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BIOGRAPHICAL REMINISCENCES OF GEORGE PILKINGTON.

THESE biographical reminiscences of Mr. PILKINGTON are a very singular work, and in many ways. His life has been full of ad- ventures, chances, and varied fortunes. He has endured much persecution for conscience sake; although something both of im- prudence and temper, or at least temperament, may have stimu- lated him in his course, and furnished opportunities to his enemies. His character is a strange mixture of steady zeal and controlled enthusiasm—a sort of methodical madness. The latter part of his narration, when he describes his adventures as an itinerant lec- turer on the unlawfulness of war to a Christian, will to many open up views of a state of society they little wot of. The lecturer him- self, travelling about as an apostle of peace, in a truly apostolical fashion, taking no been of to-morrow, and trusting for the subsis- tence of himself and his family to " Particular Providences," which never seem to fail him, must be an object of curiosity to all.

GEORGE PILKINGTON was born in Dublin, in 1785; and finished his education at Trinity College; where he probably was of some mark in mathematics, as he quitted the University to accept a commission in the Engineers. Having been brought up, he tells us, in that gentlemanly disposition which is more inclined to seek affronts than submit to them, he rather admired, and gladly embraced, the profession of arms. Having witnessed "the conduct of professing Christians during the Rebellion of 1798, who were mutually engaged in the revolting work of slaughter- ing each other, and, as they affirmed, on Christian principles and for Christian objects," he had become as regards religion a practi- cal Infidel ; which feeling was confirmed by the opposition of "the prayers used, to the practices enjoined" in his new calling. Mr. Pi Lei NOTON.S life, from 1804 to 1814, was passed in active service, and lie rose to the rank of Captain ; but we hear of no circum- stances or adventures of any kind. In the last-named year the Captain's services were "dispensed with," in consequence of his having brought a superior officer to a court-martial, which found the accused guilty of peculation, but acquitted him of some minor charges. Returning to England, the Infidel soldier married a Christian wife; and a few years afterwards (in 1817) was appointed Chief Civil Engineer on the Western coast of Africa. Here he erected many public buildings in various towns; but Sierra Leone disagreeing with his wife, and a relation having left him a consi- derable quantity of merchandise, Captain nuns:Gros relin- quished engineering in 1819, and undertook a trading voyage along the coast. This mode of life he seems to have pursued during part of two years; visiting many of the tribes, exploring several of the rivers, and trafficking so successfully in one way and another, as to have acquired a considerable property. Calcu- lating upon touching 10,000/. at least, our author sailed for the Brazils : but his vessel unfortunately struck upon a sand-bank near Cape Lopez. The sable monarch of the laud immediately came aboard, to render assistance, as lie said ; but, finding it im- possible to float the ship, declared her a wreck, and confiscated

the cargo. He, hos ever, made a kind of lion's division with his victim ; but as the palm-oil—the most valuable part of the cargo —was staved, PIL.KINGTON got little more than 1501. as salvage. After sojourning with the King for seven weeks, whilst the boat was made ready for sea, our adventurer committed himself to the ocean with his crew ; and fell in with a vessel, whose captain in- sisted on him and the men "coming on board his ship, for he could not as a Christian suffer them to proceed in such a miser- able vessel." No sooner had Captain PILKINOTON mounted the deck, than he found himself on board a slaver: and his feelings as a "British subject"—he was then in the darkness of earthy de- lusions—induced him to think of departing; but the "Christian" master persuaded him to remain, and, after treating him with great hospitality fsr six weeks, safely landed him and his crew at St. Thomas's, together with two hundred and fifty men, women, and children, destined for the slave-market. From St. Thomas's the Captain, after a good many occurrences, found himself again at Sierra Leone; and whilst pondering how he should join his wife at the Brazils, she arrived in the harbour !—the vessel having been driven in, as it then appeared by want of water, kit as our author now knows, by a direction of Providence. From Sierra Leone he proceeded to Trinidad,—memorable as

the scene of his first conviction of the truth of Christianity, if not as the spot of his attaining his present high state of grace. In this island he settled as an engineer, and also accepted an appoint- ment on the Governor's Staff; in which capacity, it formed a part of his duty to go in procession to the Catholic chapel on certain state occasions. To himself this was then a matter of no moment —he would hate attended any ceremony of any creed. At best, he went to see and be seen : but when the Catholic Bishop had given out his text, " When the Son of Man corneal, shall he And faith upon

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earth?" our military Deist prepared to scoff. As, however, the preacher proceeded to maintain the truths of the Christian dispensation, from the evidences afforded by the life, character, and doctrine of Christ, and the subsequent establishment of the faith, conviction was poured upon the mind of PILKINGTON. He returned home a happy man, conscious, "in the dawning exercise of saving faith, that all his past sins were forgiven. But, although convinced of the truth of the Saviour's mission, he was yet ashamed "to confess him before men."

"This indecision, however, was not of long continuance. The next morning, after breakfast, I was reclining on my sofa, ruminating on the wonderful event which was now made manifest to any spiritual eye, when my wife took her books, as usual, to retire to her closet. I felt a strong desire to go with her, but my innate pride repressed the rising wish. As she advanced towards the Adoor, the desire became still stronger; but the stiff-necked haughtiness of the Deist again triumphed, until at length she entered the room and was closing the door; when the good spirit, by a more powerful effort, overcame my stubborn pride, and, breaking the fetters by which it enslaved me, I at length summoned courage to exclaim 'Charlotte, will you not take me in to pray with you?' Words are poor to paint the feelings of my dearest friend, now that the many prayers she had offered for me were thus obviously answered; and who shall describe the spirit that fell upon us in that period of prayer, in which, being now one in Christ, we supplicated together for grace, for pardon, and protection! That prayer was answered also; for ever since that time we have been equally yoked, and amidst many vicissitudes have continued to walk through this wilderness of tears with an assurance that our union is indeed for ever."

Having overcome his own scruples, and inured himself to the remarks of his former Infidel friends, Captain PILKINGTON made gradual but slow advances in the adoption of "religious principle" and practices. A singular return of good for evil, which reached the ears of the Governor, induced him to offer the Captain a civil situation of 800/. a year; to which was soon after added the appointment of town-surveyor, and a majorship of cavalry. In spiritual things, however, he was still but a babe and suckling. Sunday parades never struck him as being in the least unlawful; and though he once made a formal struggle for some relaxation of duty when the sacrament was administered, yet he quietly gave it up. He swore, too, "like a trooper," till, by imposing fasts upon himself, he starved out the habit. But Trinidad was a field too narrow for him; and the Coloured population was the means of his removal. Having, in the absence of the Governor, appointed two Coloured gentlemen to the situation of acting cadets in his corps—which he had an undoubted right to do—the whole colony was in a flame: the Governor gave him up—perhaps he could not have upheld him; and, as regards temporals, our author was ruined.

"I was made a victim to the political expediency of the moment; and on the 10th of June 1830, received directions to confine myself to my staff duties as Quartermaster-General, and the command of the corps was given to another. Just at the same juncture also, my situation as town-surveyor was found to be burdensome to the public (although the fees for surveys executed formed the principal portion of the salary), and the office was suppressed. To conclude this singular coincidence, my situation as colonial engineer, which I had undertaken for 8071. per annum, under an engagement to give up my private profession, was now reduced to 300/. sterling,—a sum altogether inadequate to the support of my family in that expensive colony; and as now I had no friends among the White civilian inhabitants, I could not possibly engage in the private practice of my profession. I therefore came to the resolution of embarking for England, in order to obtain (which I never for one moment imagined I could fail to procure) an order from the Colonial Secretary, for the balance of salary, amounting to 1146/. 18s., which was justly due to me, but which the Trinidad Government refused to pay me."

Thus far, there is a good deal extraordinary in these biographical reminiscences, but nothing singular. We now approach the period of Mr. PILKINGTON'S career which is distinguished throughout by "Particular Providences." We despair of being able to convey any idea of the confiding faith of the man, or the strange circumstances that befell him: the only mode, however, of attempting it must be by instances; though, singly, they want the richness of the legions of blessings showered upon him, and they lose something of their raciness by compression.

On reaching England, Captain PILKINGTON placed his wife and family with some friends; proceeding himself to London, to get his arrears; whose payment the Colonial Office—ever prone to oppression in one form or another—refused to order: Having disbursed what money he had, he was reduced to a "single shilling." From an out-door creditor he could skulk, but he could not shirk his landlady: she entered one morning, with her bill of 21. 10s., and required its discharge on the following day. Thus saying, she retired; and a simultaneous knock at the street-door announced the arrival of a letter by a messenger. It was for the Captain, and contained a "Particular Providence" in the shape of a five-pound note, with these words—"Accept this trifle, with the best wishes of a warm-hearted friend, whose prayers shall attend you." The trifle out of this amount that he could retain from his landlady and his wife, was soon exhausted; and he was reduced to a single halfpenny, "which he resolved not to part with, seeing that it could procure nothing of any consequence;" and he carried it for three days in his pocket. During this period, he seems to have supported life chiefly by dropping in at the Anti-Slavery Society when the clerks were at tea; of which they used to invite him to partake. His faith was now "brought to a severe trial;" but "he cried to the Lord," and "deliverance" came in a post-letter from a Masonic Lodge he had established, placing the balance of 50/. at his disposal, after paying a few charges to the amount of some 10/. Having shortly before this become a morning attendant at Mr. Lavism's chapel, the Captain had discovered time delusion of the Unknown Tongues, and, instigated by some Christian friends, published a pamphlet upon the subject, and, we infer, spent some of



this last-mentioned money upon its production. At this conjuncture he received a letter from his wife, earnestly requesting 45/. to meet unforeseen expenses. In the author's reply, he was enabled to notice an extraordinary demand for his book, and to remit her money as the cash came in from its sale, till the exact amount was made up; "after which, the demand ceased as suddenly as it began, and no more copies were sold." Thus the author gained nothing by his labour; but, whilst he was "in some perplexity" on account of the state of his purse, a reader of his pamphlet requested the writer to call upon him, and "kindly constrained" our biographer to "take up his abode in the house." About this time, the reminiscence was in want of a five-pound note, which he steadily expected, although no human reasons could be found to rely upon; and lo! when his last chance had failed, the person who announced its failure put the needful into his hands. The same benevolent individual also endeavoured to serve him, by raising money to send him out to Canada, or New South Wales; but "the Lord had work for him" in England, and a "Particular Providence" thwarted the design, at the very moment of its apparent completion. It should be remarked, that during all these vicissitudes and destitution, the Captain mostly enjoyed a high degree of mental beatitude, the result of his unflinching faith. Having, almost at the outset of his town career, sold his regimentals and accoutrements to procure the means of subsistence,

our author began to entertain doubts upon the Christian lawfulness even of a defensive war; and about this time he made up his mind in the negative, and abandoned all thoughts of the army. Nearly at the same period, the summer of 1832, a very welcome "Particular Providence" arrived from Trinidad, being 100/. remitted by the Coloured inhabitants, as a testimony of gratitude. This enabled Mr. PILKINGTON to bring his wife and tinnily to London; and having been engaged by the Anti-Slavery Society as a lecturer on slavery, he was in the receipt of a regular income till the passing of the Abolition Act. Being then again without employment, he subsisted on casual assistance, or, as he persists in considering them, special dispensations; and occasionally lectured on the unlawfulness of war. He was next engaged by the Labourer's Friend Society, as itinerant lecturer, with permission to address the public on "Peace and Temperance, provided it did not interfere with his immediate duties." The Committee, however, especially the divines, began to be alarmed at the success of his anti-warlike hortations, and the result was his resignation.

Temporal poverty now again stared him in the face; but was alleviated by ten pounds subscribed by friends towards the defrayment of his public meetings on Peace. GEORGE PILKINGTON felt this as a call: "I at once," he writes, "perceived the approval of my conduct, and heard a voice, as from the cloud, saying—preach peace. My mind was aroused from its reverie—the cloud dispersed—I saw, and followed the pillar of fire." Thus encouraged, the apostle of peace went forth; and from that day, Saturday, March the 8th, 1834, at four of the clock in the afternoon,\* until the present time, he has continued his labours,—sometimes rewarded after a lecture by voluntary collections of pounds, sometimes of shillings; generally living at the houses of the faithful, but when driven to a publican's in a strange town, occasionally finding his bill discharged by an unknown purse. Now he travels on foot, now on a stage, and anon in a fly, or a cart; improving every opportunity that he can meet or make of fulfilling his calling, and sometimes so touching the driver by his discourse, that—triumph of personal oratory!—Jehu declines his fare. Holding that the money given to him was intended by the Providence that prompted the givers for the furtherance of "peace on earth, goodwill towards men," and not to contribute to the luxury of GEORGE PLIXINCOAT, he has, by degrees, and as he advanced in grace, reduced himself to vegetable diet, and the simplest beverages; and his family have followed his example. By a series of particular instances, and reasons thereupon founded, which are too long to enumerate, he is convinced of the unlawfulness of taking off his hat in bowing, even though it be to return the salute of ladies. Of his powers of persuading, perhaps no higher proof can be given than the affair at Ipswich, where a certain Captain SWORD, probably on the recruiting service, had no sooner heard of his arrival, than he wrote to the Magistrates requesting them to forbid the coming lecture; but in vain. We cannot enter into the particulars of any of his various adventures; but those who are curious upon the subject will find the Acts of the Apostle written at large in the closing part of the Doctrine of Particular Providence. The results, however, we can find room for.

"Those who feel called to preach the gospel may by this statement perceive that the will alone is necessary. In me the Lord has been pleased to show his great power, that with thirty-five ahlfins, the sum I first started with (which might have been dispensed with, had I walked to Uxbridge, for I was only called to expend the fare before I received help), I should have gone forth, and not only wanted nothing for a period of twenty-seven months (ending June 7th, 1836), but have convinced 170 ministers of the gospel of the unlawfulness of defensive war, have caused six military officers to lay down their swords, and addressed about 250,000 persons. I am led to be thus particular in closing this account of the early part of my labours, in order to induce others to follow, that they may help to arouse a slumbering people to oppose the wickedness of Satan, who 'as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.'" It is scarcely necessary to state that we have no knowledge of Mr. PILKINGTON, and do not pledge ourselves to his statements; although, as a matter of opinion, we have no doubt as to the author's will not, like the fanatics of the last age, presume to define the moment of grace.—Granov's Armin. theticity a .s1 truth of the whole. Neither do we offer any judgment on the propriety of trusting to "Providence" for the subsistence of a wife and family, or to the receipt of pence from the poor and needy. This remark, however, we feel justified in making, that a person should be sure of a heavenly call before he neglects the earthly duties.



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