trivial whim of a complete stranger! Fortunately, however, though he had not seen it, my car was just round the corner, and of course I insisted upon us going in that, if *he* could spare the time. He was delighted, and thanked me profusely, hoping I was not putting myself to too much trouble. The journey was soon made. Success crowned it. I was pleased, and doubtless showed it.

On our return to his doorstep, I was just about to express my

gratitude when he forestalled me by thanking *me* for being so very kind as to give him a lift on so inclement a day. He meant every word of it too—there was no pretence whatever in that old clergyman's heart.

Now I like to think, and I believe it is true, that he had enjoyed his ride—an event, perhaps, in his simple life, especially as unrationed petrol had only just come back—and he certainly enjoyed showing me round his churches. But it was transparently clear that what was really making his day for him was the fact that I was pleased and showed my pleasure. I do hope, if only for his parishioners' sake, that their Povre Persoun is still with them

> To drawen folk to heven by fairnesse,
> By good ensample . . .

Last come the local genealogical enthusiasts, met with occasionally all over these islands, but most often in the Land of my Father's (though not my Mother's). Wales is their spiritual home. There, thank heaven, they are still no rarity.

Again my heart warms whenever I think of one such enthusiast. I never discovered how (or indeed whether) he made a living; but he dwelt by the large church of a tiny village, in an old house crammed from floor to ceiling with antiquities, all from his beloved Wales. (In one corner were stacked four or five genuine crwths, all, I think, in working order.) I had never met him before, but my son and I visited him by appointment one mid-morning. We found a substantial meal awaiting us, to which we were pressed with a beautiful courtliness. Having breakfasted rather late, I could hardly do justice to such generous "elevenses": but fortunately my son could oblige, and did. There can be no doubt about it, our host was delighted to see us.

Now why? What had I done for him that could deserve such hospitality, still less such transparent pleasure? I will relate my previous dealings with him, though I doubt whether this will provide the answer. Through the kind offices of a friend of his—one of the curator-librarian type of enthusiasts who had already exerted himself nobly—I had for some time been in correspondence with him. I have his letters now; at least a dozen of them, written in a variety of coloured inks. The shortest covers several sheets with beautiful old-world handwriting: the longest must run to many thousands of words. And what words—full of wide genealogical lore, wise and scholarly, crammed with knowledgeable comment and

enthusiastic advice! They are classics of their kind; and how long it took him to write them I shall never know. The while, *my* contribution to the correspondence was to answer them, with gratitude I hope—indeed I know—but with little or nothing in them of any value to him.

This, however, was far from all. Without ever telling me of his intention, he began to embark upon what can only be called "field-work". His studies (on my behalf) had led him to believe that, in a churchyard some 40 miles away, there was the tombstone of an ancestor—of *mine*. Thereupon he had taken train and performed a cross-country journey to the spot. There he had spent the whole day, and found—what *I* wanted; yes, but, by this time, what he wanted too, nearly if not quite as much as I. This, if you please, is the only reason I ever knew why *he* was delighted to greet *me* in his home; and why my carefully-phrased hint of "expenses" induced the only passing cloud that crossed his face that morning. I still stand amazed. Why, it was not even as though he had discovered—as, in Wales, he might well have done—that I was his eighth cousin.

Now doubtless my hospitable genealogist's many kindnesses were partly due to the fact that he just loved ancestors, in the abstract as it were: and in this I have the strongest sympathy with him because it is exactly what I do myself. Indeed I—even I, who stake no claim whatever to any special measure of altruism—must own to having spent many hours, very happy ones too, on other folk's forebears: yes, and to have experienced to the full the savour of having found some of them. That is the nature of the beast, not its merits. Yet I never went to half the length he did, and would no more back myself against him in the Altruist Stakes than I would back a cart-horse against a Derby-winner. These Welsh lads, look at it how you will, are great-hearted fellows, whether as patriots, scholars or simply—altruists.

But there are altruists much nearer home too. There is Richard Ollard, who is no Welshman but good old Lincolnshire; not by inclination even a genealogist, and certainly no sort of relative. Yet, as ever, he insisted upon helping me, with all his customary clarity of mind and sense of purpose. Here there can be no motive other than sheer good nature, coupled with faithful (and reciprocated) friendship. Again no words can adequately express my debt.

Nor can words do justice to that other helper, who for the last dozen years or more, has regularly, and happily, gone angling with me. True he has something of a vested interest in the fish we take

together, because they are all his quite as much as mine. Yet the collaboration is no less valuable as it is no less welcome for that. I refer, of course, to my dear son, Dr. M. J. T. Lewis of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

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[Ancestors in Small Caps]