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Italicized words or phrases are placed between underscore (\_)

marks.

English Men of Letters

Edited by John Morley

ANDREW MARVELL

by

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL

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PREFACE

I desire to express my indebtedness to the following editions of

Marvell's Works:--

(1) \_The Works of Andrew Marvell, Esq., Poetical, Controversial, and

Political\_: containing many Original Letters, Poems, and Tracts

never before printed, with a New Life. By Captain Edward

Thompson. In three volumes. London, 1776.

(2) \_The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Andrew Marvell, M.P.\_

Edited with Memorial-Introduction and Notes by the Rev. Alexander

B. Grosart. In four volumes. 1872.

(\_In the Fuller Worthies Library.\_)

(3) \_Poems and Satires of Andrew Marvell, sometime Member of

Parliament for Hull.\_ Edited by G.A. Aitken. Two volumes.

Lawrence and Bullen, 1892.

\_Reprinted\_ Routledge, 1905.

Mr. C.H. Firth's Life of Marvell in the thirty-sixth volume of \_The

Dictionary of National Biography\_ has, I am sure, preserved me from

some, and possibly from many, blunders.

A.B.

3 NEW SQUARE, LINCOLN'S INN,

June 3, 1905.

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ANDREW MARVELL

CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS AT SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

The name of Andrew Marvell ever sounds sweet, and always has, to use

words of Charles Lamb's, a fine relish to the ear. As the author of

poetry of exquisite quality, where for the last time may be heard the

priceless note of the Elizabethan lyricist, whilst at the same moment

utterance is being given to thoughts and feelings which reach far

forward to Wordsworth and Shelley, Marvell can never be forgotten in his

native England.

Lines of Marvell's poetry have secured the final honours, and incurred

the peril, of becoming "familiar quotations" ready for use on a great

variety of occasion. We may, perhaps, have been bidden once or twice too

often to remember how the Royal actor

"Nothing common did, or mean,

Upon that memorable scene,"

or have been assured to our surprise by some self-satisfied worldling

how he always hears at his back,

"Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near."

A true poet can, however, never be defiled by the rough usage of the

populace.

As a politician Marvell lives in the old-fashioned vivacious

history-books (which if they die out, as they show some signs of doing,

will carry with them half the historic sense of the nation) as the hero

of an anecdote of an unsuccessful attempt made upon his political virtue

by a minister of the Crown, as a rare type of an inflexible patriot, and

as the last member of the House of Commons who was content to take wages

from, instead of contributing to the support of, his constituents. As

the intimate friend and colleague of Milton, Marvell shares some of the

indescribable majesty of that throne. A poet, a scholar, a traveller, a

diplomat, a famous wit, an active member of Parliament from the

Restoration to his death in 1678, the life of Andrew Marvell might \_a

priori\_ be supposed to be one easy to write, at all events after the

fashion in which men's lives get written. But it is nothing of the kind,

as many can testify. A more elusive, non-recorded character is hardly to

be found. We know all about him, but very little of him. His parentage,

his places of education, many of his friends and acquaintances, are all

known. He wrote nearly four hundred letters to his Hull constituents,

carefully preserved by the Corporation, in which he narrates with much

particularity the course of public business at Westminster.

Notwithstanding these materials, the man Andrew Marvell remains

undiscovered. He rarely comes to the surface. Though both an author and

a member of Parliament, not a trace of personal vanity is noticeable,

and vanity is a quality of great assistance to the biographer. That

Marvell was a strong, shrewd, capable man of affairs, with enormous

powers of self-repression, his Hull correspondence clearly proves, but

what more he was it is hard to say. He rarely spoke during his eighteen

years in the House of Commons. It is impossible to doubt that such a

man in such a place was, in Mr. Disraeli's phrase, a "personage." Yet

when we look for recognition of what we feel sure was the fact, we fail

to find it. Bishop Burnet, in his delightful history, supplies us with

sketches of the leading Parliamentarians of Marvell's day, yet to

Marvell himself he refers but once, and then not by name but as "the

liveliest droll of the age," words which mean much but tell little. In

Clarendon's \_Autobiography\_, another book which lets the reader into the

very clash and crowd of life, there is no mention of one of the author's

most bitter and cruel enemies. With Prince Rupert, Marvell was credited

by his contemporaries with a great intimacy; he was a friend of

Harrington's; it may be he was a member of the once famous "Rota" Club;

it is impossible to resist the conviction that wherever he went he made

a great impression, that he was a central figure in the lobbies of the

House of Commons and a man of much account; yet no record survives

either to convince posterity of his social charm or even to convey any

exact notion of his personal character.

A somewhat solitary man he would appear to have been, though fond of

occasional jollity. He lived alone in lodgings, and was much immersed in

business, about a good deal of which we know nothing except that it took

him abroad. His death was sudden, and when three years afterwards the

first edition of his poems made its appearance, it was prefaced by a

certificate signed "Mary Marvell," to the effect that everything in the

book was printed "according to the copies of my late dear husband."

Until after Marvell's death we never hear of Mrs. Marvell, and with this

signed certificate she disappears. In a series of Lives of Poets' Wives

it would be hard to make much of Mrs. Andrew Marvell. For different but

still cogent reasons it is hard to write a life of her famous husband.

Andrew Marvell was born at Winestead in Holdernesse, on Easter Eve, the

31st of March 1621, in the Rectory House, the elder Marvell, also

Andrew, being then the parson of the parish. No fitter birthplace for a

garden-poet can be imagined. Roses still riot in Winestead; the

fruit-tree roots are as mossy as in the seventeenth century. At the

right season you may still

"Through the hazels thick espy

The hatching throstle's shining eye."

Birds, fruits and flowers, woods, gardens, meads, and rivers still make

the poet's birthplace lovely.

"Loveliness, magic, and grace,

They are here--they are set in the world!

They abide! and the finest of souls

Has not been thrilled by them all,

Nor the dullest been dead to them quite.

The poet who sings them may die,

But they are immortal and live,

For they are the life of the world."

Holdernesse was not the original home of the Marvells, who would seem to

have been mostly Cambridgeshire folk, though the name crops up in other

counties. Whether Cambridge "men" of a studious turn still take long

walks I do not know, but "some vast amount of years ago" it was

considered a pleasant excursion, either on foot or on a hired steed,

from Cambridge to Meldreth, where the Elizabethan manor-house, long

known as "the Marvells'," agreeably embodied the tradition that here it

was that the poet's father was born in 1586. The Church Registers have

disappeared. Proof is impossible. That there were Marvells in the

neighbourhood is certain. The famous Cambridge antiquary, William Cole,

perhaps the greatest of all our collectors, has included among his

copies of early wills those of several Marvells and Mervells of Meldreth

and Shepreth, belonging to pre-Reformation times, as their pious gifts

to the "High Altar" and to "Our Lady's Light" pleasingly testify. But

our Andrew was a determined Protestant.

The poet's father is an interesting figure in our Church history.

Educated at Emmanuel College, from whence he proceeded a Master of Arts

in 1608, he took Orders; and after serving as curate at Flamborough, was

inducted to the living of Winestead in 1614, where he remained till

1624, in which year he went to Hull as master of the Grammar School and

lecturer, that is preacher, of Trinity Church. The elder Marvell

belonged, from the beginning to the end of his useful and even heroic

life, to the Reformed Church of England, or, as his son puts it, "a

conformist to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England, though

I confess none of the most over-running and eager in them." The younger

Marvell, with one boyish interval, belonged all through his life to the

paternal school of religious thought.

Fuller's account of the elder Marvell is too good to be passed over:--

"He afterwards became Minister at Hull, where for his lifetime he was

well beloved. Most facetious in discourse, yet grave in his carriage,

a most excellent preacher who, like a good husband, never broached

what he had new brewed, but preached what he had pre-studied some

competent time before. Insomuch that he was wont to say that he would

cross the common proverb which called Saturday the working-day and

Monday the holyday of preachers. It happened that Anno Dom. 1640,

Jan. 23, crossing Humber in a Barrow boat, the same was sandwarpt,

and he was drowned therein (with Mrs. Skinner, daughter to Sir Edward

Coke, a very religious gentlewoman) by the carelessness, not to say

drunkenness of the boatmen, to the great grief of all good men. His

excellent comment upon St. Peter is daily desired and expected, if

the envy and covetousness of private persons \_for their own use\_

deprive not the public of the benefit thereof."[6:1]

This good man, to whom perhaps, remembering the date of his death, the

words may apply, \_Tu vero felix non vitæ tantum claritate sed etiam

opportunitate mortis\_, was married at Cherry Burton, on the 22nd of

October 1612, to Anne Pease, a member of a family destined to become

widely known throughout the north of England. Of this marriage there

were five children, all born at Winestead, viz. three daughters, Anne,

Mary, and Elizabeth, and two sons, Andrew and John, the latter of whom

died a year after his birth, and was buried at Winestead on the 20th

September 1624.

The three daughters married respectively James Blaydes of Sutton,

Yorkshire, on the 29th of December 1633; Edmund Popple, afterwards

Sheriff of Hull, on the 18th of August 1636; and Robert More. Anne's

eldest son, Joseph Blaydes, was Mayor of Hull in 1702, having married

the daughter of a preceding Mayor in 1698. The descendants of this

branch still flourish. The Popples also had children, one of whom,

William Popple, was a correspondent of his uncle the poet's, and a

merchant of repute, who became in 1696 Secretary to the Board of Trade,

and the friend of the most famous man who ever sat at the table of that

Board, John Locke. A son of this William Popple led a very comfortable

eighteenth-century life, which is in strong contrast with that of his

grand-uncle, for, having entered the Cofferers' Office about 1730, he

was made seven years later Solicitor and Clerk of the Reports to the

Commissioners of Trade and Plantations, and in 1745 became in

succession to a relative, one Alured Popple, Governor of the Bermudas, a

post he retained until his death, which occurred not

"Where the remote Bermudas ride

In the ocean's bosom unespied,"

but at his house in Hampstead. So well placed and idle a gentleman was

almost bound to be a bad poet and worse dramatist, and this William

Popple was both.

Marvell's third sister, Elizabeth, does not seem to have had issue, a

certain Thomas More, or Moore, a Fellow of Magdalen College, Cambridge,

whose name occurs in family records, being her stepson.

In the latter part of 1624 the elder Marvell resigned the living of

Winestead, and took up the duties of schoolmaster and lecturer, or

preacher, at Hull. Important duties they were, for the old Grammar

School of Hull dates back to 1486, and may boast of a long career of

usefulness, never having fallen into that condition of decay and

disrepute from which so many similar endowments have been of late years

rescued by the beneficent and, of course, abused action of the Charity

Commissioners. Andrew Marvell the elder succeeded to and was succeeded

by eminent headmasters. Trinity Church, where the poet's father preached

on Sundays to crowded and interested congregations, was then what it

still is, though restored by Scott, one of the great churches in the

north of England.

The Rev. Andrew Marvell made his mark upon Hull. Mr. Grosart, who lacked

nothing but the curb upon a too exuberant vocabulary, a little less

enthusiasm and a great deal more discretion, to be a model editor, tells

us in his invaluable edition of \_The Complete Works in Verse and Prose

of Andrew Marvell, M.P.\_,[8:1] that he had read a number of the elder

Marvell's manuscripts, consisting of sermons and miscellaneous papers,

from which Mr. Grosart proceeds:--

"I gather three things.

"(1) That he was a man of a very brave, fearlessly outspoken

character. Some of his practical applications in his sermons before

the Magistrates are daring in their directness of reproof, and

melting in their wistfulness of entreaty.

"(2) That he was a well-read man. His Sermons are as full of

classical and patristic allusions and pat sayings from the most

occult literatures as even Bishop Andrewes.

"(3) That he was a man of tireless activity. Besides the two offices

named, he became head of one of the Great Hospitals of the Town

(Charter House), and in an address to the Governors placed before

them a prescient and statesmanlike plan for the better management of

its revenues, and for the foundation of a Free Public Library to be

accessible to all."

When at a later day, and in the midst of a fierce controversy, Andrew

Marvell wrote of the clergy as "the reserve of our Christianity," he

doubtless had such men as his father in his mind and memory.

It was at the old Grammar School of Hull, and with his father as his

\_Orbilius\_, that Marvell was initiated into the mysteries of the Latin

grammar, and was, as he tells us, put to his

"Montibus, inquit, erunt; et erant submontibus illis;

Risit Atlantiades; et me mihi, perfide, prodis?

Me mihi prodis? ait.

"For as I remember this scanning was a liberal art that we learn'd at

Grammar School, and to scan verses as he does the Author's prose

before we did or were obliged to understand them."[8:2]

Irrational methods have often amazingly good results, and the Hull

Grammar School provided its head-master's only son with the rudiments of

learning, thus enabling him to become in after years what John Milton

himself, the author of that terrible \_Treatise on Education\_ addressed

to Mr. Hartlibb, affirmed Andrew Marvell to be in a written testimonial,

"a scholar, and well-read in the Latin and Greek authors."

Attached to the Grammar School there was "a great garden," renowned for

its wall-fruit and flowers; so by leaving Winestead behind, our

"garden-poet," that was to be, was not deprived of inspiration.

Apart from these meagre facts, we know nothing of Marvell's boyhood at

Hull. His clerical foe, Dr. Parker, afterwards Bishop of Oxford, writes

contemptuously of "an hunger-starved whelp of a country vicar," and in

another passage, which undoubtedly refers to Marvell, he speaks of "an

unhappy education among Boatswains and Cabin-boys," whose unsavoury

phrases, he goes on to suggest, Marvell picked up in his childhood. But

truth need not be looked for in controversial pages. The best argument

for a married clergy is to be found, for Englishmen at all events, in

the sixty-seven volumes of the \_Dictionary of National Biography\_, where

are recorded the services rendered to religion, philosophy, poetry,

justice, and the empire by the "whelps" of many a country vicar.

Parsons' wives may sometimes be trying and hard to explain, but an

England without the sons of her clergy would be shorn of half her glory.

Marvell's boyhood seems to have been surrounded with the things that

most make for a child's happiness. A sensible, affectionate, humorous,

religious father, occupying a position of authority, and greatly

respected, a mother and three elder sisters to make much of his bright

wit and early adventures, a comfortable yet simple home, and an

atmosphere of piety, learning, and good fellowship. What more is wanted,

or can be desired? The "Boatswains" and "Cabin-boys" of Bishop Parker's

fancy were in the neighbourhood, no doubt, and as stray companions for a

half-holiday must have had their attractions; but it is unnecessary to

attribute Andrew Marvell's style in controversy to his early

acquaintance with a sea-faring population, for he is far more likely to

have picked it up from his great friend and colleague, the author of

\_Paradise Lost\_.

Marvell's school education over, he went up to Cambridge, not to his

father's old college, but to the more splendid foundation of Trinity.

About the date of his matriculation there is a doubt. In Wood's \_Athenæ

Oxonienses\_ there is a note to the effect that Marvell was admitted "in

matriculam Acad. Cant. Coll. Trin." on the 14th of December 1633, when

the boy was but twelve years old. Dr. Lort, a famous master of Trinity

in his day, writing in November 1765 to Captain Edward Thompson, of whom

more later on, told the captain that until 1635 there was no register of

admissions of ordinary students, or pensioners, as they are called, but

only a register of Fellows and Foundation Scholars, and in this

last-named register Marvell's name appears as a Scholar sworn and

admitted on the 13th of April 1638. As, however, Marvell took his B.A.

degree in 1639, he must have been in residence long before April 1638.

Probably Marvell went to Trinity about 1635, just before the register of

pensioners was begun, as a pensioner, becoming a Scholar in 1638, and

taking his degree in 1639.

Cambridge undergraduates do not usually keep diaries, nor after they

have become Masters of Art are they much in the habit of giving details

as to their academic career. Marvell is no exception to this provoking

rule. He nowhere tells us what his University taught him or how. The

logic of the schools he had no choice but to learn. Molineus, Peter

Ramus, Seton, Keckerman were text-books of reputation, from one or

another of which every Cambridge man had to master his \_simpliciters\_,

his \_quids\_, his \_secundum quids\_, his \_quales\_, and his \_quantums\_.

Aristotle's Physics, Ethics, and Politics were "tutor's books," and

those young men who loved to hear themselves talk were left free to

discuss, much to Hobbes's disgust, "the freedom of the will, incorporeal

substance, everlasting nows, ubiquities, hypostases, which the people

understand not nor will ever care for."

In the life of Matthew Robinson,[11:1] who went up to Cambridge a little

later than Marvell (June 1645), and was probably a harder reader, we are

told that "the strength of his studies lay in the metaphysics and in

those subtle authors for many years which rendered him an irrefragable

disputant \_de quolibet ente\_, and whilst he was but senior freshman he

was found in the bachelor schools, disputing ably with the best of the

senior sophisters." Robinson despised the old-fashioned Ethics and

Physics, but with the new Cartesian or Experimental Philosophy he was

\_inter primos\_. History, particularly the Roman, was in great favour at

both Universities at this time, and young men were taught, so old Hobbes

again grumbles, to despise monarchy "from Cicero, Seneca, Cato and other

politicians of Rome, and Aristotle of Athens, who seldom spake of kings

but as of wolves and other ravenous beasts."[12:1] The Muses were never

neglected at Cambridge, as the University exercises survive to prove,

whilst modern languages, Spanish and Italian for example, were greedily

acquired by such an eager spirit as Richard Crashaw, the poet, who came

into residence at Pembroke in 1631. There were problems to be "kept" in

the college chapel, lectures to be attended, both public and private,

declamations to be delivered, and even in the vacations the scholars

were not exempt from "exercises" either in hall or in their tutors'

rooms. Earnest students read their Greek Testaments, and even their

Hebrew Bibles, and filled their note-books, working more hours a day

than was good for their health, whilst the idle ones wasted their time

as best they could in an unhealthy, over-crowded town, in an age which

knew nothing of boating, billiards, or cricket. A tennis-court there was

in Marvell's time, for in Dr. Worthington's \_Diary\_, under date 3rd of

April 1637, it stands recorded that on that day and in that place that

learned man received "a dangerous blow on the Eye."[12:2]

The only incident we know of Marvell's undergraduate days is remarkable

enough, for, boy though he was, he seems, like the Gibbon of a later

day, to have suddenly become a Roman Catholic. This occurrence may serve

to remind us how, during Marvell's time at Trinity, the University of

Cambridge (ever the precursor in thought-movements) had a Catholic

revival of her own, akin to that one which two hundred years afterwards

happened at Oxford, and has left so much agreeable literature behind it.

Fuller in his history of the University of Cambridge tells us a little

about this highly interesting and important movement:--

"Now began the University (1633-4) to be much beautified in

buildings, every college either casting its skin with the snake, or

renewing its bill with the eagle, having their courts or at least

their fronts and Gatehouses repaired and adorned. But the greatest

alteration was in their Chapels, most of them being graced with the

accession of organs. And seeing musick is one of the liberal arts,

how could it be quarrelled at in an University if they sang with

understanding both of the matter and manner thereof. Yet some took

great distaste thereat as attendancie to superstition."[13:1]

The chapel at Peterhouse, we read elsewhere, which was built in 1632,

and consecrated by Bishop White of Ely, had a beautiful ceiling and a

noble east window. "A grave divine," Fuller tells us, "preaching before

the University at St. Mary's, had this smart passage in his Sermon--that

as at the Olympian Games he was counted the Conqueror who could drive

his chariot wheels nearest the mark yet so as not to hinder his running

or to stick thereon, so he who in his Sermons could preach \_near Popery\_

and yet \_no Popery\_, \_there was your man\_. And indeed it now began to be

the general complaint of most moderate men that many in the University,

both in the schools and pulpits, approached the opinions of the Church

of Rome nearer than ever before."

Archbishop Laud, unlike the bishops of Dr. Newman's day, favoured the

Catholic revival, and when Mr. Bernard, the lecturer of St. Sepulchre's,

London, preached a "No Popery" sermon at St. Mary's, Cambridge, he was

dragged into the High Commission Court, and, as the hateful practice

then was, a practice dear to the soul of Laud, was bidden to subscribe a

formal recantation. This Mr. Bernard refused to do, though professing

his sincere sorrow and penitence for any oversights and hasty

expressions in his sermon. Thereupon he was sent back to prison, where

he died. "If," adds Fuller, "he was miserably abused in prison by the

keepers (as some have reported) to the shortening of his life, He that

maketh inquisition for blood either hath or will be a revenger

thereof."[14:1]

By the side of this grim story the much-written-about incidents of the

Oxford Movement seem trivial enough.

Not a few Cambridge scholars of this period, Richard Crashaw among the

number, found permanent refuge in Rome.

The story of Marvell's conversion is emphatic but vague in its details.

The "Jesuits," who were well represented in Cambridge at the time, are

said to have persuaded him to leave Cambridge secretly, and to take

refuge in one of their houses in London. Thither the elder Marvell

followed in pursuit, and after search came across his son in a

bookseller's shop, where he succeeded both in convincing the boy of his

errors and in persuading him to return to Trinity. An odd story, and

not, as it stands, very credible; but Mr. Grosart discovered among the

Marvell papers at Hull a fragment of a letter without signature,

address, or date, which throws some sort of light on the incident. This

letter was evidently, as Mr. Grosart surmises, sent to the elder Marvell

by some similarly afflicted parent. In its fragmentary state the letter

reads as follows:--

"Worthy S^r,--M^r Breerecliffe being w^th me to-day, I related vnto

him a fearfull passage lately at Cambridg touching a sonne of mine,

Bachelor of Arts in Katherine Hall, w^ch was this. He was lately

inuited to a supper in towne by a gentlewoman, where was one M^r

Nichols a felow of Peterhouse, and another or two masters of arts, I

know not directly whether felowes or not: my sonne hauing noe

p'ferment, but liuing meerely of my penny, they pressed him much to

come to liue at their house, and for chamber and extraordinary bookes

they promised farre: and then earnestly moued him to goe to Somerset

house, where they could doe much for p'ferring him to some eminent

place, and in conclusion to popish arguments to seduce him soe rotten

and vnsauory as being ouerheard it was brought in question before the

heads of the Uniuersity: \_Dr. Cosens\_, being \_Vice Chancelor\_ noe

punishment is inioined him: but on Ash-wednesday next a recantation

in regent house of some popish tenets Nicols let fall: I p'ceive by

M^r Breercliffe some such prank vsed towards y^r sonne: I desire to

know what y^u did therin: thinking I cannot doe god better seruice

then bring it vppon the stage either in Parliament if it hold: or

informing some Lords of the Counsail to whom I stand much oblieged if

a bill in Starchamber be meete To terrify others by making these some

publique spectacle: for if such fearfull practises may goe vnpunished

I take care whether I may send a child ... the lord."[15:1]

The reference to Dr. Cosens, or Cosin, being Vice-Chancellor gives a

clue to the date, for Cosin was chosen Vice-Chancellor on the 4th of

November 1639.[15:2]

Though we can know nothing of the elder Marvell's methods of

re-conversion, they were more successful than the elder Gibbon's, who,

as we know, packed the future historian off to Lausanne and a Swiss

pastor's house. What Gibbon became on leaving off his Romanism we can

guess for ourselves, whereas Marvell, once out of the hands of these

very shadowy "Jesuits," remained the staunchest of Christian Protestants

to the end of his days.

This strange incident, and two college exercises or poems, one in

Greek, the other in Latin, both having reference to an addition to the

Royal Family, and appearing in the \_Musa Cantabrigiensis\_ for 1637, are

all the materials that exist for weaving the story of Marvell, the

Cambridge undergraduate. The Latin verses, which are Horatian in style,

contain one pretty stanza, composed apparently before the sex of the

new-born infant was known at Cambridge.

"Sive felici Carolum figurâ

Parvulus princeps imitetur almae

Sive Mariae decoret puellam

Dulcis imago."

After taking his Bachelor's degree in 1639, Marvell, being still a

Scholar of the college, must have gone away, for the Conclusion Book of

Trinity, under date September 24, 1641, records as follows:--

"It is agreed by y^e Master and 8 seniors y^t M^r Carter and D^r

Wakefields, D^r Marvell, D^r Waterhouse, and D^r Maye in regard y^t

some of them are reported to be married and y^t others look not after

y^eir days nor Acts shall receave no more benefitt of y^e Coll and

shall be out of y^ier places unless y^ei shew just cause to y^e Coll

for y^e contrary in 3 months."

Dr. Lort, in his amiable letter of 1765, already mentioned, points out

that this entry contains no reflection on Marvell's morals, but shows

that he was given "notice to quit" for non-residence, "then much more

strictly enjoined than it is now." The days referred to in the entry

were, so the master obligingly explains, "the certain number allowed by

statute to absentees," whilst the "acts mean the Exercises also enjoyned

by the statutes." Dr. Lort adds, "It does not appear, by any subsequent

entry, whether Marvell did or did not comply with this order." We may

now safely assume he did not. Marvell's Cambridge days were over.

The vacations, no inconsiderable part of the year, were probably spent

by Marvell under his father's roof at Hull, where his two elder sisters

were married and settled. It is not to be wondered at that Andrew

Marvell should, for so many years, have represented Hull in the House of

Commons, for both he and his family were well known in the town. The

elder Marvell added to his reputation as a teacher and preacher the

character of a devoted servant of his flock in the hour of danger. The

plague twice visited Hull during the time of the elder Marvell, first in

1635 and again in 1638. In those days men might well pray to be

delivered from "plague, pestilence, and famine." Hull suffered terribly

on both occasions. We have seen, in comparatively recent times, the

effect of the cholera upon large towns, and the plague was worse than

the cholera many times over. The Hull preacher, despite the stigma of

\_facetiousness\_, which still clings to him, stuck to his post, visiting

the sick, burying the dead, and even, which seems a little superfluous,

preaching and afterwards printing "by request" their funeral sermons. A

brave man, indeed, and one reserved for a tragic end.

In April 1638 the poet's mother died. In the following November the

elder Marvell married a widow lady, but his own end was close upon him.

The earliest consecutive account of this strange event is in Gent's

\_History of Hull\_ (1735):--"This year, 1640, the Rev. Mr. Andrew

Marvell, Lecturer of Hull, sailing over the Humber in company with

Madame Skinner of Thornton College and a young beautiful couple who were

going to be wedded; a speedy Fate prevented the designed happy union

thro' a violent storm which overset the boat and put a period to all

their lives, nor were there any remains of them or the vessel ever after

found, tho' earnestly sought for on distant shores."

Thus died by drowning a brave man, a good Christian, and an excellent

clergyman of the Reformed Church of England. The plain narrative just

quoted has been embroidered by many long-subsequent writers in the

interests of those who love presentiments and ghostly intimations of

impending events, and in one of these versions it is recorded, that

though the morning was clear, the breeze fair, and the company gay, yet

when stepping into the boat "the reverend man exclaimed, 'Ho for

Heaven,' and threw his staff ashore and left it to Providence to fulfil

its awful warning."

So melancholy an occurrence naturally excited great attention, and long

lingered in local memories. Everybody in Hull knew who was their

member's father.

There is an obstinate tradition quite unverifiable that Mrs. Skinner,

the mother of the beautiful young lady who was drowned with the elder

Marvell, adopted the young Marvell as a son, sending to Cambridge for

him after his father's death, and providing him with the means of

travel, and that afterwards she bequeathed him her estate. Whether there

is any truth in this story cannot now be ascertained. The Skinners were

a well-known Hull family, one of them, a brother of that Cyriac Skinner

who was urged by Milton in immortal verse to enjoy himself whilst the

mood was on him, having been Mayor of Hull. The lady, doubtless, had

money, and Andrew Marvell was in need of money, and appears to have been

supplied with it. It is quite possible the tradition is true.

FOOTNOTES:

[6:1] Fuller's \_Worthies\_ (1662), p. 159.

[8:1] "The Fuller Worthies Library," 4 vols., 1872. Hereafter referred

to as \_Grosart\_.

[8:2] \_Mr. Smirke or the Divine in Mode.\_--Grosart, iv. 15.

[11:1] \_Autobiography of Matthew Robinson\_. Edited by J.E.B. Mayor,

Cambridge, 1856.

[12:1] \_Behemoth\_, Hobbes' Works (Molesworth), vol. vi., see pp. 168,

218, 233-6.

[12:2] Worthington's \_Diary\_, vol. i. p. 5 (Chetham Society).

[13:1] Fuller, \_History of Cambridge University\_ (1655), p. 167.

[14:1] Fuller, p. 166.

[15:1] Grosart, I., xxviii.

[15:2] See Worthington's \_Diary\_, vol. i. p. 7.

CHAPTER II

"THE HAPPY GARDEN-STATE"

The seventeenth century was the century of travel for educated

Englishmen--of long, leisurely travel. Milton's famous Italian tour

lasted fifteen months. John Evelyn's \_Wander-Jahre\_ occupied four years.

Andrew Marvell lived abroad in France, Spain, Holland, and Italy from

1642 to 1646, and we have Milton's word for it that when the traveller

returned he was well acquainted with the French, Dutch, Spanish, and

Italian languages. Andrew Marvell was a highly cultivated man, living in

a highly cultivated age, in daily converse with scholars, poets,

philosophers, and men of very considerable scientific attainments. In

reading Clarendon and Burnet, and whilst turning over Aubrey's

delightful gossip, it is impossible not to be struck with the width and

variety of the learning as well as with the wit of the period.

Intellectually it was a great age.

No record remains of Marvell's travels during these years. Up and down

his writings the careful reader will come across pleasant references to

foreign manners and customs, betokening the keen humorous observer, and

the possession of that wide-eyed faculty that takes a pleasure, half

contemplative, half the result of animal spirits, in watching the way of

the world wherever you may chance to be. Of another and an earlier

traveller, Sir Henry Wotton, we read in "Walton's \_Life\_."

"And whereas he was noted in his youth to have a sharp wit and apt to

jest, \_that\_ by time, travel, and conversation was so polished and

made useful, that his company seemed to be one of the delights of

mankind."

In all Marvell's work, as poet, as Parliamentarian, as controversialist,

we shall see the travelled man. Certainly no one ever more fully grasped

the sense of the famous sentence given by Wotton to Milton, when the

latter was starting on his travels: "\_I pensieri stretti ed il viso

sciolto.\_"

Marvell was in Rome about 1645. I can give no other date during the

whole four years. This, our only date, rests upon an assumption. In

Marvell's earliest satirical poem he gives an account of a visit he paid

in Rome to the unlucky poetaster Flecknoe, who was not in Rome until

1645. If, therefore, the poem records an actual visit, it follows that

the author of the poem was in Rome at the same time. It is not very

near, but it is as near as we can get.

Richard Flecknoe was an Irish priest of blameless life, with a passion

for scribbling and for printing. His exquisite reason for both these

superfluous acts is worth quoting:--

"I write chiefly to avoid idleness, and print to avoid the imputation

(of idleness), and as others do it to live after they are dead, I do

it only not to be thought dead whilst I am alive."[20:1]

Such frankness should have disarmed ridicule, but somehow or another

this amiable man came to be regarded as the type of a dull author, and

his name passed into a proverb for stupidity, so much so that when

Dryden in 1682 was casting about how best to give pain to Shadwell, he

devised the plan of his famous satire, "MacFlecknoe," where in biting

verse he describes Flecknoe (who was happily dead) as an aged Prince--

"Who like Augustus young

Was called to empire and had governed long;

In prose and verse was owned, without dispute,

Through all the realms of nonsense absolute."

Dryden goes on to picture the aged Flecknoe,

"pondering which of all his sons was fit

To reign and wage immortal war with Wit,"

and fixing on Shadwell.

"Shadwell alone my perfect image bears,

Mature in dulness from his tender years;

Shadwell alone, of all my sons, is he

Who stands confirmed in full stupidity:

The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,

But Shadwell never deviates into sense."

Thus has it come about that Flecknoe, the Irish priest, whom Marvell

visited in his Roman garret in 1645, bears a name ever memorable in

literature.

Marvell's own poem, though eclipsed by the splendour of Glorious John's

resounding lines, has an interest of its own as being, in its roughly

humorous way, a forerunner of the "Dunciad" and "Grub Street"

literature, by which in sundry moods 'tis "pleasure to be bound." It

describes seeking out the poetaster in his lodging "three staircases

high," at the sign of the Pelican, in a room so small that it seemed "a

coffin set in the stair's head." No sooner was the rhymer unearthed than

straightway he began to recite his poetry in dismal tones, much to his

visitor's dismay:--

"But I who now imagin'd myself brought

To my last trial, in a serious thought

Calm'd the disorders of my youthful breast

And to my martyrdom preparèd rest.

Only this frail ambition did remain,

The last distemper of the sober brain,

That there had been some present to assure

The future ages how I did endure."

To stop the cataract of "hideous verse," Marvell invited the scarecrow

to dinner, and waits while he dresses. As they turn to leave, for the

room is so small that the man who comes in last must be the first to go

out, they meet a friend of the poet on the stairs, who makes a third at

dinner. After dinner Flecknoe produces ten quires of paper, from which

the friend proceeds to read, but so infamously as to excite their

author's rage:--

"But all his praises could not now appease

The provok't Author, whom it did displease

To hear his verses by so just a curse

That were ill made, condemned to be read worse:

And how (impossible!) he made yet more

Absurdities in them than were before:

For his untun'd voice did fall or raise

As a deaf man upon the Viol plays,

Making the half-points and the periods run

Confus'der than the atoms in the sun:

Thereat the poet swell'd with anger full,"

and after violent exclamations retires in dudgeon back to his room. The

faithful friend is in despair. What is he to do to make peace? "Who

would commend his mistress now?" Marvell

"counselled him to go in time

Ere the fierce poet's anger turned to rhyme."

The advice was taken, and Marvell, finding himself at last free from

boredom, went off to St. Peter's to return thanks.

This poem is but an unsatisfactory \_souvenir de voyage\_, but it is all

there is.

What Marvell was doing during the stirring years 1646-1650 is not

known. Even in the most troubled times men go about their business, and

our poet was always a man of affairs. As for his opinions during these

years, we can only guess at them from those to which he afterwards gave

expression. Marvell was neither a Republican nor a Puritan. Like his

father before him, he was a Protestant and a member of the Reformed

Church of England. He stood for both King and Parliament. Archbishop

Laud he distrusted, and it may well be detested, but good churchmen have

often distrusted and even detested their archbishops. Mr. Gladstone had

no great regard for Archbishop Tait. Before the Act of Uniformity and

the repressive legislation that followed upon its heels had driven

English dissent into its final moulds, it was not doctrine but

ceremonies that disturbed men's minds; and Marvell belonged to that

school of English churchmen, by no means the least distinguished school,

which was not disposed to quarrel with their fellow-Christians over

white surplices, the ring in matrimony, or the attitude during Holy

Communion. He shared the belief of a contemporary that no system is bad

enough to destroy a good man, or good enough to save a bad one.

The Civil War was to Marvell what it was to most wise men not devoured

by faction--a deplorable event. Twenty years after he wrote in the

\_Rehearsal Transprosed\_:--

"Whether it be a war of religion or of liberty it is not worth the

labour to inquire. Whichsoever was at the top, the other was at the

bottom; but upon considering all, I think the cause was too good to

have been fought for. Men ought to have trusted God--they ought to

have trusted the King with that whole matter. The arms of the Church

are prayers and tears, the arms of the subject are patience and

petitions. The King himself being of so accurate and piercing a

judgment would soon have felt it where it stuck. For men may spare

their pains when Nature is at work, and the world will not go the

faster for our driving. Even as his present Majesty's happy

Restoration did itself, so all things else happen in their best and

proper time, without any heed of our officiousness."[24:1]

In the face of this passage and many another of the like spirit, it is

puzzling to find such a man, for example, as Thomas Baker, the ejected

non-juring Fellow and historian of St. John's College, Cambridge

(1656-1740), writing of Marvell as "that bitter republican"; and Dryden,

who probably knew Marvell, comparing his controversial pamphlets with

those of Martin Marprelate, or at all events speaking of Martin

Marprelate as "the Marvell of those times."[24:2] A somewhat

anti-prelatical note runs through Marvell's writings, but it is a

familiar enough note in the works of the English laity, and by no means

dissevers its possessor from the Anglican Church. But there are some

heated expressions in the satires which probably gave rise to the belief

that Marvell was a Republican.[24:3]

During the Commonwealth Marvell was content to be a civil servant. He

entertained for the Lord-Protector the same kind of admiration that such

a loyalist as Chateaubriand could not help feeling for Napoleon. Even

Clarendon's pedantic soul occasionally vibrates as he writes of Oliver,

and compares his reputation in foreign courts with that of his own

royal master. When the Restoration came Marvell rejoiced. Two

old-established things had been destroyed by Cromwell--Kings and

Parliaments, and Marvell was glad to see them both back again in

England.

Some verses of Marvell's attributable to this period (1646-1650) show

him keeping what may be called Royalist company. With a dozen other

friends of Richard Lovelace, the Cavalier poet and the author of two of

the most famous stanzas in English verse, Marvell contributed some

commendatory lines addressed to his "noble friend, Mr. Richard Lovelace,

upon his Poems," which appeared with the poems themselves in that year

of fate, 1649. "After the murder of the King," says Anthony Wood,

"Lovelace was set at liberty, and having by that time consumed all his

estate, grew very melancholy, became very poor in body and purse, was

the object of charity, went in ragged clothes (whereas when he was in

glory he wore cloth of gold and silver), and mostly lodged in obscure

and dirty places, more befitting the worst of beggars and poorest of

servants."

Then it was that \_Lucasta\_ made its first appearance. When the fortunes

of the gallant poet were at their lowest and never to revive, Marvell

seizes the occasion to deplore the degeneracy of the times, a familiar

theme with poets:--

"Our civil wars have lost the civic crown,

He highest builds who with most art destroys,

And against others' fame his own employs."

He then glances scornfully at the new Presbyterian censorship of the

press:--

"The barbèd censurers begin to look

Like the grim consistory on thy book,

And on each line cast a reforming eye,"

and suggests that \_Lucasta\_ is in danger because in 1642 its author had

been imprisoned by order of the House of Commons for presenting a

petition from Kent which prayed for the restoration of the Book of

Common Prayer. This danger is, however, overcome by the ladies, who rise

in arms to defend their favourite poet.

"But when the beauteous Ladies came to know

That their dear Lovelace was endangered so,

Lovelace that thaw'd the most congealèd breast,

He who lov'd best and them defended best,

They all in mutiny, though yet undrest,

Sally'd."

One of them challenged Marvell as to whether he had not been of the

poet's traducers, but he answered No!

"O No, mistake not, I reply'd, for I

In your defence or in his cause would die.

But he, secure of glory and of time,

Above their envy or my aid doth climb.

Him, bravest men and fairest nymphs approve,

His book in them finds Judgment, with you, Love."

Lovelace did not live to see the Restoration, but died in a mean lodging

near Shoe Lane in April 1658, and was buried in St. Bridget's Church.

Let us indulge the hope that the friends who occupied so many of the

introductory pages of Lovelace's \_Lucasta\_ occasionally enlivened the

solitude and relieved the distress of the poet whose praises they had

once sung with so much vigour. As Marvell was undoubtedly a friendly

man, and one who loved to be alone with his friends, and had never any

house of his own to keep up, living for the most part in hired lodgings,

it would be unkind to doubt that he at least did not forget Lovelace in

his poverty and depression of spirit.

In 1649 thirty-three poets combined to weep over the early grave of the

Lord Henry Hastings, the eldest son of the sixth Earl of Huntingdon, who

died of the smallpox in the twentieth year of his age. Not even this

plentiful discharge of poets' tears should rob the young nobleman of his

claim to be regarded as a fine example of the great learning,

accomplishments, and high spirits of the age. We can still produce the

thirty-three poets, but what young nobleman is there who can boast such

erudition as had rewarded the scorned delights and the laborious days of

this Lord Hastings? We have at least the satisfaction of knowing that

did such a one exist he probably would not die of the smallpox. Among

the poets who wept on this occasion were Herrick, Sir John Denham,

Andrew Marvell, and John Dryden, then a Westminster schoolboy, whose

description of the smallpox is as bad as the disease.

Marvell's verses begin very prettily and soon introduce a characteristic

touch:--

"Go, stand betwixt the Morning and the Flowers,

And ere they fall arrest the early showers,

Hastings is dead; and we disconsolate

With early tears must mourn his early fate."

In 1650 Marvell, then in his twenty-ninth year, went to live with Lord

Fairfax at Nunappleton House in Yorkshire, as tutor to the only child

and daughter of the house, Mary Fairfax, aged twelve years (born 30th

July 1638). This proved to be a great event in Marvell's life as a poet,

and it happened at an epoch in the distinguished career of the famous

Parliamentarian general

"Whose name in arms through Europe rings."

Lord Fairfax, though he had countenanced, if not approved, the trial

and deposition of the king, had resolutely held himself aloof from the

proceedings which, beginning on Saturday the 20th of January 1649,

terminated so dismally on Tuesday the 30th. The strange part played by

Lady Fairfax on the first day of the so-called trial (though it was no

greater a travesty of justice than many a real trial both before and

after) is one of the best-known stories in English history. There are

several versions of it. Having provided herself with a seat in a small

gallery in Westminster Hall, just above the heads of the judges, when

her husband's name was called out as one of the commissioners, the

intrepid lady (no Cavalier's dame, be it remembered, but a true blue

Presbyterian), a brave soldier's daughter, cried out, "Lord Fairfax is

not here; he will never sit among you. You do wrong to name him as a

sitting Commissioner." This is Rushworth's version, and he was present.

Clarendon, who was not present, being abroad at the time, reports the

words as, "He has more wit than to be here."

Later on in the day, when the President Bradshaw interrupted the king

and peremptorily bade him to answer the charges exhibited against him

"in the name of the Commons of England assembled, and of the people of

England," Lady Fairfax again rose to her feet and exclaimed, "It's a

lie! Not half the people. Where are they and their consents? Oliver

Cromwell is a traitor."

Lieutenant-Colonel Axtell, who during the trial was in command of a

regiment in Westminster and charged by his military superior, Lord

Fairfax himself, with the duty of maintaining order, hearing this

disturbance, went forward and told Lady Fairfax to hold her tongue,

sound advice which she appears to have taken. After the Restoration

Axtell was put to his trial as a "regicide." His defence, which was,

that as a soldier he obeyed his orders, and was no more guilty than his

general, Lord Fairfax, was not listened to, and he was sentenced to

death, a fate which he met like the brave man he was.

Although Fairfax did not immediately resign his command after the king's

death, from that moment he lost heart in the cause. Lady Fairfax, whose

loyalty to Charles may have been quickened by her dislike of Oliver, had

great influence with him, and it may well be that his conscience pricked

him. The rupture came in June 1650, when Charles's son made his

appearance in Scotland and his peace with the Presbyterians, subscribing

with inward emotions it would be unkind to attempt to describe the

Solemn League and Covenant, and attending services and listening to

sermons the length of which, at least, he never forgot. War was plainly

imminent between the two countries. The question was, who should begin?

Cromwell, who had hurried home from Ireland, Lambert, and Harrison were

all keen to strike the first blow. Fairfax felt a scruple, and in those

days scruples counted. Was there, he asked, a just cause for an invasion

of Scotland? A committee was appointed, consisting of the three warriors

above-named with St. John and Whitelock, to confer with the Lord-General

and satisfy him of the lawfulness of the undertaking. The six met, and

having first prayed--Oliver praying first--they proceeded to a

discussion which may be read at length in Whitelock's \_Memorials\_, vol.

iii. p. 207. The substance of their talk was as follows: Fairfax's

scruple proved to be that both they and the Scots had joined in the

Solemn League and Covenant, and that, therefore, until Scotland assumed

the offensive, there was no cause for an invasion. Cromwell's retort,

after a preliminary quibble, was practical enough. "War is inevitable.

Is it better to have it in the bowels of another's country or in one's

own? In one or other it must be." Fairfax's scruple, however, withstood

this battery, though it was strongly enforced by Harrison, who, in reply

to the Lord-General's question, "What was the warrant for the assumption

that Scotland meant to fall upon England?" inquired, if Scotland did not

mean to invade England, for whose benefit were levies being made and

soldiers enlisted.

Fairfax proved immovable. "Every man," said he, "must stand or fall by

his own conscience"; and as he offered to lay down his command, there

was nothing for it but to accept the resignation and appoint his

successor. This was speedily done, and on the 28th of June 1650 "Oliver

Cromwell, Esquire," was appointed Captain-General and Commander-in-chief

of all the forces. On 16th July Cromwell crossed the Tweed, and on the

3rd of September the Lord delivered Leslie into his hands at Dunbar.

It was in these circumstances that Lord Fairfax and his energetic lady

and only child went back to their Yorkshire home in the midsummer of

1650, taking Marvell with them to instruct the Lady Mary in the tongues.

Nunappleton House is in the Ainstey of York, a pleasant bit of country

bounded by the rivers Ouse, Wharfe, and Nidd. The modern traveller, as

his train rushes north, whilst shut up in his corridor-carriage with his

rug, his pipe, and his novel, passes at no great distance from the house

on the way between Selby and York. The old house, as it was in Marvell's

time, is thus described by Captain Markham, who had a print to help

him, in his delightful \_Life of the Great Lord Fairfax\_:--

"It was a picturesque brick mansion with stone copings and a high

steep roof, and consisted of a centre and two wings at right angles,

forming three sides of a square, facing to the north. The great hall

or gallery occupied the centre between the two wings. It was fifty

yards long, and was adorned with thirty shields in wood, painted with

the arms of the family. In the three rooms there were chimney-pieces

of delicate marble of various colours, and many fine portraits on the

walls. The central part of the house was surrounded by a cupola, and

clustering chimneys rose in the two wings. A noble park with splendid

oak-trees, and containing 300 head of deer, stretched away to the

north, while on the south side were the ruins of the old Nunnery, the

flower-garden, and the low meadows called \_ings\_ extending to the

banks of the Wharfe. In this flower-garden the General took especial

delight. The flowers were planted in masses, tulips, pinks, and

roses, each in separate beds, which were cut into the shape of forts

with five bastions. General Lambert, whom Fairfax had reared as a

soldier, also loved his flowers, and excelled both in cultivating

them and in painting them from Nature. Lord Fairfax only went to

Denton, the favourite seat of his grandfather, when the floods were

out over the \_ings\_ at Nunappleton, and he also occasionally resorted

to his house at Bishop Hill in York."[31:1]

In this garden the muse of Andrew Marvell blossomed like the

cherry-tree.

Lord Fairfax, though furious in war, and badly wounded in many a fierce

engagement, was, when otherwise occupied, a man of quiet literary

tastes, and a good bit of a collector and \_virtuoso\_. Some of the rare

books and manuscripts he had around him at Nunappleton are now in the

Bodleian, the treasures of which he had protected in troubled times. He

loved to handle medals and coins, and knew the points of old

engravings. He wrote a history of the Christian Church down to our own

ill-conducted Reformation, and composed a complete metrical version of

the Psalms of David and of the Song of Solomon. These and many other

productions, which he characterised as "The Employment of my Solitude,"

still remain in his own handwriting. Amongst them, Yorkshire men will

hear with pleasure, is a "Treatise on the breeding of the Horse."

Of the quality of his wife we have already had a touch. She was one of

the four daughters of Lord Vere of Tilbury, who came of a fine fighting

family, and whose daughters had a roughish bringing-up, chiefly in the

Netherlands. None of the daughters were reckoned beautiful, either in

face or figure, and it may well be that Lady Fairfax had something about

her of the old campaigner; but of her courage, sincerity, and goodness

there can be no question. Her loyalty was no sickly fruit of "Church

Principles," for her strong intelligence rejected scornfully the slavish

doctrines, alien to our political constitution, of divine right and

passive obedience; but a loyalty, none the less, it was, of a very

valuable kind. She was fond of argument, and with Lady Fairfax at

Nunappleton there was never likely to be any dearth of sensible talk and

lively reminiscence. The tragedy of the 30th of January could never be

forgotten, and it is possible that Marvell's most famous verses, so

nobly descriptive of the demeanour of the king on that memorable

occasion, derived their inspiration from discourse at Nunappleton.

Of the Lady Mary, aged twelve, we have no direct testimony. When she

grew up and had her portrait painted she stands revealed as a stout

young woman with a plain good-natured face. The poor soul needed all

the good-nature heaven had bestowed upon her, for she had to bear the

misery and disgrace which were the inevitable marriage-portion of the

woman whose ill-luck it was to become the wife of George Villiers,

second Duke of Buckingham. Somebody seems to have taught her philosophy,

for she bore her misfortunes as best became a great lady, living as one

who had sorrow but no grievance. The duke died in 1688; she lived on

till 1704. She was ever a good friend to another ill-used solitary wife,

Catherine of Braganza. Marvell had every reason to be proud of his

pupil.

Beside the actual inmates of the great house, the whole countryside

swarmed with Fairfaxes. At the Rectory of Bolton Percy was the late

Lord-General's uncle, Henry Fairfax, and his two sons, Henry, who

succeeded to the title, and the better-known Brian, the biographer of

the Duke of Buckingham. At Stenton, four miles off, lived the widow of

the gallant Sir William Fairfax, who died, covered with wounds, in 1644

before Montgomery Castle. There were two sons and two daughters at

Stenton, whilst Charles Fairfax, another uncle, and the lawyer and

genealogist of the family, lived at no great distance with no less than

fourteen children. There were also sisters of Lord Fairfax, with

families of their own, all settled in the same part of the county.

Such were the agreeable surroundings of our poet for two years,

1650-1652. I must leave it to the imaginations of my readers to fill up

the picture, for excepting the poems, which we may safely assume were

written at Nunappleton House, and--who can doubt it?--read aloud to its

inmates, there is nothing more to be said.

Before considering the Nunappleton poetry, a word must be got in of

bibliography. College exercises and complimentary verses excepted,

Marvell printed none of his verse under his own name in his lifetime. So

far as his themes were political there is no need to wonder at this.

Indeed, the wonder is how, despite their anonymity, their author kept

his ears; but why the Nunappleton verse should have remained in

manuscript for more than thirty years is hard to explain.

Until Pope took his muse to market, poetry, apart from the drama, had no

direct commercial value, or one too small to be ranked as a motive for

publication. None the less, the age loved distinction and appreciated

wit, and to be known as a poet whose verses "numbered good intellects"

was to gain the \_entrée\_ to the society of men both of intellect and

fashion, and also, not infrequently, snug berths in the public service,

and secretaryships to foreign missions and embassies. Thus there was

always, in addition to natural vanity, a strong motive for a

seventeenth-century poet to publish his poems. To-day one would hesitate

to recommend a young man who wanted to get on in the world to publish a

volume of verse; but the age of "wit" and "parts" is over.

It was not till 1681--three years after Marvell's death--that the small

folio appeared with a fine portrait, still dear to the collector, which

contains for the first time what may be called the "garden-poetry" of

our author, together with some specimens of his political and satirical

versification.

Marvell's most famous poem--\_The Ode upon Cromwell's Return from

Ireland\_--is not included in the 1681 volume, and remained in manuscript

until 1776, as also did the poem upon Cromwell's death.

The remainder of the political poems, which had made their first

appearance as broadsheets, were reprinted after the Revolution in the

well-known \_Collection of Poems on Affairs of State\_.[35:1] These verses

were never owned by Marvell, and it is probable that some of them,

though attributed to him, are not his at all. We have only tradition to

go by. In the case of political satires, squibs, epigrams, rough popular

occasional rhymes flung off both in haste and heat to be sold with old

ballads in the market-place, we need not seek for better evidence than

tradition, which indeed is often the only external evidence we have for

the authorship of much more important things.

Now to return to the Nunappleton poetry.

In a poem of 776 lines Marvell tells the story and describes the charms

of the house which Lord Fairfax built for himself during the war, and to

which, as just narrated, he retired in the summer of 1650. The story is

only too familiar a one, being writ large over many a fine property.

Appleton House was Church loot. In the time of Henry, "the majestic lord

that burst the bonds of Rome," the old house at Nunappleton was a

Cistercian nunnery, a religious house. In 1542 the community was

suppressed and its property appropriated by the great-grandfather of the

Lord-General--one Sir Thomas Fairfax. The religious buildings were

pulled down and a new secular house rose in their place. In these bare

and sordid facts there is not much room for poetry, but there is a story

thrown in. Shortly before 1518 a Yorkshire heiress, bearing the

unromantic name of Isabella Thwaites, was living in the Cistercian

abbey, under the guardianship of the abbess, the Lady Anna Langton.

Property under the care of the Church is always supposed to be in

danger, and the Lady Anna was freely credited with the desire to make a

nun of her ward, and so keep her broad acres in Wharfedale and her

messuages in York for the use of Mother Church. None the less, the young

lady was allowed to go about and visit her neighbours, and whilst so

doing she fell in love with Sir William Fairfax, or he fell in love with

her or with her estates. Thereupon, so the story proceeds, the abbess

kept her ward a close prisoner within the nunnery walls. Legal

proceedings were taken, but in the end the privacy of the nunnery was

invaded, and Miss Thwaites was abducted and married to Sir William

Fairfax at the church of Bolton Percy. The lady abbess had to submit to

\_vis major\_, but worse days were in front of her, for she lived on to

see the nunnery itself despoiled, and the fair domains she had during a

long life preserved and maintained for religious uses handed over to the

son of her former ward, Isabella Thwaites.

Our poet begins by referring to the modest dimensions of the house, and

the natural charms of its surroundings:--

"The house was built upon the place,

Only as for a mark of grace,

And for an inn to entertain

Its Lord awhile, but not remain.

Him Bishop's-hill or Denton may,

Or Billborow, better hold than they:

But Nature here hath been so free,

As if she said, 'Leave this to me.'

Art would more neatly have defac'd

What she had laid so sweetly waste

In fragrant gardens, shady woods,

Deep meadows, and transparent floods."

And then starts the story:--

"While, with slow eyes, we these survey,

And on each pleasant footstep stay,

We opportunely may relate

The progress of this house's fate.

A nunnery first gave it birth,

(For virgin buildings oft brought forth)

And all that neighbour-ruin shows

The quarries whence this dwelling rose.

Near to this gloomy cloister's gates,

There dwelt the blooming virgin Thwaites,

Fair beyond measure, and an heir,

Which might deformity make fair;

And oft she spent the summer's suns

Discoursing with the subtle Nuns,

Whence, in these words, one to her weav'd,

As 'twere by chance, thoughts long conceiv'd:

'Within this holy leisure, we

Live innocently, as you see.

These walls restrain the world without,

But hedge our liberty about;

These bars inclose that wilder den

Of those wild creatures, callèd men,

The cloister outward shuts its gates,

And, from us, locks on them the grates.

Here we, in shining armour white,

Like virgin amazons do fight,

And our chaste lamps we hourly trim,

Lest the great Bridegroom find them dim.

Our orient breaths perfumèd are

With incense of incessant prayer;

And holy-water of our tears

Most strangely our complexion clears;

Not tears of grief, but such as those

With which calm pleasure overflows;

Or pity, when we look on you

That live without this happy vow.

How should we grieve that must be seen

Each one a spouse, and each a queen,

And can in heaven hence behold

Our brighter robes and crowns of gold!

When we have prayèd all our beads,

Some one the holy Legend reads,

While all the rest with needles paint

The face and graces of the Saint;

Some of your features, as we sewed,

Through every shrine should be bestowed,

And in one beauty we would take

Enough a thousand Saints to make.

And (for I dare not quench the fire

That me does for your good inspire)

'Twere sacrilege a man to admit

To holy things for heaven fit.

I see the angels in a crown

On you the lilies showering down;

And round about you glory breaks,

That something more than human speaks.

All beauty when at such a height,

Is so already consecrate.

Fairfax I know, and long ere this

Have marked the youth, and what he is;

But can he such a rival seem,

For whom you heaven should disesteem?

Ah, no! and 'twould more honour prove

He your devoto were than Love.

Here live belovèd and obeyed,

Each one your sister, each your maid,

And, if our rule seem strictly penned,

The rule itself to you shall bend.

Our Abbess, too, now far in age,

Doth your succession near presage.

How soft the yoke on us would lie,

Might such fair hands as yours it tie!

Your voice, the sweetest of the choir,

Shall draw heaven nearer, raise us higher,

And your example, if our head,

Will soon us to perfection lead.

Those virtues to us all so dear,

Will straight grow sanctity when here;

And that, once sprung, increase so fast,

Till miracles it work at last.'"

What reply was given by the heiress to these arguments, and others of a

still more seductive hue, the poet does not tell, but turns to the eager

lover who asks, What should he do? He hints that a nunnery is no place

for a virtuous maid, and that the nuns (unlike himself, I hope) are only

thinking of her property. He complains that though the Court has

authorised him to use either peace or force, the nuns still stand upon

their guard.

"Ill-counselled women, do you know

Whom you resist or what you do?"

Using a most remarkable poetic licence, the poet refers to the fact that

this barred-out lover is to be the progenitor of the great Lord Fairfax.

"Is not this he, whose offspring fierce

Shall fight through all the universe;

And with successive valour try

France, Poland, either Germany,

Till one, as long since prophesied,

His horse through conquered Britain ride?"

The lover determines to take the place by assault. It was not a very

heroic enterprise, as Marvell describes it.

"Some to the breach, against their foes,

Their wooden Saints in vain oppose;

Another bolder, stands at push,

With their old holy-water brush,

While the disjointed Abbess threads

The jingling chain-shot of her beads;

But their loud'st cannon were their lungs,

And sharpest weapons were their tongues.

But waving these aside like flies,

Young Fairfax through the wall does rise.

Then the unfrequented vault appeared,

And superstition, vainly feared;

The relicks false were set to view;

Only the jewels there were true,

And truly bright and holy Thwaites,

That weeping at the altar waits.

But the glad youth away her bears,

And to the Nuns bequeathes her tears,

Who guiltily their prize bemoan,

Like gypsies who a child have stol'n."

The poet then goes on to glorify the results of this union and to

describe happy days spent at Nunappleton by the descendants of Isabella

Thwaites.

"At the demolishing, this seat

To Fairfax fell, as by escheat;

And what both nuns and founders willed,

'Tis likely better thus fulfilled.

For if the virgin proved not theirs,

The cloister yet remainèd hers;

Though many a nun there made her vow,

'Twas no religious house till now.

From that blest bed the hero came

Whom France and Poland yet does fame;

Who, when retirèd here to peace,

His warlike studies could not cease;

But laid these gardens out, in sport,

In the just figure of a fort,

And with five bastions it did fence,

As aiming one for every sense.

When in the east the morning ray

Hangs out the colours of the day,

The bee through these known alleys hums,

Beating the dian with its drums.

Then flowers their drowsy eyelids raise,

Their silken ensigns each displays,

And dries its pan, yet dank with dew,

And fills its flask with odours new.

These as their Governor goes by

In fragrant volleys they let fly,

And to salute their Governess

Again as great a charge they press:

None for the virgin nymph; for she

Seems with the flowers a flower to be.

And think so still! though not compare

With breath so sweet, or cheek so fair!

Well shot, ye firemen! Oh, how sweet

And round your equal fires do meet,

Whose shrill report no ear can tell,

But echoes to the eye and smell!

See how the flowers, as at parade,

Under their colours stand displayed;

Each regiment in order grows,

That of the tulip, pink and rose.

But when the vigilant patrol

Of stars walk round about the pole,

Their leaves, which to the stalks are curled,

Seem to their staves the ensigns furled.

Then in some flower's belovèd hut,

Each bee, as sentinel, is shut,

And sleeps so too, but, if once stirred,

She runs you through, nor asks the word.

Oh, thou, that dear and happy isle,

The garden of the world erewhile,

Thou Paradise of the four seas,

Which heaven planted us to please,

But, to exclude the world, did guard

With watery, if not flaming sword,--

What luckless apple did we taste,

To make us mortal, and thee waste?

Unhappy! shall we never more

That sweet militia restore,

When gardens only had their towers

And all the garrisons were flowers,

When roses only arms might bear,

And men did rosy garlands wear?

Tulips, in several colours barred,

Were then the Switzers of our guard;

The gardener had the soldier's place,

And his more gentle forts did trace;

The nursery of all things green

Was then the only magazine;

The winter quarters were the stoves,

Where he the tender plants removes.

But war all this doth overgrow:

We ordnance plant, and powder sow.

The arching boughs unite between

The columns of the temple green,

And underneath the wingèd quires

Echo about their tunèd fires.

The nightingale does here make choice

To sing the trials of her voice;

Low shrubs she sits in, and adorns

With music high the squatted thorns;

But highest oaks stoop down to hear,

And listening elders prick the ear;

The thorn, lest it should hurt her, draws

Within the skin its shrunken claws.

But I have for my music found

A sadder, yet more pleasing sound;

The stock-doves, whose fair necks are graced

With nuptial rings, their ensigns chaste,

Yet always, for some cause unknown,

Sad pair, unto the elms they moan.

O why should such a couple mourn,

That in so equal flames do burn!

Then as I careless on the bed

Of gelid strawberries do tread,

And through the hazels thick espy

The hatching throstle's shining eye,

The heron, from the ash's top,

The eldest of its young lets drop,

As if it stork-like did pretend

That tribute to its lord to send.

Thus I, easy philosopher,

Among the birds and trees confer;

And little now to make me, wants,

Or of the fowls, or of the plants;

Give me but wings as they, and I

Straight floating on the air shall fly;

Or turn me but, and you shall see

I was but an inverted tree.

Already I begin to call

In their most learn'd original,

And where I language want, my signs

The bird upon the bough divines,

And more attentive there doth sit

Than if she were with lime-twigs knit,

No leaf does tremble in the wind,

Which I returning cannot find.

One of these scattered Sibyls' leaves

Strange prophecies my fancy weaves,

And in one history consumes,

Like Mexique paintings, all the plumes;

What Rome, Greece, Palestine e'er said,

I in this light mosaic read.

Thrice happy he, who, not mistook,

Hath read in Nature's mystic book!

And see how chance's better wit

Could with a mask my studies hit!

The oak-leaves me embroider all,

Between which caterpillars crawl;

And ivy, with familiar trails,

Me licks and clasps, and curls and hales.

Under this Attic cope I move,

Like some great prelate of the grove;

Then, languishing with ease, I toss

On pallets swoln of velvet moss,

While the wind, cooling through the boughs,

Flatters with air my panting brows.

Thanks for your rest, ye mossy banks,

And unto you, cool zephyrs, thanks,

Who, as my hair, my thoughts too shed,

And winnow from the chaff my head!

How safe, methinks, and strong behind

These trees, have I encamped my mind,

Where beauty, aiming at the heart,

Bends in some tree its useless dart,

And where the world no certain shot

Can make, or me it toucheth not,

But I on it securely play

And gall its horsemen all the day.

Bind me, ye woodbines, in your twines

Curl me about, ye gadding vines,

And oh so close your circles lace,

That I may never leave this place!

But, lest your fetters prove too weak,

Ere I your silken bondage break,

Do you, O brambles, chain me too,

And, courteous briars, nail me through!

Oh what a pleasure 'tis to hedge

My temples here with heavy sedge,

Abandoning my lazy side,

Stretched as a bank unto the tide,

Or to suspend my sliding foot

On the osier's underminèd root,

And in its branches tough to hang,

While at my lines the fishes twang?

But now away, my hooks, my quills,

And angles, idle utensils!

The young MARIA walks to-night;

'Tis she that to these gardens gave

That wondrous beauty which they have;

She straightness on the woods bestows;

To her the meadow sweetness owes;

Nothing could make the river be

So crystal pure, but only she,

She yet more pure, sweet, straight, and fair

Than gardens, woods, meads, rivers are.

This 'tis to have been from the first

In a domestic heaven nursed,

Under the discipline severe

Of FAIRFAX, and the starry VERE;

Where not one object can come nigh

But pure, and spotless as the eye,

And goodness doth itself entail

On females, if there want a male."

This poem, having a biographical value, I have quoted at, perhaps, too

great length. Other poems of this garden-period of Marvell's life are

better known. His own English version of his Latin poem \_Hortus\_

contains lovely stanzas:--

"How vainly men themselves amaze

To win the palm, the oak, or bays;

And their uncessant labours see

Crowned from some single herb or tree,

Whose short and narrow-vergèd shade

Does prudently their toils upbraid;

While all the flowers and trees do close,

To weave the garlands of Repose!

Fair Quiet, have I found thee here,

And Innocence, thy sister dear?

Mistaken long, I sought you then

In busy companies of men.

Your sacred plants, if here below,

Only among the plants will grow;

Society is all but rude

To this delicious solitude.

No white nor red was ever seen

So amorous as this lovely green.

What wond'rous life is this I lead!

Ripe apples drop about my head;

The luscious clusters of the vine

Upon my mouth do crush their wine;

The nectarine, and curious peach,

Into my hands themselves do reach;

Stumbling on melons, as I pass,

Insnared with flowers, I fall on grass.

Meanwhile the mind, from pleasure less,

Withdraws into its happiness;--

The mind, that ocean where each kind

Does straight its own resemblance find;--

Yet it creates, transcending these,

Far other worlds, and other seas,

Annihilating all that's made

To a green thought in a green shade."[46:1]

Well known as are Marvell's lines to his Coy Mistress, I have not the

heart to omit them, so eminently characteristic are they of his style

and humour:--

"Had we but world enough and time,

This coyness, lady, were no crime.

We would sit down and think which way

To walk, and pass our long love's day.

Thou by the Indian Ganges' side

Should'st rubies find: I by the tide

Of Humber would complain. I would

Love you ten years before the Flood,

And you should, if you please, refuse

Till the conversion of the Jews.

My vegetable love should grow

Vaster than empires and more slow.

An hundred years should go to praise

Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;

Two hundred to adore each breast,

But thirty thousand to the rest;

An age at least to every part,

And the last age should show your heart.

For, lady, you deserve this state,

Nor would I love at lower rate.

But at my back I always hear

Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near,

And yonder all before us lie

Deserts of vast eternity.

Thy beauty shall no more be found,

Nor in thy marble vault shall sound

My echoing song; then worms shall try

That long-preserved virginity,

And your quaint honour turn to dust,

And into ashes all my lust.

The grave's a fine and private place,

But none, I think, do there embrace.

Now, therefore, while the youthful hue

Sits on thy skin like morning dew,

And while thy willing soul transpires

At every pore with instant fires,

Now, let us sport us while we may;

And now, like amorous birds of prey,

Rather at once our time devour,

Than languish in his slow-chapt power!

Let us roll all our strength, and all

Our sweetness up into one ball;

And tear our pleasures with rough strife,

Through the iron gates of life!

Thus, though we cannot make our sun

Stand still, yet we will make him run."

Mr. Aitken's valuable edition of Marvell's poems and satires can now be

had of all booksellers for two shillings,[47:1] and with these volumes

in his possession the judicious reader will be able to supply his own

reflections whilst life beneath the sun is still his. Poetry is a

personal matter. The very canons of criticism are themselves literature.

If we like the \_Ars Poetica\_, it is because we enjoy reading Horace.

FOOTNOTES:

[20:1] For an account of Flecknoe, see Southey's \_Omniana\_, i. 105. Lamb

placed some fine lines of Flecknoe's at the beginning of the Essay \_A

Quakers' Meeting\_.

[24:1] Grosart, vol. iii. p. 175.

[24:2] \_See\_ preface to \_Religio Laici\_, Scott's \_Dryden\_, vol. x. p.

27.

[24:3] Jeremy Collier in his \_Historical Dictionary\_ (1705) describes

Marvell, to whom he allows more space (though it is but a few lines)

than he does to Shakespeare, "as to his opinion he was a dissenter." In

Collier's opinion Marvell may have been no better than a dissenter, but

in fact he was a Churchman all his life, and it was Collier who lived to

become a non-juror and a dissenter, and a schismatical bishop to boot.

[31:1] \_Life of Lord Fairfax\_, by C.R. Markham (1870), p. 365.

[35:1] The fifth edition is dated 1703.

[46:1] Many a reader has made his first acquaintance with Marvell on

reading these lines in the \_Essays of Elia\_ (\_The Old Benchers of the

Inner Temple\_).

[47:1] \_Poems and Satires of Andrew Marvell\_, 2 vols. Routledge, 1905.

CHAPTER III

A CIVIL SERVANT IN THE TIME OF THE COMMONWEALTH

When Andrew Marvell first made John Milton's acquaintance is not known.

They must both have had common friends at or belonging to Cambridge.

Fairfax may have made the two men known to each other, although it is

just as likely that Milton introduced Marvell to Fairfax. All we know is

that when the engagement at Nunappleton House came to an end, Marvell,

being then minded to serve the State in some civil capacity, applied to

the Secretary for Foreign Tongues for what would now be called a

testimonial, which he was fortunate enough to obtain in the form of a

letter to the Lord-President of the Council, John Bradshaw. Milton seems

always to have liked Bradshaw, who was not generally popular even on his

own side, and in the \_Defensio Secunda pro populo Anglicano\_ extols his

character and attainments in sonorous latinity. Bradshaw had become in

February 1649 the first President of the new Council of State, which,

after the disappearance of the king and the abolition of the House of

Lords, took over the burden of the executive, and claimed the right to

scrape men's consciences by administering to anybody it chose an oath

requiring them to approve of what the House of Commons had done against

the king, and of their abolition of kingly government and of the House

of Peers, and that the legislative and supreme power was wholly in the

House of Commons.

Before the creation of this Council the duties of Latin Secretary to the

Parliament had been discharged by Georg Rudolph Weckherlin, a German

diplomat who had married an Englishwoman. He retired in bad health at

this time, and Milton was appointed to his place in 1649. When, later

on, the sight of the most illustrious of all our civil servants failed

him, Weckherlin returned to the office as Milton's assistant. In

December 1652 ill-health again compelled Weckherlin's retirement.[49:1]

Milton's letter to Bradshaw, who had made his home at Eton, is dated

February 21, 1653, and is as follows:--

"MY LORD,--But that it would be an interruption to the

public wherein your studies are perpetually employed, I should now

and then venture to supply thus my enforced absence with a line or

two, though it were onely my business, and that would be no slight

one, to make my due acknowledgments of your many favours; which I

both do at this time and ever shall; and have this farther, which I

thought my part to let you know of, that there will be with you

to-morrow upon some occasion of business a gentleman whose name is

Mr. Marvile, a man whom both by report and the converse I have had

with him of singular desert for the State to make use of, who also

offers himself, if there be any employment for him. His father was

the Minister of Hull, and he hath spent four years abroad in Holland,

France, Italy, and Spain to very good purpose, as I believe, and the

gaining of these four languages, besides he is a scholer and

well-read in the Latin and Greek authors, and no doubt of an approved

conversation, for he now comes lately out of the house of the Lord

Fairfax, who was Generall, where he was intrusted to give some

instructions in the languages to the Lady, his daughter. If upon the

death of Mr. Weckerlyn the Councell shall think that I shall need any

assistance in the performance of my place (though for my part I find

no encumbrance of that which belongs to me, except it be in point of

attendance at Conferences with Ambassadors, which I must confess in

my condition I am not fit for) it would be hard for them to find a

man so fit every way for that purpose as this gentleman: one who, I

believe, in a short time would be able to do them as much service as

Mr. Ascan. This, my Lord, I write sincerely without any other end

than to perform my duty to the publick in helping them to an humble

servant; laying aside those jealousies and that emulation which mine

own condition might suggest to me by bringing in such a coadjutor;

and remain, my Lord, your most obliged and faithful servant,

JOHN MILTON.

"\_Feb. 21, 1652\_ (O.S.)."

Addressed: "For the Honourable the Lord Bradshawe."

No handsomer testimonial than this was ever penned. It was unsuccessful.

When Milton wrote to Bradshaw, Weckherlin was in fact dead, and on his

retirement in the previous December, John Thurloe, the very handy

Secretary of the Council, had for the time assumed Weckherlin's duties,

and obtained on that score an addition to his salary. No actual vacancy,

therefore, occurred on Weckherlin's death. None the less, shortly

afterwards, Philip Meadows, also a Cambridge man, was appointed Milton's

assistant, and Marvell had to wait four years longer for his place.

When Marvell's connection with Eton first began is not to be

ascertained. His friend, John Oxenbridge, who had been driven from his

tutorship at Magdalen Hall, Oxford, by Laud in 1634 to

"Where the remote Bermudas ride,"

but had returned home, became in 1652 a Fellow of Eton College. Oliver

St. John, who at this time was Chancellor of the University of

Cambridge, and had married Oxenbridge's sister, was known to Marvell,

and may have introduced him to his brother-in-law. At all events Marvell

frequently visited Eton, where, however, he had the good sense to

frequent not merely the cloisters, but the poor lodgings where the "ever

memorable" John Hales, ejected from his fellowship, spent the last years

of his life.

"I account it no small honour to have grown up into some part of his

acquaintance and conversed awhile with the living remains of one of

the clearest heads and best prepared breasts in Christendom."[51:1]

Hales died in 1656, and his \_Golden Remains\_ were first published three

years later. Marvell's words of panegyric are singularly well chosen. It

is a curious commentary upon the confused times of the Civil War and

Restoration that perhaps never before, and seldom, if ever, since, has

England contained so many clear heads and well-prepared breasts as it

did then. Small indeed is the influence of men of thought upon their

immediate surroundings.

The Lord Bradshaw, we know, had a home in Eton, and on the occasion of

one of Marvell's evidently frequent visits to the Oxenbridges, Milton

entrusted him with a letter to Bradshaw and a presentation copy of the

\_Secunda defensio\_. Marvell delivered both letter and book, and seems at

once to have informed the distinguished author that he had done so. But

alas for the vanity of the writing man! The sublime poet, who in his

early manhood had composed \_Lycidas\_, and was in his old age to write

\_Paradise Lost\_, demanded further and better particulars as to the

precise manner in which the chief of his office received, not only the

book, but the letter which accompanied it. Nobody is now left to think

much of Bradshaw, but in 1654 he was an excellent representative of the

class Carlyle was fond of describing as the \_alors célèbre\_. Prompted by

this desire, Milton must have written to Marvell hinting, as he well

knew how to do, his surprise at the curtness of his friend's former

communication, and Marvell's reply to this letter has come down to us.

It is Marvell's glory that long before \_Paradise Lost\_ he recognised the

essential greatness of the blind secretary, and his letter is a fine

example of the mode of humouring a great man. Be it remembered, as we

read, that this letter was not addressed to one of the greatest names in

literature, but to a petulant and often peevish scholar, living of

necessity in great retirement, whose name is never once mentioned by

Clarendon, and about whom the voluminous Thurloe, who must have seen him

hundreds of times, has nothing to say except that he was "a blind man

who wrote Latin letters." Odder still, perhaps, Richard Baxter, whose

history of his own life and times is one of the most informing books in

the world, never so much as mentions the one and only man whose name

can, without any violent sense of unfitness, be given to the age about

which Baxter was writing so laboriously.

"HONOURED SIR,--I did not satisfie my self in the account I

gave you of presentinge your Book to my Lord, although it seemed to

me that I writ to you all which the messenger's speedy returne the

same night from Eaton would permit me; and I perceive that, by reason

of that hast, I did not give you satisfaction neither concerninge the

delivery of your Letter at the same time. Be pleased therefore to

pardon me and know that I tendered them both together. But my Lord

read not the Letter while I was with him, which I attributed to our

despatch, and some other businesse tendinge thereto, which I

therefore wished ill to, so farr as it hindred an affaire much better

and of greater importance, I mean that of reading your Letter. And to

tell you truly mine own imagination, I thought that he would not open

it while I was there, because he might suspect that I, delivering it

just upon my departure, might have brought in it some second

proposition like to that which you had before made to him by your

Letter to my advantage. However, I assure myself that he has since

read it, and you, that he did then witnesse all respecte to your

person, and as much satisfaction concerninge your work as could be

expected from so cursory a review and so sudden an account as he

could then have of it from me. Mr. Oxenbridge, at his returne from

London, will, I know, give you thanks for his book, as I do with all

acknowledgement and humility for that you have sent me. I shall now

studie it even to the getting of it by heart; esteeming it, according

to my poore judgment (which yet I wish it were so right in all things

else), as the most compendious scale for so much to the height of the

Roman Eloquence, when I consider how equally it turnes and rises with

so many figures it seems to me a Trajan's columne, in whose winding

ascent we see imboss'd the severall monuments of your learned

victoryes: And Salmatius and Morus make up as great a triumph as that

of Decebalus, whom too, for ought I know, you shall have forced, as

Trajan the other, to make themselves away out of a just desperation.

I have an affectionate curiousity to know what becomes of Colonell

Overton's businesse. And am exceeding glad that Mr. Skynner is got

near you, the happinesse which I at the same time congratulate to him

and envie, there being none who doth, if I may so say, more jealously

honour you then, Honoured Sir, Your most affectionate humble servant,

ANDREW MARVELL.

"Eaton, \_June 2, 1654.\_"

Addressed: "For my most honoured friend,

John Milton, Esquire, Secretarye

for the Forrain affaires

at his house in Petty France,

Westminster."

To conclude Marvell's Eton experiences; in 1657, and very shortly before

his obtaining his appointment as Milton's assistant in the place of

Philip Meadows, who was sent on a mission to Lisbon, Marvell was chosen

by the Lord-Protector to be tutor at Eton to Cromwell's ward, Mr.

Dutton, and took up his residence with his pupil with the Oxenbridges.

The following letter, addressed by Marvell to Oliver, will be read with

interest:--

"May it please your Excellence,--It might, perhaps, seem fit for me

to seek out words to give your Excellence thanks for myself. But,

indeed, the only civility which it is proper for me to practice with

so eminent a person is to obey you, and to perform honestly the work

that you have set me about. Therefore I shall use the time that your

Lordship is pleased to allow me for writing, onely for that purpose

for which you have given me it; that is, to render you an account of

Mr. Dutton. I have taken care to examine him several times in the

presence of Mr. Oxenbridge, as those who weigh and tell over money

before some witnesse ere they take charge of it; for I thought that

there might be possibly some lightness in the coyn, or errour in the

telling, which hereafter I should be bound to make good. Therefore,

Mr. Oxenbridge is the best to make your Excellency an impartial

relation thereof: I shall only say, that I shall strive according to

my best understanding (that is, according to those rules your

Lordship hath given me) to increase whatsoever talent he may have

already. Truly, he is of gentle and waxen disposition; and God be

praised, I cannot say he hath brought with him any evil impression;

and I shall hope to set nothing into his spirit but what may be of a

good sculpture. He hath in him two things that make youth most easy

to be managed,--modesty, which is the bridle to vice; and emulation,

which is the spur to virtue. And the care which your Excellence is

pleased to take of him is no small encouragement and shall be so

represented to him; but, above all, I shall labour to make him

sensible of his duty to God; for then we begin to serve faithfully,

when we consider He is our master. And in this, both he and I owe

infinitely to your Lordship, for having placed us in so godly a

family as that of Mr. Oxenbridge, whose doctrine and example are like

a book and a map, not only instructing the ear, but demonstrating to

the eye, which way we ought to travell; and Mrs. Oxenbridge has

looked so well to him, that he hath already much mended his

complexion; and now she is ordering his chamber, that he may delight

to be in it as often as his studys require. For the rest, most of

this time hath been spent in acquainting ourselves with him; and

truly he is chearfull, and I hope thinks us to be good company. I

shall, upon occasion, henceforward inform your Excellence of any

particularities in our little affairs, for so I esteem it to be my

duty. I have no more at present, but to give thanks to God for your

Lordship, and to beg grace of Him, that I may approve myself, Your

Excellency's most humble and faithful servant,

ANDREW MARVELL.

"Windsor, \_July 28, 1653\_.

"Mr. Dutton[55:1] presents his most humble service to your

Excellence."

Something must now be said of Marvell's literary productions during this

period, 1652-1657. It was in 1653 that he began his stormy career as an

anonymous political poet and satirist. The Dutch were his first victims,

good Protestants though they were. Marvell never liked the Dutch, and

had he lived to see the Revolution must have undergone some qualms.

In 1652 the Commonwealth was at war with the United Provinces. Trade

jealousy made the war what politicians call "inevitable." This jealousy

of the Dutch dates back to Elizabeth, and to the first stirring in the

womb of time of the British navy. This may be readily perceived if we

read Dr. John Dee's "Petty Navy Royal," 1577, and "A Politic Plat (plan)

for the Honour of the Prince," 1580, and, somewhat later in date,

"England's Way to Win Wealth," 1614.[56:1]

These short tracts make two things quite plain--first, the desire to get

our share of the foreign fishing trade, then wholly in the hands of the

Dutch; and second, the recognition that England was a sea-empire,

dependent for its existence upon a great navy manned by the seafaring

inhabitants of our coasts.

The enormous fishing trade done in our own waters by the Dutch, the

splendid fleet of fishing craft with twenty thousand handy sailors on

board, ready by every 1st of June to sail out of the Maas, the Texel,

and the Vlie, to catch herring in the North Sea, excited admiration,

envy, and almost despair.

"O, slothful England and careless countrymen! look but on these

fellows that we call the plump Hollanders! Behold their diligence in

fishing and our most careless negligence! Six hundred of these

fisherships and more be great Busses, some six score tons, most of

them be a hundred tons, and the rest three score tons and fifty tons;

the biggest of them having four and twenty men, some twenty men, and

some eighteen or sixteen men apiece. So there cannot be in this fleet

of People no less than twenty thousand sailors.... No king upon the

earth did ever see such a fleet of his own subjects at any time, and

yet this fleet is there and then yearly to be seen. A most worthy

sight it were, if they were my own countrymen, yet have I taken

pleasure in being amongst them, to behold the neatness of their ships

and fishermen, how every man knoweth his own place, and all labouring

merrily together.[57:1]

"Now, in our sum of fishermen, let us see what vent have we for our

fish in other countries, and what commodities and corn is brought

into this Kingdom? And what ships are set in work by them whereby

mariners are best employed. Not one. It is pitiful! ... This last

year at Yarmouth there were three hundred idle men that could get

nothing to do, living very poor for lack of employment, which most

gladly would have gone to sea in Pinks if there had been any for them

to go in.... And this last year the Hollanders did lade 12 sail of

Holland ships with red herrings at Yarmouth for Civita Vecchia,

Leghorn and Genoa and Marseilles and Toulon. Most of these being

laden by the English merchants. So that if this be suffered the

English owners of ships shall have but small employment for

them."[57:2]

Nor was the other aspect of the case lost sight of. How can a great navy

necessary for our sea-empire be manned otherwise than by a race of brave

sea-faring men, accustomed from their infancy to handle boats?

"Fourthly, how many thousands of soldiers of all degrees would be by

these means not only hardened well to brook all rage and disturbance

of sea, but also would be well practised and trained to great

perfection of understanding all manner of fight and service of sea,

so that in time of great need that expert and hardy crew of some

thousands of sea-soldiers would be to this realm a treasure

incomparable.[58:1]

"We see the Hollanders being well fed in fishing affairs and stronger

and lustier than the sailors who use the long Southern voyages, but

these courageous, young, lusty, strong-fed younkers that shall be

bred in the Busses, when His Majesty shall have occasion for their

service in war against the enemy, will be fellows for the nonce! and

will put more strength to an iron crow at a piece of great ordnance

in training of a cannon, or culvining with the direction of the

experimented master Gunner, then two or three of the forenamed

surfeited sailors. And in distress of wind-grown sea and foul

winter's weather, for flying forward to their labour, for pulling in

a top-sail or a sprit-sail, or shaking off a bonnet in a dark night!

for wet or cold cannot make them shrink nor stain, that the North

Seas and the Busses and Pinks have dyed in the grain for such

purposes."[58:2]

The years, as they went by, only served to increase English jealousy of

the Dutch, who not only fished our water but did the carrying trade of

the world. It was no rare sight to see Yarmouth full of Dutch bottoms,

and Dutch sailors loading them with English goods.

In the early days of the Commonwealth the painfulness of the situation

was accentuated by the fact that some of our colonies or plantations, as

they were then called--Virginia and the Barbadoes, for example--stuck to

the king and gave a commercial preference to the Dutch, shipping their

produce to all parts of the world exclusively in Dutch bottoms. This was

found intolerable, and in October 1651 the Long Parliament, nearing its

violent end, passed the first Navigation Act, of which Ranke says: "Of

all the acts ever passed in Parliament, it is perhaps the one which

brought about the most important results for England and the

world."[59:1]

The Navigation Act provided "that all goods from countries beyond Europe

should be imported into England in English ships only; and all European

goods either in English ships or in ships belonging to the countries

from which these articles originally came."

This was a challenge indeed.

Another perpetual source of irritation was the Right of Search, that is,

the right of stopping neutral ships and searching their cargoes for

contraband. England asserted this right as against the Dutch, who, as

the world's carriers, were most subject to the right, and not

unnaturally denied its existence.

War was declared in 1652, and made the fame of two great admirals, Blake

and Van Tromp. Oliver's spirit was felt on the seas, and before many

months were over England had captured more than a thousand Dutch trading

vessels, and brought business to a standstill in Amsterdam--then the

great centre of commercial interests. When six short years afterwards

the news of Cromwell's death reached that city, its inhabitants greatly

rejoiced, crowding the streets and crying "the Devil is dead."

Andrew Marvell was impregnated with the new ideas about sea-power. A

great reader and converser with the best intellects of his time, and a

Hull man, he had probably early grasped the significance of Bacon's

illuminating saying in the famous essay on the \_True Greatness of

Kingdoms and Estates\_ (first printed in 1612), "that he that commands

the sea is at great liberty and may take as much and as little of the

war as he will." Cromwell, though not the creator of our navy, was its

strongest inspiration until Nelson, and no feature of his great

administration so excited Marvell's patriotic admiration as the

Lord-Protector's sleepless energy in securing and maintaining the

command of the sea.

In Marvell's poem, first published as a broadsheet in 1655, entitled

\_The First Anniversary of the Government under His Highness the

Lord-Protector\_, he describes foreign princes soundly rating their

ambassadors for having misinformed them as to the energies of the new

Commonwealth:--

"'Is this,' saith one, 'the nation that we read

Spent with both wars, under a Captain dead!

Yet rig a navy while we dress us late

And ere we dine rase and rebuild a state?

What oaken forests, and what golden mines,

What mints of men--what union of designs!

...

Needs must we all their tributaries be

Whose navies hold the sluices of the sea!

\_The ocean is the fountain of command\_,

But that once took, we captives are on land;

And those that have the waters for their share

Can quickly leave us neither earth nor air.'"

Marvell's aversion to the Dutch was first displayed in the rough lines

called \_The Character of Holland\_, published in 1653 during the first

Dutch War. As poetry the lines have no great merit; they do not even

jingle agreeably--but they are full of the spirit of the time, and

breathe forth that "envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness"

which are apt to be such large ingredients in the compound we call

"patriotism." They begin thus:--

"Holland, that scarce deserves the name of land,

As but the off-scouring of the British sand,

And so much earth as was contributed

By English pilots when they heaved the lead,

Or what by the ocean's slow alluvion feel

Of shipwrecked cockle and the muscle-shell,--

This indigested vomit of the sea

Fell to the Dutch by just propriety."

The gallant struggle to secure their country from the sea is made the

subject of curious banter:--

"How did they rivet with gigantic piles,

Thorough the centre their new-catched miles,

And to the stake a struggling country bound,

Where barking waves still bait the forced ground,

Building their watery Babel far more high,

To reach the sea, than those to scale the sky!

Yet still his claim the injured ocean laid,

And oft at leap-frog o'er their steeples played,

As if on purpose it on land had come

To show them what's their \_mare liberum\_.

A daily deluge over them does boil;

The earth and water play at level coil.

The fish ofttimes the burgher dispossessed,

And sat, not as a meat, but as a guest."

This final conceit greatly tickled the fancy of Charles Lamb, who was

perhaps the first of the moderns to rediscover both the rare merits and

the curiosities of our author. Hazlitt thought poorly of the jest.[61:1]

Marvell proceeds with his ridicule to attack the magistrates:--

"For, as with pygmies, who best kills the crane;

Among the hungry, he that treasures grain;

Among the blind, the one-eyed blinkard reigns;

So rules among the drowned, he that drains:

Not who first see the rising sun, commands,

But who could first discern the rising lands;

Who best could know to pump an earth so leak,

Him they their Lord, and Country's Father, speak;

To make a bank, was a great plot of state;

Invent a shovel, and be a magistrate."[62:1]

When the war-fever was raging such humour as this may well have passed

muster with the crowd.

The incident--there is always an "incident"--which served as the actual

excuse for hostilities, is referred to as follows:--

"Let this one courtesy witness all the rest,

When their whole navy they together pressed,

Not Christian captives to redeem from bands,

Or intercept the western golden sands,

No, but all ancient rights and leagues must fail,

\_Rather than to the English strike their sail\_;

To whom their weather-beaten province owes

Itself."

Two spirited lines describe the discomfiture of Van Tromp:--

"And the torn navy staggered with him home

While the sea laughed itself into a foam."

This first Dutch War came to an end in 1654, when Holland was compelled

to acknowledge the supremacy of the English flag in the home waters, and

to acquiesce in the Navigation Act. It is a curious commentary upon the

black darkness that conceals the future, that Cromwell, dreading as he

did the House of Orange and the youthful grandson of Charles the First,

who at the appointed hour was destined to deal the House of Stuart a far

deadlier stroke than Cromwell had been able to do, either on the field

of battle or in front of Whitehall, refused to ratify the Treaty of

Peace with the Dutch until John De Witt had obtained an Act excluding

the Prince of Orange from ever filling the office of Stadtholder of the

Province of Holland.

The contrast between the glory of Oliver's Dutch War and the shame of

Charles the Second's sank deep into Marvell's heart, and lent bitterness

to many of his later satirical lines.

Marvell's famous \_Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland\_ in

1650 has a curious bibliographical interest. So far as we can tell, it

was first published in 1776. When it was composed we do not know. At

Nunappleton House Oliver was not a \_persona grata\_ in 1650, for he had

no sooner come back from Ireland than he had stepped into the shoes of

the Lord-General Fairfax; and there were those, Lady Fairfax, I doubt

not, among the number, who believed that the new Lord-General thought it

was high time he should be where Fairfax's "scruple" at last put him. We

may be sure Cromwell's character was dissected even more than it was

extolled at Nunappleton. The famous Ode is by no means a panegyric, and

its true hero is the "Royal actor," whom Cromwell, so the poem suggests,

lured to his doom. It is not likely that the Ode was composed after

Marvell had left Nunappleton, though it may have been so before he went

there. There is an old untraceable tradition that Marvell was among the

crowd that saw the king die. What deaths have been witnessed, and with

what strange apparent apathy, by the London crowd! But for this

tradition one's imagination would trace to Lady Fairfax the most famous

of the stanzas.

But to return to the history of the Ode. In 1776 Captain Edward

Thompson, a connection of the Marvell family and a versatile sailor with

a passion for print, which had taken some odd forms of expression,

produced by subscription in three quarto volumes the first collected

edition of Andrew Marvell's works, both verse and prose. Such an edition

had been long premeditated by Thomas Hollis, one of the best friends

literature had in the eighteenth century. It was Hollis who gave to

Sidney Sussex College the finest portrait in existence of Oliver

Cromwell. Hollis collected material for an edition of Marvell with the

aid of Richard Barron, an early editor of Milton's prose works, and of

Algernon Sidney's \_Discourse concerning Government\_. Barron, however,

lost zeal as the task proceeded, and complained justly enough "of a want

of anecdotes," and as the printer, the well-known and accomplished

Bowyer, doubted the wisdom of the undertaking, it was allowed to drop.

Barron died in 1766, and Hollis in 1774, but the collections made by the

latter passed into the hands of Captain Thompson, who, with the

assistance of Mr. Robert Nettleton, a grandson of one of Marvell's

sisters, at once began to get his edition ready. On Nettleton's death

his "Marvell" papers came into Thompson's hands, and among them was, to

quote the captain's own words, "a volume of Mr. Marvell's poems, some

written with his own hand and the rest copied by his order."

The \_Horatian Ode\_ was in this volume, and was printed from it in

Thompson's edition of 1776.

What has become of this manuscript book? It has disappeared--destroyed,

so we are led to believe, in a fit of temper by the angry and uncritical

sea-captain.

This precious volume undoubtedly contained some poems by Marvell, and as

his handwriting was both well known from many examples, and is highly

characteristic, we may also be certain that the captain was not mistaken

in his assertion that some of these poems were in Marvell's own

handwriting. But, as ill-luck would have it, the volume also contained

poems written at a later period and in quite another hand. Among these

latter pieces were Addison's verses, \_The Spacious Firmament on High\_

and \_When all thy Mercies, O my God\_; Dr. Watts' paraphrase \_When Israel

freed from Pharaoh's Hand\_; and Mallet's ballad \_William and Margaret\_.

The two Addison pieces and the Watts paraphrase appeared for the first

time in the \_Spectator\_, Nos. 453, 465, and 461, in 1712, and Mallet's

ballad was first printed in 1724.

Still there these pieces were, in manuscript, in this volume, and as

there were circumstances of mystification attendant upon their prior

publication, what does the captain do but claim them all, \_Songs of

Zion\_ and sentimental ballad alike, as Marvell's. This of course brought

the critics, ever anxious to air their erudition, down upon his head,

raised his anger, and occasioned the destruction of the book.

Mr. Grosart says that Captain Thompson states that the \_Horatian Ode\_

was in Marvell's handwriting. I cannot discover where this statement is

made, though it is made of other poems in the volume, also published for

the first time by the captain.

All, therefore, we know is that the Ode was first published in 1776 by

an editor who says he found it copied in a book, subsequently destroyed,

which contained (among other things) some poems written in Marvell's

handwriting, and that this book was given to the editor by a

grand-nephew of the poet.

Yet I imagine, poor as this evidence may seem to be, no student of

Marvell's life and character (so far as his life reveals his character),

and of his verse (so much of it as is positively known), wants more

evidence to satisfy him that the \_Horatian Ode\_ is as surely Marvell's

as the lines upon \_Appleton House\_, the \_Bermudas\_, \_To his Coy

Mistress\_, and \_The Garden\_.

The great popularity of this Ode undoubtedly rests on the three

stanzas:--

"That thence the royal actor borne,

The tragic scaffold might adorn,

While round the armèd bands;

Did clap their bloody hands:

He nothing common did, or mean,

Upon that memorable scene,

But with his keener eye

The axe's edge did try;

Nor called the gods with vulgar spite

To vindicate his helpless right,

But bowed his comely head

Down, as upon a bed."

It is strange that the death of the king should be so nobly sung in an

Ode bearing Cromwell's name and dedicate to his genius:--

"So restless Cromwell could not cease

In the inglorious arts of peace,

But through adventurous war

Urgèd his active star;

...

Then burning through the air he went,

And palaces and temples rent;

And Cæsar's head at last

Did through his laurels blast.

'Tis madness to resist or blame

The force of angry Heaven's flame;

And if we would speak true,

Much to the man is due,

Who, from his private gardens, where

He lived reservèd and austere,

(As if his highest plot

To plant the bergamot),

Could by industrious valour climb

To ruin the great work of time,

And cast the kingdoms old

Into another mould."

The last stanzas of all have much pith and meaning in them:--

"But thou, the war's and fortune's son,

March indefatigably on!

And for the last effect,

Still keep the sword erect.

Besides the force it has to fright

The spirits of the shady night,

The same arts that did gain

A power, must it maintain."[67:1]

It is not surprising that this Ode was not published in 1650--if indeed

it was the work of that, and not of a later year. There is nothing

either of the courtier or of the partisan about its stately

versification and sober, solemn thought. Entire self-possession,

dignity, criticism of a great man and a strange career by one well

entitled to criticise, are among the chief characteristics of this noble

poem. It is infinitely refreshing, when reading and thinking about

Cromwell, to get as far away as possible from the fanatic's scream and

the fury of the bigot, whether of the school of Laud or Hobbes. Andrew

Marvell knew Oliver Cromwell alive, and gazed on his features as he lay

dead--he knew his ambition, his greatness, his power, and where that

power lay. How much might we unwittingly have lost, if Captain Thompson

had not printed a poem which for more than a century of years had

remained unknown, and exposed to all the risks of a single manuscript

copy!

When Cromwell sent his picture to Queen Christina of Sweden to

commemorate the peace he concluded with her in 1654, Marvell, though not

then attached to the public service, was employed to write the Latin

couplet that accompanied the picture. He discharged his task as

follows:--

\_In effigiem Oliveri Cromwell\_.

"Hæc est quæ toties inimicos umbra fugavit

At sub quâ cives otia lenta terunt."

The authorship of these lines is often attributed to Milton, but there

is little doubt they are of Marvell's composition. They might easily

have been better.

Marvell became Milton's assistant in September 1657, and the friendship

between the two men was thus consolidated by the strong ties of a

common duty. Milton's blindness making him unfit to attend the reception

of foreign embassies, Marvell took his place and joined in respectfully

greeting the Dutch ambassadors. After all he was but a junior clerk,

still he doubtless rejoiced that his lines on Holland had been published

anonymously. Literature was strongly represented in this department of

State just then, for Cromwell's Chamberlain, Sir Gilbert Pickering, who

represented Northamptonshire in Parliament, had taken occasion to

introduce his nephew, John Dryden, to the public service, and he was

attached to the same office as Andrew Marvell. Poets, like pigeons, have

often taken shelter under our public roofs, but Milton, Marvell, and

Dryden, all at the same time, form a remarkable constellation. Old Noll,

we may be sure, had nothing to do with it. Marvell must have known

Cromwell personally; but there is nothing to show that Milton and

Cromwell ever met. The popular engraving which represents a theatrical

Lord-Protector dictating despatches to a meek Milton is highly

ludicrous. Cromwell could have as easily dictated a book of \_Paradise

Lost\_, on the composition of which Milton began to be engaged during the

last year of the Protectorate, as one of Milton's despatches.

In April 1657 Admiral Blake, the first great name in the annals of our

navy, performed his last feat of arms by destroying the Spanish West

Indian fleet at Santa Cruz without the loss of an English vessel. The

gallant sailor died of fever on his way home, and was buried according

to his deserts in the Abbey. His body, with that of his master, was by a

vote of Parliament, December 4, 1660, taken from the grave and drawn to

the gallows-tree, and there hanged and buried under it. Pepys, who was

to know something of naval administration under the second Charles, has

his reflections on this unpleasing incident.

Marvell's lines on Blake's victory over the Spaniards are not worthy of

so glorious an occasion, but our great doings by land and sea have

seldom been suitably recorded in verse. Drayton's \_Song of Agincourt\_ is

imperishable, but was composed nearly two centuries after the battle.

The wail of Flodden Field still floats over the Border; but Miss

Elliot's famous ballad was published in 1765. Even the Spanish Armada

had to wait for Macaulay's spirited fragment. Mr. Addison's \_Blenheim\_

stirred no man's blood; no poet sang Chatham's victories.[70:1] Campbell

at a later day did better. We must be content with what we get.

Marvell's poem contains some vigorous lines, which show he was a good

hater:--

"Now does Spain's fleet her spacious wings unfold,

Leaves the new world, and hastens for the old;

But though the wind was fair, they slowly swum,

Freighted with acted guilt, and guilt to come;

For this rich load, of which so proud they are,

Was raised by tyranny, and raised for war.

...

...

For now upon the main themselves they saw

That boundless empire, where you give the law."

The Canary Islands are rapturously described--their delightful climate

and their excellent wine. Obviously they should be annexed:--

"The best of lands should have the best of Kings."

The fight begins. "Bold Stayner leads" and "War turned the temperate to

the torrid zone":--

"Fate these two fleets, between both worlds, had brought

Who fight, as if for both those worlds they fought.

...

...

The all-seeing sun ne'er gazed on such a sight,

Two dreadful navies there at anchor fight,

And neither have, or power, or will, to fly;

There one must conquer, or there both must die."

Blake sinks the Spanish ships:--

"Their galleons sunk, their wealth the sea does fill,

The only place where it can cause no ill";

and the poet concludes:--

"Ah! would those treasures which both Indias have

Were buried in as large, and deep a grave!

War's chief support with them would buried be,

And the land owe her peace unto the sea.

Ages to come your conquering arms will bless.

There they destroyed what had destroyed their peace;

And in one war the present age may boast,

The certain seeds of many wars are lost."

Good politics, if but second-rate poetry. This was the last time the

Spanish war-cry \_Santiago, y cierra España\_ rang in hostility in English

ears.

Turning for a moment from war to love, on the 19th of November 1657

Cromwell's third daughter, the Lady Mary Cromwell, was married to

Viscount, afterwards Earl, Fauconberg. The Fauconbergs took revolutions

calmly and, despite the disinterment of their great relative, accepted

the Restoration gladly and lived to chuckle over the Revolution. The

forgetfulness, no less than the vindictiveness, of men is often

surprising. Marvell, who played the part of Laureate during the

Protectorate, produced two songs for the conventionally joyful

occasion. The second of the two is decidedly pretty for a November

wedding:--

"\_Hobbinol.\_ PHILLIS, TOMALIN, away!

Never such a merry day,

For the northern shepherd's son

Has MENALCAS' daughter won.

\_Phillis.\_ Stay till I some flowers have tied

In a garland for the bride.

\_Tomalin.\_ If thou would'st a garland bring,

PHILLIS, you may wait the spring:

They have chosen such an hour

When she is the only flower.

\_Phillis.\_ Let's not then, at least, be seen

Without each a sprig of green.

\_Hobbinol.\_ Fear not; at MENALCAS' hall

There are bays enough for all.

He, when young as we, did graze,

But when old he planted bays.

\_Tomalin.\_ Here she comes; but with a look

Far more catching than my hook;

'Twas those eyes, I now dare swear,

Led our lambs we knew not where.

\_Hobbinol.\_ Not our lambs' own fleeces are

Curled so lovely as her hair,

Nor our sheep new-washed can be

Half so white or sweet as she.

\_Phillis.\_ He so looks as fit to keep

Somewhat else than silly sheep.

\_Hobbinol.\_ Come, let's in some carol new

Pay to love and them their due.

\_All.\_ Joy to that happy pair

Whose hopes united banish our despair.

What shepherd could for love pretend,

Whilst all the nymphs on Damon's choice attend?

What shepherdess could hope to wed

Before Marina's turn were sped?

Now lesser beauties may take place

And meaner virtues come in play;

While they

Looking from high

Shall grace

Our flocks and us with a propitious eye."

All this merriment came to an end on the 3rd of September 1658, when

Oliver Cromwell died on the anniversary of Dunbar fight and of the field

of Worcester. And yet the end, though it was to be sudden, did not at

once seem likely to be so. There was time for the poets to tune their

lyres. Waller, Dryden, Sprat, and Marvell had no doubt that "Tumbledown

Dick" was to sit on the throne of his father and "still keep the sword

erect," and were ready with their verses.

Westminster Abbey has never witnessed a statelier, costlier funeral than

that of "the late man who made himself to be called Protector," to quote

words from one of the most impressive passages in English prose, the

opening sentences of Cowley's \_Discourse by way of Vision concerning the

Government of Oliver Cromwell\_. The representatives of kings,

potentates, and powers crowded the aisles, and all was done that pomp

and ceremony could do. Marvell, arrayed in the six yards of mourning the

Council had voted him on the 7th of September, was, we may be sure, in

the Abbey, and it may well be that his blind colleague, to whom the same

liberal allowance had been made, leant on his arm during the service.

Milton's muse remained silent. The vote of the House of Commons ordering

the undoing of this great ceremony was little more than two years ahead.

\_O caeca mens hominum!\_

Among the poems first printed by Captain Thompson from the old

manuscript book was one which was written therein in Marvell's own hand

entitled "A poem upon the Death of his late Highness the Protector." Its

composition was evidently not long delayed:--

"We find already what those omens mean,

Earth ne'er more glad nor Heaven more serene.

Cease now our griefs, calm peace succeeds a war,

Rainbows to storms, Richard to Oliver."

The lines best worth remembering in the poem are the following:--

"I saw him dead: a leaden slumber lies,

And mortal sleep over those wakeful eyes;

Those gentle rays under the lids were fled,

Which through his looks that piercing sweetness shed;

That port, which so majestic was and strong,

Loose, and deprived of vigour, stretched along;

All withered, all discoloured, pale and wan,

How much another thing, no more that man!

O, human glory vain! O, Death! O, wings!

O, worthless world! O, transitory things!

Yet dwelt that greatness in his shape decayed,

That still though dead, greater than Death he laid,

And in his altered face you something feign

That threatens Death, he yet will live again."

FOOTNOTES:

[49:1] In 1659 Clarendon, then Sir Edward Hyde, and in Brussels, writing

to Sir Richard Fanshaw, says, "You are the secretary of the Latin tongue

and I will mend the warrant you sent, and have it despatched as soon as

I hear again from you, but I must tell you the place in itself, if it be

not dignified by the person who hath some other qualification, is not to

be valued. There is no signet belongs to it, which can be only kept by a

Secretary of State, from whom the Latin Secretary always receives orders

and prepares no despatches without his direction, and hath only a fee of

a hundred pound a year. And therefore, except it hath been in the hands

of a person who hath had some other employment, it hath fallen to the

fortune of inconsiderable men as Weckerlin was the last" (\_Hist. MSS.

Com.\_, \_Heathcote Papers\_, 1899, p. 9).

[51:1] \_The Rehearsal Transprosed\_.--Grosart, iii. 126.

[55:1] Even Mr. Firth can tell me nothing about this Ward of Cromwell's.

[56:1] For reprints of these tracts, see \_Social England Illustrated\_,

Constable and Co., 1903.

[57:1] "England's Way to Win Wealth." See \_Social England Illustrated\_,

p. 253.

[57:2] \_Ibid.\_ p. 265.

[58:1] Dr. Dee's "Petty Navy Royal." \_Social England Illustrated\_, p.

46.

[58:2] "England's Way to Win Wealth." \_Social England Illustrated\_, p.

268.

[59:1] Ranke's \_History of England during the Seventeenth Century\_, vol.

iii. p. 68.

[61:1] See Leigh Hunt's \_Wit and Humour\_ (1846), pp. 38, 237.

[62:1] Butler's lines, \_A Description of Holland\_, are very like

Marvell's:--

"A Country that draws fifty foot of water

In which men live as in a hold of nature.

...

...

They dwell in ships, like swarms of rats, and prey

Upon the goods all nations' fleets convey;

...

...

That feed like cannibals on other fishes,

And serve their cousin-germans up in dishes:

A land that rides at anchor and is moor'd,

In which they do not live but go aboard."

Marvell and Butler were rival wits, but Holland was a common butt; so

powerful a motive is trade jealousy.

[67:1] "To one unacquainted with Horace, this Ode, not perhaps so

perfect as his are in form, and with occasional obscurities of

expression, which Horace would not have left, will give a truer notion

of the kind of greatness which he achieved than could, so far as I know,

be obtained from any other poem in our language."--\_Dean Trench\_.

[70:1] "In the last war, when France was disgraced and overpowered in

every quarter of the globe, when Spain coming to her assistance only

shared her calamities, and the name of an Englishman was reverenced

through Europe, no poet was heard amidst the general acclamation; the

fame of our counsellors and heroes was entrusted to the gazetteer."--Dr.

Johnson's \_Life of Prior\_.

CHAPTER IV

IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Cromwell's death was an epoch in Marvell's history. Up to that date he

had, since he left the University, led the life of a scholar, with a

turn for business, and was known to many as an agreeable companion and a

lively wit. He was keenly interested in public affairs, and personally

acquainted with some men in great place, and for a year before

Cromwell's death he had been in a branch of the Civil Service; but of

the wear and tear, the strife and contention, of what are called

"practical politics" he knew nothing from personal experience.

Within a year of the Protector's death all this was changed and, for the

rest of his days, with but the shortest of occasional intervals, Andrew

Marvell led the life of an active, eager member of Parliament, knowing

all that was going on in the Chamber and hearing of everything that was

alleged to be going on in the Court; busily occupied with the affairs of

his constituents in Hull, and daily watching, with an increasingly heavy

heart and a bitter humour, the corruption of the times, the declension

of our sea-power, the growing shame of England, and what he believed to

be a dangerous conspiracy afoot for the undoing of the Reformation and

the destruction of the Constitution in both Church and State.

"Garden-poetry" could not be reared on such a soil as this. The age of

Cromwell and Blake was over. The remainder of Marvell's life (save so

far as personal friendship sweetened it) was spent in politics, public

business, in concocting roughly rhymed and bitter satirical poems, and

in the composition of prose pamphlets.

Through it all Marvell remained very much the man of letters, though one

with a great natural aptitude for business. His was always the critical

attitude. He was the friend of Milton and Harrington, of the political

philosophers who invented paper constitutions in the "Rota" Club, and of

the new race of men whose thoughts turned to Natural Science, and who

founded the Royal Society. Office he never thought of. He could have had

it had he chosen, for he was a man of mark, even of distinction, from

the first. Clarendon has told us how members of the House of Commons

"got on" in the Long Parliament of Charles the Second. It was full of

the king's friends, who ran out of the House to tell their shrewd master

the gossip of the lobbies, "commended this man and discommended another

who deserved better, and would many times, when His Majesty spoke well

of any man, ask His Majesty if he would give them leave to let that

person know how gracious His Majesty was to him, or bring him to kiss

his hand. To which he commonly consenting, every one of his servants

delivered some message from him to a Parliament man, and invited him to

Court, as if the King would be willing to see him. And by this means the

rooms at Court were always full of the members of the House of Commons.

This man brought to kiss his hand, and the King induced to confer with

that man and to thank him for his affection, which could never conclude

without some general expression of grace or promise, which the poor

gentleman always interpreted to his own advantage, and expected some

fruit from it that it could never yield."

The suspicious Clarendon, already shaking to his fall, goes on to add,

"all which, being contrary to all former order, did the King no good,

and rendered those unable to do him service who were inclined to

it."[77:1]

It is a lifelike picture Clarendon draws of the crowded rooms, and of

the witty king moving about fooling vanity, ambition, and corruption to

the top of their bent. That the king chose his own ministers is plain

enough.

Marvell was at the beginning well disposed towards Charles. They had

some points in common; and among them a quick sense of humour and a turn

for business. But the member for Hull must soon have recognised that

there was no place for an honest quick-witted man in any Stuart

administration.

Marvell and his great chief remained in their offices until the close of

the year 1659, when the impending Restoration enforced their retirement.

Milton used his leisure to pour forth excited tracts to prove how easy

it would still be to establish a Free Commonwealth. Once again, and for

the last time, he prompted the age to quit its clogs

"by the known rules of ancient liberty."

These pamphlets of Milton's prove how little that solitary thinker ever

knew of the real mind and temper of the English people.

The Lord Richard Cromwell was exactly the sort of eldest son a great

soldier like Oliver, who had put his foot on fortune's neck, was likely

to have. Richard (1626-1712) was not, indeed, born in the purple, but

his early manhood was nurtured in it. Religion, as represented by long

sermons, tiresome treatises, and prayerful exercises, bored him to

death. Of enthusiasm he had not a trace, nor was he bred to arms. He

delighted in hunting, in the open air, and the company of sportsmen.

Whatever came his way easily, and as a matter of right, he was well

content to take. He bore himself well on State occasions, and could make

a better speech than ever his father was able to do. But he was not a

"restless" Cromwell, and had no faith in his destiny. I do not know

whether he had ever read \_Don Quixote\_, in Shelton's translation, a very

popular book of the time; probably not, for, though Chancellor of the

University of Oxford, Richard was not a reading man, but if he had, he

must have sympathised with Sancho Panza's attitude of mind towards the

famous island.

"If your highness has no mind that the government you promised should

be given me, God made me of less, and perhaps it may be easier for

Sancho, the Squire, to get to Heaven than for Sancho, the Governor.

\_In the dark all cats are gray.\_"

The new Protector took up the reins of power with proper forms and

ceremonies, and at once proceeded to summon a Parliament, an Imperial

Cromwellian Parliament, containing representatives both from Scotland

and Ireland. In this Parliament Andrew Marvell sat for the first time as

one of the two members for Kingston-upon-Hull. His election took place

on the 10th of January 1659, being the first county day after the

sheriff had received the writ. Five candidates were nominated: Thomas

Strickland, Andrew Marvell, John Ramsden, Henry Smyth, and Sir Henry

Vane, and a vote being taken in the presence of the mayor, aldermen, and

many of the burgesses, John Ramsden and Andrew Marvell were declared

duly elected.

Nobody to-day, glancing his eye over a list of the knights and

burgesses who made up Richard Cromwell's first and last Parliament,

would ever guess that it represented an order of things of the most

recent date which was just about to disappear. On paper it has a solid

look. The fine old crusted Parliamentary names with which the clerks

were to remain so long familiar as the members trooped out to divide

were more than well represented.[79:1] The Drakes of Amersham were

there; Boscawens, Bullers, and Trelawneys flocked from Cornwall; Sir

Wilfred Lawson sat for Cumberland, and his son for Cockermouth; a

Knightly represented Northamptonshire, whilst Lucys from Charlecote

looked after Warwick, both town and county. Arthur Onslow came from

Surrey, a Townshend from Norfolk, and, of course, a Bankes from Corfe

Castle;[79:2] Oxford University, contented, as she occasionally is, to

be represented by a great man, had chosen Sir Matthew Hale, whilst the

no less useful and laborious Thurloe sat for the sister University.

Anthony Ashley Cooper was there, but in opposition, snuffing the morrow.

Mildmays, Lawleys, Binghams, Herberts, Pelhams, all travelled up to

London with the Lord-Protector's writs in their pockets. A less

revolutionary assembly never met, though there was a regicide or two

among them. But when the members found themselves alone together there

was some loose talk.

On the 27th of January 1659 Marvell attended for the first time in his

place, when the new Protector opened Parliament, and made a speech in

the House of Lords, which was pronounced at the time to be "a very

handsome oration."

The first business of the Commons was to elect a Speaker, nor was their

choice a very lucky one, for it first fell on Chaloner Chute, who

speedily breaking down in health, the Recorder of London was appointed

his substitute, but the Recorder being on his deathbed at the time, and

Chute dying very shortly afterwards, Thomas Bampfield was elected

Speaker, and continued so to be until the Parliament was dissolved by

proclamation on the 22nd of April. This proclamation was Richard

Cromwell's last act of State.

Marvell's first Parliament was both short and inglorious. One only of

its resolutions is worth quoting:--

"That a very considerable navy be forthwith provided, and put to sea

for the safety of the Commonwealth and the preservation of the trade

and commerce thereof."

It was, however, the army and not the navy that had to be reckoned

with--an army unpaid, angry, suspicious, and happily divided. I must not

trace the history of faction. There is no less exalted page in English

history since the days of Stephen. Monk is its fitting hero, and Charles

the Second its expensive saviour of society. The story how the

Restoration was engineered by General Monk, who, if vulgar, was adroit,

both on land and sea, is best told from Monk's point of view in the

concluding chapter of \_Baker's Chronicle\_ (Sir Roger de Coverley's

favourite Sunday reading), whilst that old-fashioned remnant, who still

love to read history for fun, may not object to be told that they will

find printed in the Report of the Leyborne-Popham Papers (\_Historical

Manuscripts Commission\_, 1899, p. 204) a \_Narrative of the Restoration\_,

by Mr. John Collins, the Chief Butler of the Inner Temple, proving in

great and highly diverting detail how this remarkable event was really

the work not so much of Monk as of the Chief Butler.

Richard Cromwell having slipped the collar, the officers assumed

command, as they were only too ready to do, and recalled the old,

dishonoured, but pertinacious Rump Parliament, which, though mustering

at first but forty-two members, at once began to talk and keep journals

as if nothing had happened since the day ten years before, when it was

sent about its business. Old Speaker Lenthall was routed out of

obscurity, and much against his will, and despite his protests, clapped

once more into the chair. Dr. John Owen, an old parliamentary preaching

hand, was once again requisitioned to preach before the House, which he

did at enormous length one fine Sunday in May.

The Rump did not prove a popular favourite. It was worse than Old Noll

himself, who could at least thrash both Dutchman and Spaniard, and be

even more feared abroad than he was hated at home. The City of London,

then almost an Estate of the Realm, declared for a Free Parliament, and

it soon became apparent to every one that the whole country was eager to

return as soon as possible to the old mould. Nothing now stood between

Charles and his own but half a dozen fierce old soldiers and their

dubious, discontented, unpaid men.

It was once commonly supposed (it is so no longer), that the Restoration

party was exclusively composed of dispossessed Cavaliers, bishops in

hiding, ejected parsons, high-flying \_jure divino\_ Episcopalians,

talkative toss-pots, and the great pleasure-loving crowd, cruelly

repressed under the rule of the saints. Had it been left to these

ragged regiments, the issue would have been doubtful, and the result

very different. The Presbyterian ministers who occupied the rectories

and vicarages of the Church of England and their well-to-do flocks in

both town and country were, with but few exceptions, all for King

Charles and a restored monarchy. In this the ministers may have shown a

sound political instinct, for none of them had any more mind than the

Anglican bishops to tolerate Papists, Socinians, Quakers, and Fifth

Monarchy men, but in their management of the business of the Restoration

these divines exposed themselves to the same condemnation that Clarendon

in an often-quoted passage passed upon his own clerical allies. When

read by the light of the Act of "Uniformity," the "Corporation," the

"Five Mile," and the "Conventicle" Acts, the conduct of the

Presbyterians seems recklessness itself, whilst the ignorance their

ministers displayed of the temper of the people they had lived amongst

all their lives, and whom they adjured to cry \_God save the King\_, but

not to drink his Majesty's health (because health-drinking was forbidden

in the Old Testament), would be startling were it not so eminently

characteristic.[82:1]

The Rump, amidst the ridicule and contempt of the populace, was again

expelled by military force on the 13th of October 1659. The officers

were divided in opinion, some supporting, others, headed by Lambert,

opposing the Parliament; but \_vis major\_, or superior cunning, was on

the side of Lambert, who placed his soldiers in the streets leading to

Westminster Hall, and when the Speaker came in his coach, his horses

were turned, and he was conducted very civilly home. The regiments that

should have resisted, "observing that they were exposed to derision,"

peaceably returned to their quarters.

Monk, in the meanwhile, was advancing with his army from Edinburgh, and

affected not to approve of the force put upon Parliament. The feeling

for a Free Parliament increased in strength and violence every day. The

Rump was for a third time restored in December by the section of the

London army that supported its claim. Lenthall was once more in the

chair, and the journals were resumed without the least notice of past

occurrences. Monk, having reached London amidst great excitement, went

down to the House and delivered an ambiguous speech. Up to the last Monk

seems to have remained uncertain what to do. The temper of the City,

which was fiercely anti-Rump, may have decided him. At all events he

invited the secluded, that is the expelled, members of the old Long

Parliament to take their seats along with the others, and in a formal

declaration addressed to Parliament, dated the 21st of February 1660, he

counselled it among other things to dissolve legally "in order to make

way for a succession of Parliaments." In a word, Monk declared for a

Free Parliament. Great indeed were the national rejoicings.

On the 16th of March 1660 a Bill was read a third time dissolving the

Parliament begun and holden at Westminster, 3rd November 1640, and for

the calling and holding of a Parliament at Westminster on the 25th of

April 1660. This time an end was really made of the Rump, though for

many a long day there were parliamentary pedants to be found in the land

ready to maintain that the Long Parliament had never been legally

dissolved and still \_de jure\_ existed; so long, I presume, as any

single member of it remained alive.

Marvell was not a "Rumper," but on the 2nd of April 1660 he was again

elected for Hull to sit in what is usually called the Convention

Parliament. John Ramsden was returned at the head of the poll with 227

votes, Marvell receiving 141. There were four defeated candidates.

With this Convention Parliament begins Marvell's remarkable

correspondence, on fine folio sheets of paper, with the corporation of

Hull, whose faithful servant he remained until death parted them in

1678.

This correspondence, which if we include in it, as we well may, the

letters to the Worshipful Society of Masters and Pilots of the Trinity

House in Hull, numbers upwards of 350 letters, and with but one

considerable gap (from July 1663 to October 1665) covers the whole

period of Marvell's membership, is, I believe, unique in our public

records. The letters are preserved at Hull, where I hope care is taken

to preserve them from the autograph hunter and the autograph thief.

Captain Thompson printed a great part of this correspondence in 1776,

and Mr. Grosart gave the world the whole of it in the second volume of

his edition of Marvell's complete works.

An admission may as well be made at once. This correspondence is not so

interesting as it might have been expected to prove. Marvell did not

write letters for his biographer, nor to instruct posterity, nor to

serve any party purpose, nor even to exhibit honest emotion, but simply

to tell his employers, whose wages he took, what was happening at

Westminster. He kept his reflections either to himself or for his

political broadsheets, and indeed they were seldom of the kind it would

have been safe to entrust to the post.

Good Mr. Grosart fusses and frets terribly over Marvell's astonishing

capacity for chronicling in sombre silence every kind of legislative

abomination. It is at times a little hard to understand it, for Hull was

what may be called a Puritan place. No doubt caution dictated some of

the reticence--but the reserve of Marvell's character is one of the few

traits of his personality that has survived. He was a satirist, not an

enthusiast.

I will give the first letter \_in extenso\_ to serve as a specimen, and a

very favourable one, of the whole correspondence:--

"\_Nov. 17, 1660.\_

"GENTLEMEN, MY WORTHY FRIENDS,--Although during the necessary absence

of my partner, Mr. Ramsden, I write with but halfe a penn, and can

scarce perswade myselfe to send you so imperfect an account of your

own and the publick affairs, as I needs must for want of his

assistance; yet I had rather expose mine own defects to your good

interpretation, then excuse thereby a totall neglect of my duty, and

that trust which is divided upon me. At my late absence out of Town I

had taken such order that if you had commanded me any thing, I might

soon haue received it, and so returned on purpose to this place to

haue obeyed you. But hearing nothing of that nature howeuer, I was

present the first day of the Parliament's sitting, and tooke care to

write to Mr. Maior what work we had cut out. Since when, we have had

little new, but onely been making a progresse in those things I then

mentioned. There is yet brought in an Act in which of all others your

corporation is the least concerned: that is, where wives shall refuse

to cohabit with their husbands, that in such case the husband shall

not be liable to pay any debts which she may run into, for clothing,

diet, lodging, or other expenses. I wish with all my heart you were no

more touched in a vote that we haue made for bringing in an Act of a

new Assessment for six moneths, of 70,000li. \_per mensem\_, to begin

next January. The truth is, the delay ere monyes can be got in, eats

up a great part of all that is levying, and that growing charge of the

Army and Navy doubles upon us. And that is all that can be said for

excuse of ourselues to the Country, to whom we had giuen our own hopes

of no further sessment to be raised, but must now needs incurre the

censure of improvidence before or prodigality now, though it becomes

no private member, the resolution having passed the House, to

interpose further his own judgment in a thing that can not be

remedied; and it will be each man's ingenuity not to grudge an

after-payment for that settlement and freedome from Armyes and Navyes,

which before he would haue been glad to purchase with his whole

fortune. There remain some eight Regiments to be disbanded, but those

all horse in a manner, and some seauenteen shipps to be payd of, that

haue laid so long upon charge in the harbour, beside fourscore shipps

which are reckoned to us for this Winter guard. But after that, all

things are to go upon his Majestye's own purse out of the Tunnage and

Poundage and his other revenues. But there being so great a provision

made for mony, I doubt not but ere we rise, to see the whole army

disbanded, and according to the Act, hope to see your Town once more

ungarrisond, in which I should be glad and happy to be instrumentall

to the uttermost. For I can not but remember, though then a child,

those blessed days when the youth of your own town were trained for

your militia, and did, methought, become their arms much better than

any soldiers that I haue seen there since. And it will not be amisse

if you please (now that we are about a new Act of regulating the

Militia, that it may be as a standing strength, but not as ill as a

perpetuall Army to the Nation) to signify to me any thing in that

matter that were according to your ancient custome and desirable for

you. For though I can promise little, yet I intend all things for your

service. The Act for review of the Poll bill proceeds, and that for

making this Declaration of his Majesty a Law in religious matters.

Order likewise is giuen for drawing up all the votes made during our

last sitting, in the businesse of Sales of Bishops' and Deans' and

Chapters' lands into an Act, which I should be glad to see passed. The

purchasers the other day offerd the house 600,000li. in ready mony,

and to make the Bishops', etc., revenue as good or better then before.

But the House thought it not fit or seasonable to hearken to it. We

are so much the more concernd to see that great interest of the

purchasers satisfyed and quieted, at least in that way which our own

votes haue propounded. On Munday next we are to return to the

consideration of apportioning 100,000li. per annum upon all the lands

in the nation, in lieu of the Court of Wards. The debate among the

Countyes, each thinking it self overrated, makes the successe of that

businesse something casuall, and truly I shall not assist it much for

my part, for it is little reason that your Town should contribute in

that charge. The Excise bill for longer continuance (I wish it proue

not too long) will come in also next weeke. And I foresee we shall be

called upon shortly to effect our vote made the former sitting, of

raising his Majestie's revenue to 1,200,000li. per Annum. I do not

love to write so much of this mony news. But I think you haue observed

that Parliaments have been always made use of to that purpose, and

though we may buy gold too deare, yet we must at any rate be glad of

Peace, Freedom, and a good Conscience. Mr. Maior tells me, your

duplicates of the Poll are coming up. I shall go with them to the

Exchequer and make your excuse, if any be requisite. My long silence

hath made me now trespasse on the other hand in a long letter, but I

doubt not of your good construction of so much familiarity and trouble

from, Gentlemen, your most affectionate friend and servant,

"ANDR: MARVELL.

"WESTMINSTER, \_Nov. 17, 1660.\_"

Although this first letter of the Hull correspondence is dated the 17th

of November 1660, the Convention Parliament began its sittings on the

25th of April.

In composition this Convention Parliament was very like Richard

Cromwell's, and indeed it contained many of the same members, whose

loyalty, however, was less restrained than in 1659. All the world knew

what brought this Parliament together. It was to make the nation's

peace with its king, either on terms or without terms. "We are all

Royalists now" are words which must often have been on the lips of the

members of this House. One can imagine the smiles, half grim, half

ironical, that would accompany their utterance. Such a right-about-face

could never be dignified. It is impossible not to be reminded of

schoolboys at the inevitable end of "a barring out." The sarcastic

comment of Clarendon has not lost its sting. "From this time there was

such an emulation and impatience in Lords, Commons, and City, and

generally over the Kingdom, who should make the most lively expressions

of their duty and of their joy, that a man could not but wonder where

those people dwelt who had done all the mischief and kept the King so

many years from enjoying the comfort and support of such excellent

subjects."[88:1]

The most significant sentence in Marvell's first letter to his

constituents is that in which he refers to the Bill for making Charles's

declaration in religious matters the law of the land. Had the passing of

any such Bill been possible, how different the history of England would

have been!

The declaration Marvell is referring to was contained in the famous

message from Breda, which was addressed by Charles to all his loving

subjects of what degree or quality, and was expressed as follows:--

"And because the passion and uncharitableness of the times have

produced several opinions in Religion by which men are engaged in

parties and animosities against each other (which, when they shall

hereafter unite in a freedom of conversation, will be composed or

better understood) we do declare a liberty to tender Consciences, and

that no man shall be disquieted or called in question for differences

of opinion in matters of Religion which do not disturb the peace of

the Kingdom; and that we shall be ready to consent to such an Act of

Parliament as upon mature deliberation shall be offered to us for the

full granting of that indulgence."

It is only doing the king bare justice to say that he was always ready

and willing to keep this part of his royal word--but it proved an

impossibility.

A Roman Catholic as a matter of creed, a Hobbist in conversation, a

sensualist in practice, and the shrewdest though most indolent of cynics

in council, Charles, in this matter of religious toleration, would

gladly have kept his word, not indeed because it was his word, for on

the point of honour he was indifferent, but because it jumped with his

humour, and would have mitigated the hard lot of the Catholics. Charles

was not a theorist, all his tastes being eminently practical, not to say

scientific. He was not a tyrant, but a \_de facto\_ man from head to heel.

For the \_jure divino\_ of the English Episcopate he cared as little as

Oliver had ever done for the \_jure divino\_ of the English Crown. Oliver

once said, and he was not given to \_braggadocio\_, that he would fire his

pistol at the king "as soon as at another if he met him in battle," and

the second Charles would have thought no more of beheading an Anglican

bishop than he did of sending Sir Harry Vane to the scaffold. Honesty

and virtue, on the rare occasions Charles encountered them, he admired

much as a painter admires the colours of a fine sunset. Above everything

else Charles was determined never again, if he could help it, to be sent

on his travels, to be snubbed and starved in foreign courts.

Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromartie, the first and best translator of

Rabelais, is said to have died of laughing on hearing of the

Restoration; Charles did not die, but he must have laughed inwardly at

the spectacle that met his eyes everywhere as he made his

often-described progress from Dover to London, and examined the gorgeous

beds and quilts, fine linen and carpets, couches, horses and liveries,

his faithful Commons had been at the pains and at the expense of

providing for his comfort.

A few years afterwards Marvell wrote the following lines:--

"Of a tall stature and of sable hue,

Much like the son of Kish, that lofty Jew;

Twelve years complete he suffered in exile

And kept his father's asses all the while.

At length, by wonderful impulse of fate,

The people called him home to help the state,

And what is more they sent him money too

To clothe him all from head to foot anew;

Nor did he such small favours then disdain,

Who in his thirtieth year began his reign."[90:1]

The "small favours" grew in size year by year.

Why it was impossible for Charles to keep his word may be read in

Clarendon's \_Life\_, and in the history of the Savoy Conference, and need

not be restated here. In the opinion of the Anglican clergy, the king's

divine right stood no higher than their own. They too had suffered in

exile. They had been "robbed" of their tithes, and turned out of their

palaces, rectories and vicarages, and excluded from the churches they

still called "theirs." Their Book of Common Prayer was no longer in

common use, having been banished by the "Directory of Public Worship"

since 1645. So late as July 1, 1660, Pepys records attending a service

in the Abbey, and adds "No Common Prayer yet." If we find ourselves

wondering why the Anglican party should have been so powerful in 1660,

our wonder ought not to be greater than is excited by the power of the

Puritan party when Laud was put to death. Both parties were, on each

occasion, in a minority. Though England has never been long

priest-ridden, it has often been priest-led.

The Convention Parliament did all that was expected of it. It was,

however irregularly summoned, a truly representative assembly. Its

members all swore--what will not members of Parliament swear?--that the

king was supreme in Church and State, the only rightful king of the

realm and of all other his dominions, and that from their hearts they

abhorred, detested, and abjured the damnable doctrine that princes,

excommunicated or deprived of the Pope, might be murdered by their

subjects. They proceeded to pass a very useful Act of Indemnity and

Oblivion, agreeing to let bygones be bygones, except in certain named

cases. They ordered Mr. John Milton to be taken into custody, and

prosecuted (which he never was) by the Attorney-General. Later on the

poet was released from custody, and we find Mr. Marvell complaining to

the House that their sergeant had extracted £150 in fees before he would

let Mr. Milton go. On which Sir Heneage Finch, afterwards Lord

Chancellor, laconically observed that Milton deserved hanging. He

certainly got off easily, but, as he lived to publish \_Paradise Lost\_,

\_Paradise Regained\_, and \_Samson Agonistes\_, he may be said to have

earned his freedom. All his poetry put together never brought him in a

third of the sum the sergeant got for letting him out of prison. General

Monk, the man-midwife, who so skilfully assisted at that great Birth of

Time, the Restoration, was made a duke, and Cromwell's army, so long the

force behind the supreme power, was paid its arrears and (two regiments

excepted) disbanded. "Fifty thousand men," says Macaulay, "accustomed to

the profession of arms, were thrown upon the world ... in a few months

there remained not a trace indicating that the most formidable army in

the world had just been absorbed in the mass of the community."[92:1]

After this the House of Commons fell to discussing religion, and made

the sad discovery that differences of opinion still existed. In these

circumstances they decided to refer the matter to their pious king, and

to such divines as he might choose. They then voted large sums of money

for the royal establishment, and, it being the very end of August,

adjourned till the 6th of November. As for making constitutional terms

with the king, they never attempted it, though Sir Matthew Hale is

credited with an attempt to induce them to do so. Any proposals of the

kind must have failed. The people were in no mood for making

constitutions.

Having met again on the 6th of November, Marvell, in a letter to the

Mayor and Aldermen of Hull, dated the 27th of the month, reports that

"the House fell upon the making out of the King's revenue to £1,200,000

a year." "The Customs are estimated toward £500,000 per annum in the

revenue. His lands and fee farms £250,000. The Excise of Beer and Ale

£300,000, the rest arise out of the Post Office, Wine Licenses,

Stannaries Court, Probate of Wills, Post-fines, Forests, and other

rights of the Crown. The excise of Foreign Commodities is to be

continued apart until satisfaction of public debts and engagements

secured upon the excise."

This settlement of revenue marks "the beginning of a time." Cromwell, as

Cowley puts it in his \_Discourse\_, by far the ablest indictment of

Oliver ever penned, "took armes against two hundred thousand pounds a

year, and raised them himself to above two millions." It is true.

Cromwell spent the money honestly and efficiently, and chiefly on a navy

that enabled him to wrest the command of the sea from the Dutch, to

secure the carrying trade, and to challenge the world for supremacy in

the Indies, both East and West. In doing this, he had the instinct of

the whole nation behind him. But it was expensive.

Had Charles been the most honest and thrifty of men, instead of one of

the most dishonest and extravagant, he must have found his financial

position a very difficult one. He was poorer than Cromwell. The feudal

taxation had fallen into desuetude. To revive wardships, etc., was

impossible, to recover arrears hopeless. There was nothing for it but

scientific taxation. One of his first Acts contains a schedule of taxed

articles extending over fifteen double-columned pages of a quarto

volume. To raise this revenue was difficult--in fact impossible, and the

amount actually obtained was always far below the estimates.

Marvell's letter concludes thus:--

"To-morrow is the Bill for enacting his Majesty's declaration in

religious matters and to have its first reading. It is said that on

Sunday next Doctor Reynolds shall be created Bishop of Norwich."

The rumour about Reynolds's bishopric proved to be true. The new bishop

was a very "moderate" Anglican indeed, and his appointment was meant as

a sop to the Presbyterians. Richard Baxter and Edmund Calamy refused

similar preferment.

On the 29th of November Marvell's letter contains the following

passage:--

"Yesterday the Bill of the King's Declaration in religious matters

was read for the first time; but upon the question for a second

reading 'twas carried 183 against 157 in the negative, so there is an

end of that Bill and for those excellent things therein. We must

henceforth rely only upon his Majesty's goodness, who, I must needs

say, hath hitherto been more ready to give than we to receive."

It is a noticeable feature of this correspondence that Marvell seldom

mentions which way he voted himself.

The letter of the 4th of December contains some interesting matter:--

"GENTLEMEN,--Since my last, upon Thursday, the Bill for Vicarages

hath been carryed up to the Lords; and a Message to them from our

House that they would expedite the Bill for confirmation of Magna

Charta, that for confirmation of marriages, and other bills of

publick concernment, which haue laid by them euer since our last

sitting, not returned to us. We had then the Bill for six moneths

assesment in consideration, and read the Bill for taking away Court

of Wards and Purveyance, and establishing the moiety of the Excise

of Beere and ale in perpetuum, about which we sit euery afternoon in

a Grand Committee. Upon Sunday last were consecrated in the Abby at

Westminster, Doctor Cossins, Bishop of Durham, Sterne of Carlile,

Gauden of Exeter, Ironside of Bristow, Loyd of Landaffe, Lucy of St.

Dauids, Lany, the seuenth, whose diocese I remember not at present,

and to-day they keep their feast in Haberdasher's hall, in London.

Dr. Reinolds was not of the number, who is intended for Norwich. A

Congedelire is gone down to Hereford for Dr. Monk, the Generall's

brother, at present Provost of Eaton. 'Tis thought that since our

throwing out the Bill of the King's Declaration, Mr. Calamy, and

other moderate men, will be resolute in refusing of Bishopricks....

To-day our House was upon the Bill of Attainder of those that haue

been executed, those that are fled, and of Cromwell, Bradshaw,

Ireton, and Pride, and 'tis ordered that the carkasses and coffins

of the four last named, shall be drawn with what expedition

possible, upon an hurdle to Tyburn, there (to) be hanged up for a

while, and then buryed under the gallows....

"WESTMINSTER, \_Dec. 4, 1660\_."

Marvell's cool reporting of the hideous indignity inflicted upon his old

master, and allowing it to pass \_sub silentio\_, is one of the many

occasions that stirred Mr. Grosart's wonder. Nerves were tough in those

days. Pepys tells us unconcernedly enough how, after seeing Lord

Southampton sworn in at the Court of Exchequer as Lord Treasurer, he

noticed "the heads of Cromwell, Bradshaw, and Ireton set up at the

further end of Westminster Hall." It is quite possible Lady Fauconberg

may have seen the same sight.[95:1]

The Convention Parliament was dissolved on the 29th of December 1660.

On 1st April 1661 Marvell was returned for the third and last time for

Hull, for Charles the Second's first Parliament was of unconscionable

long duration, not being dissolved till January 1679, after Marvell's

death. It is known in history as the Pensionary or Long Parliament. The

election figures were as below:--

Colonel Gilbey, 294

Mr. Andrew Marvell, 240

Mr. Edward Barnard, 195

Mr. John Ramsden, 122

Marvell was not present at or before the election, for on the 6th of

April he writes:--

"I perceive by Mr. Mayor that you have again (as if it were grown a

thing of course) made choice of me now, the third time, to serve for

you in Parliament, which as I cannot attribute to anything but your

constancy, so shall I, God willing, as in gratitude obliged, with no

less constancy and vigour continue to execute your commands and study

your service."

A word may here be said about payment of borough members. The members'

fee was 6s. 8d. for every day the Parliament lasted. The wages were paid

by the corporation out of the borough funds. It was never a popular

charge. Burgesses in many places cared as little for M.P.'s as do some

of their successors for free libraries. Prynne, perhaps the greatest

parliamentary lawyer that ever lived, told Pepys one day, as they were

driving to the Temple, that the number of burgesses to be returned to

Parliament for any particular borough was not, for aught Prynne could

find, fixed by law, but was at first left to the discretion of the

sheriff, and that several boroughs had complained of the sheriff's

putting them to the charge of sending up burgesses.

In August 1661 the corporation paid Marvell £28 for his fee as one of

their burgesses, being 6s. 8d. a day for eighty-four days, the length of

the Convention Parliament. Marvell continued to take his wages until the

end of his days; but it is perhaps a mistake to suppose he was the very

last member to do so. It was, however, unusual in Marvell's time.[96:1]

This Pensionary Parliament, though of a very decided "Church and King"

complexion, was not in its original composition a body lacking character

or independence, but it steadily deteriorated in both respects.

Vacancies, as they occurred, and they occurred very frequently in those

days of short lives, were filled up by courtiers and pensioners.

In the small tract, entitled \_Flagellum Parliamentum\_, which is a highly

libellous "Dod," often attributed to Marvell, a record is preserved of

more than two hundred members of this Parliament in 1675. Despite some

humorous touches, this \_Flagellum Parliamentum\_ is still disagreeable to

read. But the most graphic picture we have of this Parliament is to be

found in one of Lord Shaftesbury's political tracts entitled "A letter

from a Parliament man to his Friend" (1675):--

"SIR,--I see you are greatly scandalized at our slow and confused

Proceedings. I confess you have cause enough; but were you but

within these walls for one half day, and saw the strange make and

complexion that this house is of, you would wonder as much that ever

you wondered at it; for we are such a pied Parliament, that none can

say of what colour we are; for we consist of Old Cavaliers, Old

Round-Heads, Indigent-Courtiers, and true Country Gentlemen: the two

latter are most numerous, and would in probability bring things to

some issue were they not clogged with the numerous uncertainties of

the former. For the Old Cavalier, grown aged, and almost past his

vice, is damnable godly and makes his doting piety more a plague to

the world than his debauchery was, for he is so much a by-got to the

B(ishop) that he forces his Loyalty to strike sail to his Religion,

and could be content to pare the nails a little of the Civil

Government, so you would but let him sharpen the Ecclesiastical

Talons: which behaviour of his so exasperates the Round-Head, that

he on the other hand cares not what increases the Interest of the

Crown receives, so he can but diminish that of the miter: so that

the Round-Head had rather enslave the Man than the Conscience: the

Cavalier rather the Conscience than the Man; there being a

sufficient stock of animosity as proper matter to work upon. Upon

these, therefore, the Courtier mutually plays, for if any Ante-court

motion be made he gains the Round-Head either to oppose or absent by

telling them, If they will join him now he will join them for

Liberty of Conscience. And when any affair is started on behalf of

the Country he assures the Cavaliers, If they will then stand by him

he will then join with them in promoting a Bill against the

fanatics. Thus play they on both hands.... Wherefore it were happy

that he had neither Round-Head nor Cavalier in the House, for they

are each of them so prejudicate against the other that their sitting

here signifies nothing but their fostering their old venom and lying

at catch to stop every advantage to bear down each other, though it

be in the destruction of their country. For if the Round-Heads bring

in a good bill the Old Cavalier opposes it, for no other reason but

because they brought it in."[98:1]

Such was the theatre of Marvell's public actions for the rest of his

days, and if at times he may need forgiveness for the savagery of his

satire, it ought to be found easy to forgive him.

The two members for Hull were soon immersed in matters of much local

importance. They began by quarrelling with one another, Marvell writing

"the bond of civility betwixt Col. Gilby and myself being unhappily

snappt in pieces, and in such manner that I cannot see how it is

possible ever to knit them again." House of Commons quarrels are usually

soon made up, and so was this one. The custom was for \_both\_ members to

sign these letters, though they are all written in Marvell's hand--but

if this was for any reason inconvenient, Marvell signed alone. No

letters, unless in Marvell's writing, are preserved at Hull, which is a

curious fact.

One of these bits of local business related to a patent alleged to have

been granted by the Crown to certain persons, authorising them to erect

and maintain \_ballast wharfs\_ in the various ports, and to make charges

in respect of them. This was resented by the members for the ports, and

on Marvell's motion the matter was referred to the Committee of

Grievances, before whom the patentees were summoned. When they came it

appeared that the patent warranted none of the exactions that had been

demanded, and also that the warrant sent down to Hull naming these

charges was nothing more than a draft framed by the patentees

themselves, and not authorised in any way. The patent was at once

suspended. Marvell, like a true member of Parliament, wishes to get any

little local credit that may be due for such prompt action, and

writes:--

"In this thing (although I count all things I can do for your service

to be mere trifles, and not worth taking notice of in respect of what

I owe you) I must do myself that right to let you know that I, and I

alone, have had the happiness to do that little which hitherto is

effected."

The matter required delicate handling, for a reason Marvell gives:

"Because, if the King's right in placing such impositions should be

weakened, neither should he have power to make a grant of them to you."

Another much longer business related to a lighthouse, which some

outsiders were anxious to build in the Humber. The corporation of Hull,

acting on Marvell's advice, had petitioned the Privy Council, and were

asked by their business-like member "to send us up a dormant credit for

an hundred pound, which we yet indeed have no use of, but if need be

must have ready at hand to reward such as will not otherwise befriend

your business." Some months later Marvell forwards an account, not of

the £100, but of the legal expenses about the lighthouse. He wishes it

were less, but hopes that the "vigorous resistance" will discourage the

designers from proceeding farther. This it did not do. As a member of

the bar, I find two or three of the items in this old-world Bill of

Costs interesting:--

To Mr. Scroggs to attend the Council, £3 6 0

" " " again for the same, 3 6 0

Spent on Mr. Scroggs at dinner, 18 0

To Mr. Scroggs again, 3 0 0

Fees of the Council Table, 1 10 0

Fee to Clerk of the Council, 2 0 0

For dinner for Mr. Scroggs and wine after, 1 0 0

To Mr. Cresset (the Solicitor), 20 0 0

To Mr. Scroggs for a dinner, 1 0 0

The barrister who was so frequently "refreshed" by Marvell lived to

become "the infamous Lord Chief Justice Scroggs" of all school

histories.

A week before the prorogation of Parliament, which happened on the 19th

of May 1662, Marvell went to Holland and remained there for nine months,

for he did not return until the very end of March 1663, more than a

month after the reassembling of the House.

What took him there nobody knows. Writing to the Trinity House about the

lighthouse business on the 8th of May 1662, Marvell says:--

"But that which troubles me is that by the interest of some persons

too potent for me to refuse, and who have a great direction and

influence upon my counsels and fortune, I am obliged to go beyond

sea before I have perfected it (\_i.e.\_ the lighthouse business). But

first I do thereby make my Lord Carlisle (who is a member of the

Privy Council and one of them to whom your business is referred)

absolutely yours. And my journey is but into Holland, from whence I

shall weekly correspond as if I were at London with all the rest of

my friends, towards the affecting your business. Then I leave Col.

Gilbey there, whose ability for business and affection to yours is

such that I cannot be wanted though I am missing."

It is plain from this that Lord Carlisle is one of the powerful persons

referred to--but beyond this we cannot go.

Whilst in Holland Marvell wrote both to the Trinity House and to the

corporation on business matters.

In March 1663 Marvell came back in a hurry, some complaints having been

made in Hull about his absence. He begins his first letter after his

return as follows:--

"Being newly arrived in town and full of business, yet I could not

neglect to give you notice that this day (2nd April 1663) I have been

in the House and found my place empty, though it seems, as I now

hear, that some persons would have been so courteous as to have

filled it for me."

In none of these letters is any reference made to the debates in the

House on the unhappy Bill of Uniformity, nor does any record of those

discussions anywhere exist. The Savoy Conference proved a failure, and

no lay reader of Baxter's account of it can profess wonder. Not a single

point in difference was settled. In the meantime the restored Houses of

Convocation, from which the Presbyterian members were excluded, had

completed their revision of the Book of Common Prayer and presented it

to Parliament.

In considering the Bill for Uniformity, the House of Lords, where

Presbyterianism was powerfully represented, showed more regard for those

"tender consciences" to which the king (by the new Prayer Book called

for the first time "our most religious King") had referred in his Breda

Declaration than did the House of Commons. "The Book, the whole Book,

and nothing but the Book" was, in effect, the cry of the lower House,

and on the 19th of May, ten days after Marvell had left for the

Continent, the Act of Uniformity became law, and by the 24th of August

1662 all beneficed ministers and schoolmasters had to make the

celebrated subscription and profession, or go out into the wilderness.

There has always been a dispute as to the physical possibility of

perusing the compilation in question before the day fixed by the

Statute. The Book was advertised for sale in London on the 6th of

August, but how many copies were actually available on that day is not

known.

The Dean and Chapter of Peterborough did not get their copies until the

17th of August. When the new folios reached the lonely parsonages of

Cumberland and Durham--who would care to say? The Act required a verbal

avowal of "unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained

and prescribed in and by the Book of Common Prayer, and administrations

of the Sacraments and other rites and ceremonies of the Church according

to the use of the Church of England, together with the Psalter, and the

form of manner of making, ordaining, and consecrating Bishops, Priests,

and Deacons" to be made after the service upon "some Lord's day" before

the Feast of St. Bartholomew, \_i.e.\_ the 24th of August 1662. The Act

also required subscription within the same time-limit to a declaration

of (\_inter alia\_) uniformity to the Liturgy of the Church of England "as

it is now by law established."

That this haste was indecent no layman is likely to dispute, but that it

wrought practical wrong is doubtful. The Vicar of Bray needed no time to

read his new Folio to enable him to make whatever avowal concerning it

the law demanded; and as for signing the declaration, all he required

for that purpose was pen and ink. Neither had the incumbent, who was a

good churchman at heart, any doubts to settle. He rejoiced to know that

his side was once more uppermost, and that it would be no longer

necessary for him, in order to retain his living, to pretend to tolerate

a Presbyterian, or to submit to read in his church the Directory of

Public Worship. Convocation had approved the new Prayer Book, which was

in substance the old one, and what more did any churchman require? As

for the Presbyterians and others who were in possession of livings, the

failure of the Savoy Conference must have made it plain to them that the

Church of England had not allowed the king to keep his word, that

compromise and comprehension had failed, and that if they were to remain

where they were, it could only be on terms of completely severing

themselves from all other Protestant bodies in the world, and becoming

thorough Episcopalians. No Presbyterian of any eminence was prepared to

make the statutory avowal. Painful as it always must be to give up any

good thing by a fixed date, it is hard to see what advantage would have

accrued from delay.

When the day came, some two thousand parsons were turned out of the

Church of England. Among them were included many of the most devout and

some of the most learned of our divines. Their "coming in" had been

irregular, their "going out" was painful.

Save so far as it turned these men out, the Act was a failure. It did

not procure that uniformity in the public worship of God which it

declared was so desirable; it prevented no scandal; it arrested no

decay; it allayed no distemper, and it certainly did not settle the

peace of the Church. Inside the Church the bishops were supine, the

parochial clergy indifferent, and the worshippers, if such a name can

properly be bestowed upon the congregations, were grossly irreverent.

Nor was any improvement in the conduct of the Church service noticeable

until after the Revolution, and when legislation had conceded a somewhat

shabby measure of toleration to those who by that time had become rigid,

traditional, and hereditary dissenters. Then indeed some attempts began

to be made to secure a real uniformity of ritual in the public worship

of the Church of England.[104:1] How far success has rewarded these

exertions it is not for me to say.

Marvell did not remain long at home after his return from Holland. A

strange adventure lay before him. He thus introduces it in a letter

dated 20th June 1663:--

"GENTLEMEN, MY VERY WORTHY FRIENDS,--The relation I have to your

affairs, and the intimacy of that affection I ow you, do both

incline and oblige me to communicate to you, that there is a

probability I may very shortly have occasion to go beyond sea; for

my Lord of Carlisle being chosen by his Majesty, Embassadour

Extraordinary to Muscovy, Sweden, and Denmarke, hath used his power,

which ought to be very great with me, to make me goe along with him

Secretary in those embassages. It is no new thing for Members of our

House to be dispens'd with for the service of the King and Nation in

forain parts. And you may be sure that I will not stirre without

speciall leave of the House; that so you may be freed from any

possibility of being importuned or tempted to make any other choice,

in my absence. However, I can not but advise also with you, desiring

to take your assent along with me, so much esteeme I have both of

your prudence and friendship. The time allotted for the embassy is

not much above a yeare: probably it may not be much less betwixt our

adjournment and next meeting; and, however, you have Colonell Gilby,

to whom my presence can make litle addition, so that if I cannot

decline this voyage, I shall have the comfort to believe, that, all

things considered, you cannot thereby receive any disservice. I

shall hope to receive herein your speedy answer...."

What was the "power" Lord Carlisle had over Marvell is not now

discoverable, but the tie, whatever it may have been, was evidently a

close one.

A month after this letter Marvell started on his way.

"GENTLEMEN, MY VERY WORTHY FRIENDS,--Being this day taking barge for

Gravesend, there to embark for Archangel, so to Muscow, thence for

Sweden, and last of all Denmarke; all of which I hope, by God's

blessing, to finish within twelve moneths time: I do hereby, with my

last and seriousest thoughts, salute you, rendring you all hearty

thanks for your great kindnesse and friendship to me upon all

occasions, and ardently beseeching God to keep you all in His

gracious protection, to your own honour, and the welfare and

flourishing of your Corporation, to which I am and shall ever

continue a most affectionate and devoted servant. I undertake this

voyage with the order and good liking of his Majesty, and by leave

given me from the House and enterd in the Journal; and having

received moreover your approbation, I go therefore with more ease

and satisfaction of mind, and augurate to myselfe the happier

successe in all my proceedings...."

It was Marvell's good fortune to be in Lord Carlisle's frigate which

made the voyage to Archangel in less than a month, sailing from

Gravesend on the 22nd of July and arriving at the bar of Archangel on

the 19th of August. The companion frigate took seven weeks to compass

the same distance.

Nothing of any importance attaches to this Russian embassy. It cost a

great deal of money, took up a great deal of time, exposed the

ambassador and his suite to much rudeness and discomfort, and failed to

effect its main object, which was to secure a renewal of the privileges

formerly enjoyed in Muscovy by British merchants.

One of the attendants upon the ambassador made a small book out of his

travels, which did not get printed till 1669, when it attracted little

notice. Mr. Grosart was the first of Marvell's many biographers to

discover the existence of this narrative.[106:1] He found it in the

first instance, to use his own language, "in one of good trusty John

Harris' folios of \_Travels and Voyages\_" (two vols. folio, 1705); but

later on he made the sad discovery that this "good trusty John Harris"

had uplifted what he called his "true and particular account" from the

book of 1669 without any acknowledgment. "For ways that are dark" the

old compiler of travels was not easily excelled, but why should Mr.

Grosart have gone out of his way to call an eighteenth-century

book-maker, about whom he evidently knew nothing, "good and trusty"?

Harris was never either the one or the other, and died a pauper!

A journey to Moscow in 1663-64 was no joke. Lord Carlisle, who was

accompanied by his wife and eldest son, although ready to start from

Archangel by the end of September, was doomed to spend both the 5th of

November and Christmas Day in the gloomy town of Vologda, which they had

reached, travelling by water, on the 17th of October. Some of this time

was spent in quarrelling as to who was to supply the sledges that were

required to convey the ambassador and all his \_impedimenta\_ along the

now ice-bound roads to Moscow. It was one of Marvell's many duties to

remonstrate with the authorities for their cruel and disrespectful

indifference; he did so with great freedom, but with no effect, and at

last the ambassador was obliged to hire two hundred sledges at his own

charges. Sixty he sent on ahead, following with one hundred and forty on

the 15th of January 1664. It was an intensely cold journey, and the

accommodation at night, with one happy exception, proved quite infamous.

On the 3rd of February Lord Carlisle and his \_cortége\_ found themselves

five versts from Moscow. The 5th of February was fixed for their entry

into the city in all their finery. They were ready on the morning of

that day, awaiting the arrival of the Tsar's escort, but it never came.

Lord Carlisle had sent his cooks on to Moscow to prepare the dinner he

expected to eat in his city-quarters. Nightfall approached, and it was

not till "half an hour before night" that the belated messengers

arrived, full of excuses. The ambassador was hungry, cold, and furious,

nor did his anger abate when told he was not to be allowed to enter

Moscow that night, as the Tsar and his ladies were very anxious to

enjoy the spectacle. The return of the cooks from Moscow and the

preparation of dinner, though a mitigation, was no cure for wounded

pride, and Lord Carlisle, calling Marvell to his side, and with his

assistance, concocted a letter in Latin to the Tsar, complaining

bitterly of their ill-treatment \_inter fumosi gurgustii sordes et

angustias sine cibo aut potu\_, and going so far as to assert that had

anything of the kind happened in England to a foreign ambassador, the

King of England would never have rested until the offence had been

atoned for with the blood of the criminals. When, some forty years

afterwards, Peter the Great asked Queen Anne to chop off the heads of

the rude men who had arrested his ambassador for debt, he had, perhaps,

Marvell's letter before him.

On the 6th of February Lord Carlisle and his suite made their public

entry into Moscow; but so long a time was occupied over the few versts

they had to travel, that it was dusk before the Kremlin was reached.

The formal reception of the ambassador was on the 11th of February.

Marvell was in the ambassador's sledge and carried his credentials upon

a yard of red damask. The titles of the Russian Potentate would, if

printed here, fill half a page. All the Russias, Great, Little, and

White, emperies more than one, dukedoms by the dozen, territories,

countries, and dominions--not all easy to identify on the map, and very

hard to pronounce--were read out in a loud voice by Marvell. At the end

of them came the homely title of the Earl and his offices, "his

Majesty's Lieutenant in the Counties of Cumberland and Westmorland."

The letters read and delivered, the Tsar and his Boyars rose in their

places simultaneously, and their tissue vests made so strange, loud, and

unexpected a noise as to provoke the ever too easily moved risibility

of the Englishmen.[109:1] When Marvell and the rest of them had ceased

from giggling, the Tsar inquired after the health of the king, but the

distance between his Imperial Majesty and Lord Carlisle being too great

for the question to carry, it had to be repeated by those who were

nearer the ambassador, who gravely replied that when he last saw his

master, namely on the 20th of July then last past, he was perfectly

well. To the same question as to the health of "the desolate widow of

Charles the First," Carlisle returned the same cautious answer. He then

read a very long speech in English, which his interpreter turned into

Russian. The same oration was rendered into Latin by Marvell, and

presented. Over Marvell's Latin trouble arose, for the Russians were

bent on taking and giving offence. Marvell had styled the Tsar

\_Illustrissimus\_ when he ought, so it was alleged, to have called him

\_Serenissimus\_. Marvell was not a schoolmaster's son, an old scholar of

Trinity, and Milton's assistant as Latin Secretary for nothing. He

prepared a reply which, as it does not lack humour, has a distinct

literary flavour, and is all that came of the embassy, may here be given

at length:--

"I reply, saith he, that I sent no such paper into the

Embassy-office, but upon the desire of his Tzarskoy Majesty's

Councellor Evan Offonassy Pronchissof, I delivered it to him, not

being a paper of State, nor written in the English Language wherein I

treat, nor put into the hands of the near Boyars and Councellors of

his Tzarskoy majesty, nor subscribed by my self, nor translated into

Russe by my Interpreter, but only as a piece of curiosity, which is

now restored me, and I am possessed of it; so that herein his

Tzarskoy majestie's near Boyars and Councellors are doubtless ill

grounded. But again I say concerning the value of the words

\_Illustrissimus\_ and \_Serenissimus\_ compared together, seeing we must

here from affaires of State, fall into Grammatical contests

concerning the Latin tongue; that the word \_Serenus\_ signifieth

nothing but still and calm; and, therefore, though of late times

adopted into the Titles of great Princes by reason of that benigne

tranquility which properly dwells in the majestick countenance of

great Princes, and that venerable stillness of all the Attendants

that surround them, of which I have seen an excellent example when I

was in the presence of his Tzarskoy majesty, yet is more properly

used concerning the calmness of the weather, or season. So that even

the night is elegantly called \_Serena\_ by the best Authors, Cicero in

Arato 12, Lucretius i. l. 29. '\_Serena nox\_'; and upon perusing again

what I have writ in this paper, I finde that I have out of the

customariness of that expression my self near the beginning said, And

that most serene night, &c. Whereas on the contrary \_Illustris\_ in

its proper derivation and signification expresseth that which is all

resplendent, lightsome, and glorious, as well without as within, and

that not with a secondary but with a primitive and original light.

For if the Sun be, as he is, the first fountain of light, and Poets

in their expressions (as is well known) are higher by much than those

that write in Prose, what else is it when Ovid in the 2. of the

Metamorphoses saith of Phoebus speaking with Phaëthon, \_Qui terque

quaterque concutiens Illustre caput\_, and the Latin Orators, as

Pliny, Ep. 139, when they would say the highest thing that can be

exprest upon any subject, word it thus, \_Nihil Illustrius dicere

possum\_. So that hereby may appear to his Tzarskoy Majestie's near

Boyars and Counsellors what diminution there is to his Tzarskoy

Majesty (which farr be it from my thoughts) if I appropriate

\_Serenissimus\_ to my Master and \_Illustrissimus\_ to Him than which

\_nihil dici potest Illustrius\_. But because this was in the time of

the purity of the Latin tongue, when the word \_Serenus\_ was never

used in the Title of any Prince or Person, I shall go on to deale

with the utmost candor, forasmuch as in this Nation the nicety of

that most eloquent language is not so perfectly understood, which

gives occasion to these mistakes. I confess therefore that indeed in

the declination of the Latin tongue, and when there scarce could be

found out words enough to supply the modern ambition of Titles,

Serenissimus as several other words hath grown in fashion for a

compellation of lesser as well as greater Princes, and yet befits

both the one and the other. So there is \_Serenissima Respublica

Veneta\_, \_Serenitates Electoriæ\_, \_Serenitates Regiæ\_, even as the

word Highness or \_Celsitudo\_ befits a Duke, a Prince, a King, or an

Emperour, adjoyning to it the respective quality, and so the word

\_Illustris\_. But suppose it were by modern use (which I deny)

depressed from the undoubted superiority that it had of \_Serenus\_ in

the purest antiquity, yet being added in the transcendent degree to

the word Emperour, the highest denomination that a Prince is capable

of, it becomes of the same value. So that to interpret

\_Illustrissimus\_ unto diminution is to find a positive in a

superlative, and in the most orient light to seek for darkness. And I

would, seeing the near Boyars and Counsellors of his Tzarskoy Majesty

are pleased to mention the Title given to his Tzarskoy Majesty by his

Cesarian Majesty, gladly be satisfied by them, whether ever any

Cesarian Majesty writ formerly hither in High-Dutch, and whether then

they styled his Tzarskoy Majesty Durchluchtigste which is the same

with \_Illustrissimus\_, and which I believe the Cæsar hath kept for

Himself. But to cut short, his Royal Majesty hath used the word to

his Tzarskoy Majesty in his Letter, not out of imitation of others,

although even in the Dutch Letter to his Tzarskoy Majesty of 16 June

1663, I finde Durchlauchtigste the same (as I said) with

\_Illustrissimus\_, but out of the constant use of his own Court,

further joyning before it Most High, Most Potent, and adding after it

Great Lord Emperour, which is an higher Title than any Prince in the

World gives his Tzarskoy Majesty, and as high a Title of honour as

can be given to any thing under the Divinity. For the King my Master

who possesses as considerable Dominions, and by as high and

self-dependent a right as any Prince in the Universe, yet contenting

Himself with the easiest Titles, and satisfying Himself in the

essence of things, doth most willingly give to other Princes the

Titles which are appropriated to them, but to the Tzarskoy Majesties

of Russia his Royal Ancestors, and to his present Tzarskoy Majesty

his Royal Majesty himself, have usually and do gladly pay Titles even

to superfluity out of meer kindness. And upon that reason He added

the word most Illustrious, and so did I use it in the Latin of my

speech. Yet, that You may find I did not out of any criticisme of

honor, but for distinction sake use it as I did, You may see in one

place of the same speech \_Serenitas\_, speaking of his Tzarskoy

Majesty: and I would have used \_Serenissimus\_ an hundred times

concerning his Tzarskoy Majesty, had I thought it would have pleased

Him better. And I dare promise You that his Majesty will upon the

first information from me stile him \_Serenissimus\_, and I

(notwithstanding what I have said) shall make little difficulty of

altering the word in that speech, and of delivering it so to You,

with that protestation that I have not in using that word

\_Illustrissimus\_ erred nor used any diminution (which God forbid) to

his Tzarskoy Majesty, but on the contrary after the example of the

King my Master intended and shewed him all possible honor. And so God

grant all happiness to His most high, most Potent, most Illustrious,

and most Serene Tzarskoy Majesty, and that the friendship may daily

increase betwixt His said Majesty and his most Serene Majesty my

Master."

On the 19th of February the Tsar invited Lord Carlisle and his suite to

a dinner, which, beginning at two o'clock, lasted till eleven, when it

was prematurely broken up by the Tsar's nose beginning to bleed. Five

hundred dishes were served, but there were no napkins, and the

table-cloths only just covered the boards. There were Spanish wines,

white and red mead, Puaz and strong waters. The English ambassador was

not properly placed at table, not being anywhere near the Tsar, and his

faithful suite shared his resentment. Time went on, but no diplomatic

progress was made. The Tsar would not renew the privileges of the

British merchants; Easter was spent in Moscow, May also--and still

nothing was done. Carlisle, in a huff, determined to go away, and,

somewhat to the distress of his followers, refused to accept the costly

sables sent by the Tzar, not only to the ambassador, Lady Carlisle, and

Lord Morpeth, but to the secretaries and others. The Tzar thereupon

returned the plate which our king had sent him, which plate Lord

Carlisle seems to have appropriated, no doubt with diplomatic

correctness, as his perquisite in lieu of the sables; but the suite got

nothing.

The embassy left Moscow on the 24th of June for Novgorod and Riga, and

after visiting Stockholm and Copenhagen, Lord Carlisle and Marvell

reached London on the 30th of January 1665.

During Marvell's absence war had been declared with the Dutch. It was

never difficult to go to war with the Dutch. The king was always in want

of money, and as no proper check existed over war supplies, he took what

he wanted out of them. The merchants on 'Change desired war, saying that

the trade of the world was too little for both England and Holland, and

that one or the other "must down." The English manufacturers, who felt

the sting of their Dutch competitors, were always in favour of war. Then

the growing insolence of the Dutch in the Indies was not to be borne.

Stories were circulated how the Hollanders had proclaimed themselves

"Lords of the Southern Seas," and meant to deny English ships the right

of entry in that quarter of the globe. A baronet called on Pepys and

pulled out of his pocket letters from the East Indies, full of sad tales

of Englishmen having been actually thrashed inside their own factory at

Surat by swaggering Dutchmen, who had insulted the flag of St. George,

and swore they were going to be the masters "out there." Pepys, who

knew a little about the state of the royal navy, listened sorrowfully

and was content to hope that the war would not come until "we are more

ready for it."

In the House of Commons the prudent men were against the war, and were

at once accused of being in the pay of the Dutch. The king's friends

were all for the war, and nobody doubted that some of the money voted

for it would find its way into their pockets, or at all events that

pensions would reward their fidelity. A third group who favoured the war

were supposed to do so because their disloyalty and fanaticism always

disposed them to trouble the waters in which they wished to fish.

The war began in November 1664, and on the 24th of that month the king

opened Parliament and demanded money. He got it. Clarendon describes how

Sir Robert Paston from Norfolk, a back-bench man, "who was no frequent

speaker, but delivered what he had a mind to say very clearly," stood up

and proposed a grant of two and a half million pounds, to be spread over

three years. So huge a sum took the House by surprise. Nobody spoke;

"they sat in amazement." Somebody at last found his voice and moved a

much smaller sum, but no one seconded him. Sir Robert Paston ultimately

found supporters, "no man who had any relation to the Court speaking a

word." The Speaker put Sir Robert Paston's motion as the question, "and

the affirmative made a good sound, and very few gave their negative

aloud." But Clarendon adds, "it was notorious very many sat silent."

The war was not in its early stages unpopular, being for the control of

the sea, for the right of search, for the fishing trade, for mastery of

the "gorgeous East." The Admiralty had been busy, and a hundred

frigates, well gunned, were ready for the blue water by February 1665.

The Duke of York, who took the command, was a keen sailor, though his

unhappy notions as to patronage, and its exercise, were fatal to an

efficient service. On the 3rd of June the duke had his one victory; it

was off the roadstead of Harwich, and the roar of his artillery was

heard in Westminster. It was a fierce fight; the king's great friend,

Charles Berkeley, just made a peer and about to be made a duke, Lord

Muskerry and young Richard Boyle, all on the duke's ship the \_Royal

Charles\_, were killed by one shot, their blood and brains flying in the

duke's face. The Earls of Marlborough and Portland were killed. The

gallant Lawson, who rose from the ranks in Cromwell's time, an

Anabaptist and a Republican, but still in high command, received on

board his ship, the \_Royal Oak\_, a fatal wound. On the other side the

Dutch admiral, Opdam, was blown into the air with his ship and crew. The

Dutch fleet was scattered, and fled, after a loss estimated at

twenty-four ships and eight thousand men killed and wounded; England

lost no ship and but six hundred men.

The victory was not followed up. Some say the duke lost nerve. Tromp was

allowed to lead a great part of the fleet away in safety, and when the

great De Ruyter was recalled from the West Indies he was soon able to

assume the command of a formidable number of fighting craft.

In less than ten days after this great engagement the plague appeared in

London, a terrible and a solemnising affliction, lasting the rest of the

year. It was at its worst in September, when in one week more than seven

thousand died of it. The total number of its dead is estimated at

sixty-eight thousand five hundred and ninety-six.

On account of the plague Parliament was summoned to meet at Oxford in

October 1665.

Marvell must have reached Oxford in good time, for the Admission Book of

the Bodleian records his visit to the library on the last day of

September. His first letter from Oxford is dated 15th October, and in it

he tells the corporation that the House, "upon His Majesty's

representation of the necessity of further supplies in reference to the

Dutch War and probability of the French embracing their interests, hath

voted the King £1,250,000 additional to be levied in two years." The

king, who was the frankest of mortals in speech, though false as Belial

in action, told the House that he had already spent all the money

previously voted and must have more, especially if France was to prefer

the friendship of Holland to his. Amidst loud acclamations the money was

voted. The French ambassadors, who were in Oxford, saw for themselves

the temper of Parliament.

Notwithstanding the terrible plight of the capital, Oxford was gaiety

itself. The king was accompanied by his consort, who then was hopeful of

an heir, and also by Lady Castlemaine and Miss Stewart. Lady Castlemaine

did not escape the shaft of University wit, for a stinging couplet was

set up during the night on her door, for the discovery of the authorship

of which a reward of £1000 was offered. It may very well have been

Marvell's.[116:1]

The Duke of Monmouth gave a ball to the queen and her ladies, where,

after the queen's retirement, "Mrs. Stewart was extraordinary merry,"

and sang "French songs with great skill."[116:2]

Ten Acts of Parliament received the royal assent at Oxford, of which

but one is still remembered in certain quarters--the Five Mile Act,

which Marvell briefly describes as an Act "for debarring ejected

Nonconformists from living in or near Corporations (where they had

formerly pursued their callings), unless taking the new Oath and

Declaration." Parliament was prorogued at the end of October.

Another visitation of Providence was soon to befall the capital. On

Sunday morning, the 2nd of September, Pepys was aroused by one of his

maid-servants at 3 A.M. to look at a fire. He could not make out much

about it and went to bed again, but when he rose at seven o'clock it was

still burning, so he left his house and made his way to the Tower, from

whence he saw London Bridge aflame, and describes how the poor pigeons,

loth to leave their homes, fluttered about the balconies, until with

singed wings they fell into the flames. After gazing his fill he went to

Whitehall and had an interview with the king, who at once ordered his

barge and proceeded downstream to his burning City, and to the

assistance of a distracted Lord Mayor.

The fire raged four days, and made an end of old London, a picturesque

and even beautiful City. St. Paul's, both the church and the school, the

Royal Exchange, Ludgate, Fleet Street as far as the Inner Temple, were

by the 7th of the month smoking ruins. Four hundred streets, eighty-nine

churches (just a church an hour, so the curious noted), warehouses

unnumbered with all their varied contents, whole editions of books,

valuable and the reverse of valuable, were wiped out of existence. Rents

to an enormous amount ceased to be represented any longer by the houses

that paid them. How was the king to get his chimney-money? How were

merchants to meet their obligations? The parsons on Sunday, the 9th of

September, ought to have had no difficulty in finding texts for their

sermons. Pepys went to church twice, but without edification, and

certainly Dean Harding, whom he heard complaining in the evening "that

the City had been reduced from a folio to a duo decimo," hardly rose to

the dignity of the occasion.

Strange to say, not a life was actually lost in the fire,[118:1] though

some old Londoners (among them Edmund Calamy's grandfather) died of

grief, and others (and among them Shirley the dramatist and his wife)

from exposure and exhaustion. One hysterical foreigner, who insisted

that he lit the flame, was executed, though no sensible man believed

what he said. It was long the boast of the merchants of London that no

one of their number "broke" in consequence of the great fire.

Unhappily the belief was widespread, as that "tall bully," the monument,

long testified, that the fire was the work of the Roman Catholics, and

aliens, suspected of belonging to our old religion, found it dangerous

to walk the streets whilst the embers still smoked, which they continued

to do for six months.

The meeting of Parliament was a little delayed in consequence of this

national disaster, and when it did meet at the end of the month, Marvell

reports the appointment of two Committees, one "about the Fire of

London," and the other "to receive informations of the insolence of the

Popish priests and Jesuits, and of the increase of Popery." The latter

Committee almost at once reported to the House, to quote from Marvell's

letter of the 27th of October, "that his Majesty be desired to issue out

his proclamation that all Popish priests and Jesuits, except such as not

being natural-born subjects, or belong to the Queen Mother and Queen

Consort, be banished in thirty days or else the law be executed upon

them, that all Justices of Peace and officers concerned put the laws in

execution against Papists and suspected Papists in order to their

execution, and that all officers, civil or military, not taking the

Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance within twenty days be displaced."

In a very real sense the great fire of London continued to smoke for

many a weary year, and to fill the air with black suspicions and civil

discord.

Parliament had not sat long before it was discovered that a change had

taken place in its temper and spirit. The plague and the fire had

contributed to this change. The London clergy had not exhibited great

devotion during the former affliction. Many of the incumbents deserted

their flocks, and their empty pulpits had been filled by zealots, who

preached "Woe unto Jerusalem." The profligacy of the Court, and the

general decay of manners, when added to the severity of the legislation

against the Nonconformists, gave the ejected clergy opportunities for a

renewal of their spiritual ministrations, and as usual their labours,

\_pro salute animarum\_, aroused political dissatisfaction. Some of the

more outrageous supporters of the royal prerogative, the renegade May

among them, professed to see in the fire a punishment upon the spirit of

freedom, for which the City had once been famous, and urged the king not

to suffer it to be rebuilt again "to be a bit in his mouth and a bridle

upon his neck, but to keep it all open," and that his troops might enter

whenever he thought necessary, "there being no other way to govern that

rude multitude but by force."

Rabid nonsense of this kind had no weight with the king, who never

showed his native good sense more conspicuously than in the pains he

took over the rebuilding of London; but none the less it had its effect

in getting rid once and for ever of that spirit of excessive (besotted

is Hallam's word) loyalty which had characterised the Restoration.

The king, of course, wanted money, nor was Parliament disposed to refuse

it, we being still at war with Holland; but to the horror of that

elderly pedant, Lord Clarendon, the Commons passed a Bill appointing a

commission of members of both Houses "to inspect"--I am now quoting

Marvell--"and examine thoroughly the former expense of the £2,800,000,

of the £1,250,000 of the Militia money, of the prize goods, etc." In an

earlier letter Marvell attributes the new temper of Parliament, "not to

any want of ardour to supply the public necessities, but out of our

House's sense also of the burden to be laid upon the subject." Clarendon

was so alarmed that he advised a dissolution. Charles was alarmed, too,

knowing well that both Carteret, the Treasurer of the Navy, and Lord

Ashley, the Treasurer of the Prize Money, issued out many sums upon the

king's warrant, for which no accounts could be produced, but he was

still more frightened of a new Parliament. In the present Parliament he

had, so Clarendon admits, "a hundred members of his own menial servants

and their near relations." The bishops were also against a dissolution,

dreading the return of Presbyterian members, so Clarendon's advice was

not followed, and the king very reluctantly consented to the commission,

about which Pepys has so much to say. It did not get appointed at once,

but when it did Pepys rejoices greatly that its secretary, Mr. Jessopp,

was "an old fashioned Cromwell man"; in other words, both honest and

efficient.

The shrewd Secretary of the Navy Office here puts his finger on the

real plague-spot of the Restoration. Our Puritan historians write rather

loosely about "the floodgates of dissipation," etc., having been flung

open by that event as if it had wrought a sudden change in human nature.

Mr. Pepys, whose frank Diary begins during the Protectorate, underwent

no such change. He was just the same sinner under Cromwell as he was

under Charles. Sober, grave divines may be found deploring the growing

profligacy of the times long before the 29th of May 1660. An era of

extravagance was evidently to be expected. No doubt the king's return

assisted it. No country could be anything but the worse for having

Charles the Second as its "most religious King." The Restoration of the

Stuarts was the best "excuse for a glass" ever offered to an Englishman.

He availed himself of it with even more than his accustomed freedom. But

it cannot be said that the king's debauchery was ever approved of even

in London. Both the mercurial Pepys and the grave Evelyn alike deplore

it. The misfortune clearly attributable to the king's return was the

substitution of a corrupt, inefficient, and unpatriotic administration

for the old-fashioned servants of the public whom Cromwell had gathered

round him.

Parliament was busy with new taxes. In November 1666 Marvell writes:--

"The Committee has prepared these votes. All persons shall pay one

shilling per poll, all aliens two, all Nonconformists and papists

two, all servants one shilling in the pound of their wages, all

personal estates shall pay for so much as is not already taxed by the

land-tax, after twenty shillings in the hundred. Cattle, corn, and

household furniture shall be excepted, and all such stock-in-trade as

is already taxed by the land-tax, but the rest to be liable."

Stringent work! Later on we read:--

"Three shillings in the pound for all offices and public employments,

except military; lawyers and physicians proportionate to their

practice."

Here is the income-tax long before Mr. Pitt.

The House of Lords, trembling on the verge of a breach of privilege,

altered this Poll Bill. Marvell writes in January 1667:--

"We have not advanced much this week; the alterations of the Lords

upon the Poll Bill have kept us busy. We have disagreed in most.

Aliens we adhere to pay double. Nonconformists we agree with them

\_not\_ to pay double (126 to 91), to allow no exemptions from patents

to free from paying, we adhere; and we also rejected a long clause

whereby they as well as the Commoners pretend distinctly to give to

the King, and to-day we send up our reasons."

The Lords agreed, and the Bill passed.

Ireland supplied a very stormy measure. I am afraid Marvell was on the

wrong side, but owing to his reserve I am not sure. An Irish Cattle Bill

was a measure very popular in the House of Commons, its object being to

prevent Ireland from sending over live beasts to be fattened, killed,

and consumed in England. You can read all about it in Clarendon's \_Life\_

(vol. iii. pp. 704-720, 739), and think you are reading about Canadian

cattle to-day. The breeders (in a majority) were on one side, and the

owners of pasture-land on the other. The breeders said the Irish cattle

were bred in Ireland for nothing and transported for little, that they

undersold the English-bred cattle, and consequently "the breed of Cattle

in the Kingdom was totally given over," and rents fell. Other members

contended in their places "that their countries had no land bad enough

to breed, and that their traffic consisted in buying lean cattle and

making them fat, and upon this they paid their rent." Nobody, except the

king, gave a thought to Ireland. He, in this not unworthy of his great

Tudor predecessor, Henry the Eighth, declared he was King of Ireland no

less than of England, and would do nothing to injure one portion of his

dominions for the benefit of another. But as usual he gave way, being in

great straits for money. The House of Lords was better disposed towards

Ireland than the House of Commons, but they too yielded to selfish

clamour, and the Bill, which had excited great fury, became law, and

proved ineffective, owing (as was alleged) to that corruption which

restrictions on trade seem to have the trick of breeding.[123:1]

It is always agreeable to be reminded that however large a part of our

history is composed of the record of passion, greed, delusion, and

stupidity, yet common-sense, the love of order and of justice (in

matters of business), have usually been the predominant factors in our

national life, despite priest, merchant, and party.

Nowhere is this better illustrated than by two measures to which Marvell

refers as Bills "for the prevention of lawsuits between landlord and

tenant" and for "the Rebuilding of London." Both these Bills became law

in February 1668, within five months of the great catastrophe that was

their occasion. Two more sensible, well-planned, well-drawn, courageous

measures were never piloted through both Houses. King, Lords and

Commons, all put their heads together to face a great emergency and to

provide an immediate remedy.

The Bill to prevent lawsuits is best appreciated if we read its

preamble:--

"Whereas the greatest part of the houses in the City of London having

been burnt by the dreadful and dismal fire which happened in

September last, many of the Tenants, under-tenants, and late

occupiers are liable unto suits and actions to compel them to repair

and to rebuild the same, and to pay their rents as if the same had

not been burnt, and are not relievable therefor in any ordinary

course of law; and great differences are likely to arise concerning

the Repairs and rebuilding the said houses, and payment of rents

which, if they should not be determined with speed and without

charge, would much obstruct the rebuilding of the s^d City. And for

that it is just that everyone concerned should bear a proportionate

share of this loss according to their several interests wherein in

respect of the multitude of cases, varying in their circumstances, no

certain general rule can be prescribed."

After this recital it was enacted that the judges of the King's Bench

and Common Pleas and the Barons of the Exchequer, or any three or more

of them, should form a Court of Record to hear and determine every

possible dispute or difference arising out of the great fire, whether

relating to liability to repair, and rebuild, or to pay rent, or for

arrears of rent (other than arrears which had accrued due before the 1st

of September) or otherwise howsoever. The proceedings were to be by

summary process, \_sine forma et figura judicii\_ and without court fees.

The judges were to be bound by no rules either of law or equity, and

might call for what evidence they chose, including that of the

interested parties, and try the case as it best could be tried. Their

orders were to be final and not (save in a single excepted case) subject

to any appeal. All persons in remainder and reversion were to be bound

by these orders, although infants, married women, idiots, beyond seas,

or under any other disability. A special power was given to order the

surrender of existing leases, and to grant new ones for terms not

exceeding forty years. The judges gave their services for nothing, and,

for once, released from all their own trammels, set to work to do

substantial justice between landlord and tenant, personalty and realty,

the life interest and the remainder, covenantor and covenantee, after a

fashion which excited the admiration and won the confidence of the whole

City. The ordinary suitor, still left exposed to the pitfalls of the

special pleader, the risks (owing to the exclusion of evidence) of a

non-suit and the costly cumbersomeness of the Court of Chancery, must

often have wished that the subject-matter of his litigation had perished

in the flames of the great fire.

This court sat in Clifford's Inn, and was usually presided over by Sir

Matthew Hale, whose skill both as an arithmetician and an architect

completed his fitness for so responsible a position. Within a year the

work was done.

The Act for rebuilding the City is an elaborate measure of more than

forty clauses, and aimed at securing "the regularity, safety,

conveniency and beauty" of the new London that was to be. The buildings

were classified according to their position and character, and had to

maintain a prescribed level of quality. The materials to be employed

were named. New streets were to be of certain widths, and so on. This is

the Act that contains the first Betterment Clause: "And forasmuch as the

Houses now remaining and to be rebuilt will receive more or less

advantage in the value of the rents by the liberty of air and free

recourse for trade," it was enacted that a jury might be sworn to

assess upon the owners and others interested of and in the said houses,

such sum or sums of money with respect of their several interests "in

consideration of such improvement and melioration as in reason and good

conscience they shall think fit."

It takes nothing short of a catastrophe to suspend in England, even for

a few months, those rules of evidence that often make justice

impossible, and those rights of landlords which for centuries have

appropriated public expenditure to private gain.[126:1]

The moneys required to pay for the land taken under the Act to widen

streets and to accomplish the other authorised works were raised, as

Marvell informs his constituents, by a tax of twelve pence on every

chaldron of coal coming as far as Gravesend. Few taxes have had so

useful and so harmless a life.

All this time the Dutch War was going on, but the heart was out of it.

Nothing in England is so popular as war, except the peace that comes

after it. The king now wanted peace, and the merchants on 'Change had

glutted their ire. In February 1667 the king told the Houses of

Parliament that all "sober" men would be glad to see peace. Unluckily,

it seems to have been assumed that we could have peace whenever we

wanted it, and the fatal error was committed of at once "laying up" the

first-and second-rate ships. It thus came about that, whilst still at

war, England had no fleet to put to sea. It did not at first seem likely

that the overtures for peace would present much difficulty, when

suddenly arose the question of Poleroone. It is amazing how few

Englishmen have ever heard of Poleroone, or even of the Banda Islands,

of which group it is one. Indeed, a more insignificant speck in the

ocean it would be hard to find. To discover it on an atlas is no easy

task. Yet, but for Poleroone, the Dutch would never have taken

Sheerness, or broken the chain at Gillingham, or carried away with them

to the Texel the proud vessel that had brought back Charles the Second

to an excited population.

Poleroone is a small nutmeg-growing island in the Indian Archipelago,

not far from the eastern extremity of New Guinea. King James the First

imagined he had some right to it, and, at any rate, Oliver Cromwell,

when he made peace with the Dutch, made a great point of Poleroone. Have

it he would for the East India Company. The Dutch objected, but gave

way, and by an article in the treaty with Oliver bound themselves to

give up Poleroone to the Company. All, in fact, that they did do, was to

cut down the nutmeg trees, and so make the island good for nothing for

many a long year. Physical possession was never taken. For some

unaccountable reason Charles, who had sold Oliver's Dunkirk to the

French for half a million of money, stuck out for Poleroone. What

Cromwell had taken he was not going to give up! On the other hand,

neither would the Dutch give up Poleroone. This dispute, about a barren

island, delayed the settlement of the peace preliminaries; but

eventually the British plenipotentiaries did get out to Breda, in May

1667. Our sanguine king expected an immediate cessation of hostilities,

and that his unpreparedness would thus be huddled up. All of a sudden,

at the beginning of June, De Ruyter led out his fleet, and with a fair

wind behind him stood for the Thames. All is fair in war. England was

caught napping. The doleful history reads like that of a sudden

piratical onslaught, and reveals the fatal inefficiency of the

administration. Sheerness was practically defenceless. "There were a

Company or two of very good soldiers there under excellent officers, but

the fortifications were so weak and unfinished, and all other provisions

so entirely wanting, that the Dutch Fleet no sooner approached within a

distance but with their cannon they beat all the works flat and drove

all the men from the ground, which, as soon as they had done with their

Boats, they landed men and seemed resolved to fortify and keep

it."[128:1] Capture of Sheerness by the Dutch! No need of a halfpenny

press to spread this news through a London still in ruins. What made

matters worse, the sailors were more than half-mutinous, being paid with

tickets not readily convertible into cash. Many of them actually

deserted to the Dutch fleet, which made its leisurely way upstream,

passing Upnor Castle, which had guns but no ammunition, till it was

almost within reach of Chatham, where lay the royal navy. General Monk,

who was the handy man of the period, and whose authority was always

invoked when the king he had restored was in greater trouble than usual,

had hastily collected what troops he could muster, and marched to

protect Chatham; but what were wanted were ships, not troops. The Dutch

had no mind to land, and after firing three warships (the \_Royal James\_,

the \_Royal Oak\_, and the \_London\_), and capturing the \_Royal Charles\_,

"they thought they had done enough, and made use of the ebb to carry

them back again."[129:1] These events occupied the tenth to the

fifteenth of June, and for the impression they produced on Marvell's

mind we are not dependent upon his restrained letters to his

constituents, but can turn to his longest rhymed satire, which is

believed to have been first printed, anonymously of course, as a

broadsheet in August 1667.

This poem is called \_The Last Instructions to a Painter about the Dutch

Wars\_, 1667. The title was derived from Waller's panegyric poem on the

occasion of the Duke of York's victory over the Dutch on the 3rd of June

1665, when Opdam, the Dutch admiral, was blown up with his ship.[129:2]

Sir John Denham, a brother satirist of Marvell's, and with as good an

excuse for hating the Duke of York as this world affords, had seized

upon the same idea and published four satirical poems on these same

Dutch Wars, entitled \_Directions to a Painter\_ (see \_Poems on Affairs of

State\_, 1703, vol. i.).

Marvell's satire, which runs to 900 lines, is essentially a House of

Commons poem, and could only have been written by a member. It is

intensely "lobbyish" and "occasional." To understand its allusions, to

appreciate its "pain-giving" capacity to the full, is now impossible.

Still, the reader of Clarendon's \_Life\_, Pepys's \_Diary\_, and Burnet's

\_History\_, to name only popular books, will have no difficulty in

entering into the spirit of the performance. As a poem it is rough in

execution, careless, breathless. A rugged style was then in vogue. Even

Milton could write his lines to the Cambridge Carrier somewhat in this

manner. Marvell has nothing of the magnificence of Dryden, or of the

finished malice of Pope. He plays the part, and it is sincerely played,

of the old, honest member of Parliament who loves his country and hates

rogues and speaks right out, calling spades spades and the king's women

what they ought to be called. He is conversational, and therefore

coarse. The whole history of the events that resulted in the national

disgrace is told.

"The close cabal marked how the Navy eats

And thought all lost that goes not to the cheats;

So therefore secretly for peace decrees,

Yet for a War the Parliament would squeeze,

And fix to the revenue such a sum

Should Goodricke silence and make Paston dumb.

...

Meantime through all the yards their orders were

To lay the ships up, cease the keels begun.

The timber rots, the useless axe does rust,

The unpractised saw lies buried in the dust,

The busy hammer sleeps, the ropes untwine."

Parliament is got rid of to the joy of Clarendon.

"Blither than hare that hath escaped the hounds,

The house prorogued, the chancellor rebounds.

What frosts to fruits, what arsenic to the rat,

What to fair Denham mortal chocolate,[130:1]

What an account to Carteret, that and more,

A parliament is to the chancellor."

De Ruyter makes his appearance, and Monk

"in his shirt against the Dutch is pressed.

Often, dear Painter, have I sat and mused

Why he should be on all adventures used.

Whether his valour they so much admire,

Or that for cowardice they all retire,

As heaven in storms, they call, in gusts of state,

On Monk and Parliament--yet both do hate.

...

Ruyter, the while, that had our ocean curbed,

Sailed now amongst our rivers undisturbed;

Surveyed their crystal streams and banks so green,

And beauties ere this never naked seen."

His flags fly from the topmasts of his ships, but where is the enemy?

"So up the stream the Belgic navy glides,

And at Sheerness unloads its stormy sides."

Chatham was but a few miles further up.

"There our sick ships unrigged in summer lay,

Like moulting fowl, a weak and easy prey,

For whose strong bulk earth scarce could timber find,

The ocean water, or the heavens wind.

Those oaken giants of the ancient race,

That ruled all seas, and did our channel grace;

The conscious stag, though once the forest's dread,

Flies to the wood, and hides his armless head.

Ruyter forthwith a squadron doth untack;

They sail securely through the river's track.

An English pilot too (O, shame! O, sin!)

Cheated of 's pay, was he that showed them in."

The chain at Gillingham is broken, to the dismay of Monk, who

"from the bank that dismal sight does view;

Our feather gallants, who came down that day

To be spectators safe of the new play,

Leave him alone when first they hear the gun,

(Cornbury,[131:1] the fleetest) and to London run.

Our seamen, whom no danger's shape could fright,

Unpaid, refuse to mount their ships for spite,

Or to their fellows swim on board the Dutch,

Who show the tempting metal in their clutch."

Upnor Castle avails nought.

"And Upnor's Castle's ill-deserted wall

Now needful does for ammunition call."

The \_Royal Charles\_ is captured before Monk's face.

"That sacred Keel that had, as he, restored

Its excited sovereign on its happy board,

Now a cheap spoil and the mean victor's slave

Taught the Dutch colours from its top to wave."

Horrors accumulate.

"Each doleful day still with fresh loss returns,

The loyal \_London\_ now a third time burns,

And the true \_Royal Oak\_ and \_Royal James\_,

Allied in fate, increase with theirs her flames.

Of all our navy none shall now survive,

But that the ships themselves were taught to dive,

And the kind river in its creek them hides.

Freighting their pierced keels with oozy tides."

The situation was indeed serious enough. One wiseacre in command in

London declared his belief that the Tower was no longer "tenable."

"And were not Ruyter's maw with ravage cloyed,

Even London's ashes had been then destroyed."

But the Dutch admiral returns the way he came.

"Now nothing more at Chatham's left to burn,

The Holland squadron leisurely return;

And spite of Ruperts and of Albemarles,

To Ruyter's triumph led the captive \_Charles\_.

The pleasing sight he often does prolong,

Her mast erect, tough cordage, timber strong,

Her moving shape, all these he doth survey,

And all admires, but most his easy prey.

The seamen search her all within, without;

Viewing her strength, they yet their conquest doubt;

Then with rude shouts, secure, the air they vex,

With gamesome joy insulting on her decks.

Such the feared Hebrew captive, blinded, shorn,

Was led about in sport, the public scorn."

The poet then indulges himself in an emotional outburst.

"Black day, accursed! on thee let no man hail

Out of the port, or dare to hoist a sail,

Or row a boat in thy unlucky hour!

Thee, the year's monster, let thy dam devour,

And constant Time, to keep his course yet right,

Fill up thy space with a redoubled night.

When agèd Thames was bound with fetters base,

And Medway chaste ravished before his face,

And their dear offspring murdered in their sight,

Thou and thy fellows saw the odious light.

Sad change, since first that happy pair was wed,

When all the rivers graced their nuptial bed;

And father Neptune promised to resign

His empire old to their immortal line;

Now with vain grief their vainer hopes they rue,

Themselves dishonoured, and the gods untrue;

And to each other, helpless couple, moan,

As the sad tortoise for the sea does groan:

But most they for their darling Charles complain,

And were it burned, yet less would be their pain.

To see that fatal pledge of sea-command,

Now in the ravisher De Ruyter's hand,

The Thames roared, swooning Medway turned her tide,

And were they mortal, both for grief had died."

A scapegoat had, of course, to be at once provided. He was found in Mr.

Commissioner Pett, the most skilful shipbuilder of the age.

"After this loss, to relish discontent,

Some one must be accused by Parliament.

All our miscarriages on Pett must fall,

His name alone seems fit to answer all.

Whose counsel first did this mad war beget?

Who all commands sold through the navy? Pett.

Who would not follow when the Dutch were beat?

Who treated out the time at Bergen? Pett.

Who the Dutch fleet with storms disabled met?

And, rifling prizes, them neglect? Pett.

Who with false news prevented the Gazette?

The fleet divided? writ for Rupert? Pett.

Who all our seamen cheated of their debt,

And all our prizes who did swallow? Pett.

Who did advise no navy out to set?

And who the forts left unprepared? Pett.

Who to supply with powder did forget

Languard, Sheerness, Gravesend, and Upnor? Pett.

Who all our ships exposed in Chatham net?

Who should it be but the fanatic Pett?"

This outburst can hardly fail to remind the reader of a famous outburst

of Mr. Micawber's on the subject of Uriah Heep.

The satire concludes with the picture of the king in the dead shades of

night, alone in his room, startled by loud noises of cannons, trumpets,

and drums, and then visited by the ghost of his father.

"And ghastly Charles, turning his collar low,

The purple thread about his neck does show."

The pensive king resolves on Clarendon's disgrace, and on rising next

morning seeks out Lady Castlemaine, Bennet, and Coventry, who give him

the same advice. He knows them all three to be false to one another and

to him, but is for the moment content to do what they wish.

I have omitted, in this review of a long poem, the earlier lines which

deal with the composition of the House of Commons. All its parties are

described, one after another--the old courtiers, the pension-hunters,

the king's procurers, then almost a department of State.

"Then the Procurers under Prodgers filed

Gentlest of men, and his lieutenant mild

Bronkard, love's squire; through all the field arrayed,

No troop was better clad, nor so well paid."

Clarendon had his friends, soon sorely to be needed, and after them,

"Next to the lawyers, sordid band, appear,

Finch in the front and Thurland in the rear."

Some thirty-three members are mentioned by their names and habits. The

Speaker, Sir Edward Turner, is somewhat unkindly described. Honest men

are usually to be found everywhere, and they existed even in Charles the

Second's pensionary Parliament:--

"Nor could all these the field have long maintained

But for the unknown reserve that still remained;

A gross of English gentry, nobly born,

Of clear estates, and to no faction sworn,

Dear lovers of their king, and death to meet

For country's cause, that glorious thing and sweet;

To speak not forward, but in action brave,

In giving generous, but in council grave;

Candidly credulous for once, nay twice;

But sure the devil cannot cheat them thrice."

No member of Parliament's library is complete without Marvell, who did

not forget the House of Commons smoking-room:--

"Even iron Strangways chafing yet gave back

Spent with fatigue, to breathe awhile tabac."

Charles hastened to make peace with Holland. He was not the man to

insist on vengeance or to mourn over lost prestige. De Ruyter had gone

after suffering repulses at Portsmouth, Plymouth, and Torbay. Peace was

concluded at Breda on the 21st of July. We gave up Poleroone. \_Per

contra\_ we gained a more famous place, New Amsterdam, rechristened New

York in honour of the duke. All prisoners were to be liberated, and the

Dutch, despite Sheerness and the \_Royal Charles\_, agreed to lower their

flag to all British ships of war.

The fall, long pending, of Clarendon immediately followed the peace.

Men's tempers were furious or sullen. Hyde had no more bitter, no more

cruel enemy than Marvell. Why this was has not been discovered, but

there was nothing too bad for Marvell not to believe of any member of

Clarendon's household. All the scandals, and they were many and

horrible, relating to Clarendon and his daughter, the Duchess of York,

find a place in Marvell's satires and epigrams. To us Lord Clarendon is

a grave and thoughtful figure, the statesman-author of \_The History of

the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England\_, that famous, large book,

loftily planned, finely executed, full of life and character and the

philosophy of human existence; and of his own \_Autobiography\_, a

production which, though it must, like Burnet's \_History\_, be read with

caution, unveils to the reader a portion of that past which usually is

as deeply shrouded from us as the future. If at times we are reminded in

reading Clarendon's \_Life\_ of the old steward in Hogarth's plate, who

lifts up his hands in horror over the extravagance of his master, if his

pedantry often irritates, and his love of place displeases, we recognise

these but as the shades of the character of a distinguished and

accomplished public servant. But to Marvell Clarendon was rapacious,

ambitious, and corrupt, a man who had sold Oliver's Dunkirk to the

French, and shared the price; who had selected for the king's consort a

barren woman, so that his own damaged daughter might at least chance to

become Queen of England, who hated Parliaments and hankered after a

standing army, who took money for patents, who sold public offices, who

was bribed by the Dutch about the terms of peace, who swindled the

ruined cavaliers of the funds subscribed for their benefit, and had by

these methods heaped together great wealth which he ostentatiously

displayed. Even darker crimes than these are hinted at. That Marvell was

wrong in his estimate of Clarendon's character now seems certain;

Clarendon did not get a penny of the Dunkirk money. The case made

against him by the House of Commons in their articles of impeachment was

felt even at the time to be flimsy and incapable of proof, and in the

many records that have come to light since Clarendon's day nothing has

been discovered to give them support. And yet Marvell was a singularly

well-informed member of Parliament, a shrewd, level-headed man of

affairs, who knew Lord Clarendon in the way we know men we have to see

on business matters, whose speeches we can listen to, and whose conduct

we discuss and criticise. "Gently scan your brother-man" is a precept

Marvell never took to heart; nor is the House of Commons a place where

it is either preached or practised.

When Clarendon was well nigh at the height of his great unpopularity, he

built himself a fine big house on a site given him by the king where now

is Albemarle Street. Where did he get the money from? He employed, in

building it, the stones of St. Paul's Cathedral. True, he bought the

stones from the Dean and Chapter, but if the man you hate builds a great

house out of the ruins of a church, is it likely that so trivial a fact

as a cash payment for the materials is going to be mentioned? Splendid

furniture and noble pictures were to be seen going into the new

palace--the gifts, so it was alleged, of foreign ambassadors. What was

the consideration for these donations? England's honour! Clarendon House

was at once named Dunkirk House, Holland House, Tangiers House.

Here is Marvell upon it:--

UPON HIS HOUSE

"Here lie the sacred bones

Of Paul beguilèd of his stones:

Here lie golden briberies,

The price of ruined families;

The cavalier's debenture wall,

Fixed on an eccentric basis:

Here's Dunkirk-Town and Tangier-Hull,

The Queen's marriage and all,

The Dutchman's \_templum pacis\_."

Clarendon's fall was rapid. He knew the house of Stuart too well to

place any reliance upon the king. Evelyn visited him on the 27th of

August 1667 after the seals had been taken away from him, and found him

"in his bed-chamber very sad." His enemies were numerous and powerful,

both in the House of Commons and at Court, where all the buffoons and

ladies of pleasure hated him, because--so Evelyn says--"he thwarted some

of them and stood in their way." In November Evelyn called again and

found the late Lord-Chancellor in the garden of his new-built palace,

sitting in his gout wheel-chair and watching the new gates setting up

towards the north and the fields. "He looked and spoke very

disconsolately. After some while deploring his condition to me, I took

my leave. Next morning I heard he was gone."[139:1]

The news was true; on Saturday, the 29th of November, he drove to Erith,

and after a terrible tossing on the nobly impartial Channel the weary

man reached Calais, and died seven years later in Rouen, having well

employed his leisure in completing his history. His palace was sold for

half what it cost to the inevitable Monk, Duke of Albemarle.

On the 3rd of December Marvell writes that the House, having heard that

Lord Clarendon had "withdrawn," forthwith ordered an address to his

Majesty "that care might be taken for securing all the sea ports lest he

should pass there." Marvell adds grimly, "I suppose he will not trouble

you at Hull." The king took good care that his late Lord-Chancellor

should escape. An act of perpetual banishment was at once passed,

receiving the royal assent on the 19th of December.

Marvell was kept very busy during the early months of 1668, inquiring,

as our English fashion is, into the "miscarriages of the late war." The

House more than once sat from nine in the morning till eight at night,

finding out all it could. "What money, arising by the poll money, had

been applied to the use of the war?" This was an awkward inquiry. The

House voted that the not prosecuting the first victory of June 1665 was

a miscarriage, and one of the greatest: a snub to the Duke of York. The

not furnishing the Medway with a sufficient guard of ships, though the

king had then 18,000 men in his pay, was another great miscarriage. The

paying of the fleet with tickets, without money, was a third great

miscarriage. All this time Oliver Cromwell's skull was grinning on its

perch in Westminster Hall.

Besides the honour of England, that of Hull had to be defended by its

member. A young Lieutenant Wise, one of the Hull garrison, had in some

boisterous fashion affronted the corporation and the mayor. On this

correspondence ensues; and Marvell waits upon the Duke of Albemarle, the

head of the army, to obtain reparation.

"I waited yesterday upon my Lord General--and first presented your

usual fee which the General accepted, but saying that it was

unnecessary and that you might have bin pleased to spare it, and he

should be so much more at liberty to show how voluntary and

affectionate he was toward your corporation. I returned the civilest

words I could coin on for the present, and rendered him your humble

thanks for his continued patronage of you ... and told him that you

had further sent him up a small tribute of your Hull liquor. He

thanked you again for all these things which you might--he said--have

spared, and added that if the greatest of your military officers

should demean himself ill towards you, he would take a course with

him."

A mealy-mouthed Lord-General drawing near his end.[140:1]

Wise was removed from the Hull garrison. The affronted corporation was

not satisfied, and Marvell had to argue the point.

"And I hope, Sir, you will incline the Bench to consider whether I am

able or whether it be fit for me to urge it beyond that point. Yet it

is not all his (Wise's) Parliament men and relations that have

wrought me in the least, but what I simply conceive as the state of

things now to be possible and satisfactory. What would you have more

of a soldier than to run away and have him cashiered as to any

command in your garrison? The first he hath done and the second he

must submit to. And I assure you whatsoever he was among you, he is

here a kind of decrepit young gentleman and terribly crest-fallen."

The letter concludes thus:--

"For I assure you they use all the civility imaginable to you, and as

we sat there drinking a cup of sack with the General, Colonel

Legge[141:1] chancing to be present, there were twenty good things

said on all hands tending to the good fame, reputation, and advantage

of the Town, an occasion that I was heartily glad of."

Corporations may not have souls to save and bodies to kill, but

evidently they have vanities to tickle.

In November 1669 the House is still busy over the accounts. Sir George

Carteret was Treasurer of the Navy. Marvell refers to him in \_The Last

Instructions to a Painter\_ as:--

"Carteret the rich did the accountants guide

And in ill English all the world defied."

The following letter of Marvell's gives an excellent account of House of

Commons business, both how it is conducted, and how often it gets

accidentally interrupted by other business unexpectedly cropping up:--

"\_November 20, 1669.\_

"GENTLEMEN, MY VERY WORTHY FRIENDS,--Returning after our adjournment

to sit upon Wednesday, the House having heard what Sir G. Cartaret

could say for himselfe, and he then commended to withdraw, after a

considerable debate, put it to the question, whether he were guilty

of misdemeanour upon the Commissioners first observation, the words

of which were, That all monyes received by him out of His Majesty's

Exchequer are by the privy seales assigned for particular services,

but no such thing observed or specified in his payments, whereby he

hath assumed to himselfe a liberty to make use of the King's

treasure for other uses then is directed. The House dividing upon

the question, the ayes went out, and wondered why they were kept out

so extraordinary a time. The ayes proved 138 and the noes 129; and

the reason of the long stay then appeared; the tellers for the ayes

chanced to be very ill reckoners, so that they were forced to tell

severall times over in the House, and when at last the tellers for

the ayes would have agreed the noes to be 142, the noes would needs

say that they were 143, whereupon those for the ayes would tell once

more and then found the noes to be indeed but 129; and the ayes then

coming in proved to be 138; whereas if the noes had been content

with the first error of the tellers, Sir George had been quit upon

that observation. This I have told you so minutely because it is the

second fatall and ominous accident that hath fain out in the

divisions about Sir G. Cartaret. Thursday was ordered for the second

observation, the words of which are, Two hundred and thirty thousand

seven hundred thirty and one thousand pounds thirteen shillings and

ninepence, claimed as payd, and deposited for security of interest,

and yet no distinct specification of time appeares either on his

receits or payments, whereby no judgment can be made how interest

accrues; so that we cannot yet allow the same. But this day was

diverted and wholy taken up by a speciall report orderd by the

Committee for the Bill of Conventicles, that the House be informed

of severall Conventicles in Westminster which might be of dangerous

consequences. From hence arose much discourse; also of a report that

Ludlow was in England, that Commonwealths-men flock about the town,

and there were meetings said to be, where they talkt of New Modells

of Government; so that the House ordered a Committee to receive

informations both concerning Conventicles and these other dangerous

meetings; and then entered a resolution upon their books without

putting it to the question, That this House will adhere to His

Majesty, and the Government of Church and State as now established,

against all its enemyes. Friday having bin appointed, as I told you

in my former letter, for the House to sit in a grand Committee upon

the motion for the King's supply, was spent wholy in debate, whether

they should do so or no, and concluded at last in a consent, that

the sitting in a grand Committee upon the motion for the King's

supply should be put of till Friday next, and so it was ordered. The

reason of which kind of proceeding, lest you should thinke to arise

from an indisposition of the House, I shall tell you as they appeare

to me, to have been the expectation of what Bill will come from the

Lords in stead of that of ours which they threw out, and a desire to

redresse and see thoroughly into the miscarriages of mony before any

more should be granted. To-day the House hath bin upon the second

observation, and after a debate till foure a'clock, have voted him

guilty also of misdemeanor in that particular. The Commissioners are

ordered to attend the House again on Munday, which is done

constantly for the illustration of any matter in their report,

wherein the House is not cleare. And to say the truth, the House

receives great satisfaction from them, and shows them extraordinary

respect. These are the things of principall notice since my last."

Carteret eventually was censured and suspended and dismissed.

The sudden incursion of religion during a financial debate is highly

characteristic of the House of Commons.

Whilst Queen Elizabeth and her advisers did succeed in making some sort

of a settlement of religion having regard to the questions of her time,

the Restoration bishops, an inferior set of men, wholly failed. The

repressive legislation that followed upon the Act of Uniformity,

succeeded in establishing and endowing (with voluntary contributions)

what is sometimes called, absurdly enough, Political Dissent. On

points, not of doctrine, but of ceremony, and of church government, one

half of the religiously-minded community were by oaths and declarations,

and by employing the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper as "a picklock to a

place," drawn out of the service of the State. Excluded from Parliament

and from all corporate bodies, from grammar-schools and universities,

English Dissent learned to live its own life, remote from the army, the

navy, and the civil service, quite outside of what perhaps may be fairly

called the main currents of the national life. Nonconformists venerated

their own divines, were reared in their own academies and colleges, read

their own books, went, when the modified law permitted it, to their own

conventicles in back streets, and made it their boast that they had

never entered their parish churches, for the upkeep of which they were

compelled to subscribe--save for the purpose of being married. The

nation suffered by reason of this complete severance. Trade excepted,

there was no community of interest between Church and Dissent. Sobriety,

gravity, a decent way of life, the sense of religious obligation (even

when united with the habit of \_extempore\_ prayer, and a hereditary

disrespect for bishops' aprons), are national assets, as the expression

now goes, which cannot be disregarded with impunity.

The Conventicle Act Marvell refers to was a stringent measure, imposing

pecuniary fines upon any persons of sixteen years of age or upwards who

"under pretence of religion" should be present at any meeting of more

than five persons, or more than those of the household, "in other manner

than allowed by the Liturgy and practice of the Church of England."

Heavier fines were imposed upon the preachers. The poet Waller, who was

"nursed in Parliaments," having been first returned from Amersham in

1621, made a very sensible remark on the second reading: "Let them alone

and they will preach against each other; by this Bill they will

incorporate as being all under one calamity."[145:1] But by 144 to 78

the Bill was read, though it did not become law until the following

session. An indignant Member of Parliament once told Cromwell that he

would take the "sense" of the House against some proposal. "Very well,"

said Cromwell, "you shall take the 'sense' of the House, and I will take

the 'nonsense,' and we will see who tells the most votes."

In February 1670 the king opened a new session, and in March Marvell

wrote a private letter to a relative at Bordeaux, in which he "lends his

mind out," after a fashion forbidden him in his correspondence with his

constituents:--

"DEAR COUSIN,-- ... You know that we having voted the King, before

Christmas, four hundred thousand pounds, and no more; and enquiring

severely into ill management, and being ready to adjourn ourselves

till February, his Majesty, fortified by some undertakers of the

meanest of our House, threw up all as nothing, and prorogued us from

the first of December till the fourteenth of February. All that

interval there was great and numerous caballing among the courtiers.

The King also all the while examined at council the reports from the

Commissioners of Accounts, where they were continually

discountenanced, and treated rather as offenders than judges. In

this posture we met, and the King, being exceedingly necessitous for

money, spoke to us \_stylo minaci et imperatorio\_; and told us the

inconveniences which would fall on the nation by want of a supply,

should not ly at his door; that we must not revive any discord

betwixt the Lords and us; that he himself had examined the accounts,

and found every penny to have been employed in the war; and he

recommended the Scotch union. The Garroway party appeared with the

usual vigour, but the country gentlemen appeared not in their true

number the first day: so, for want of seven voices, the first blow

was against them. When we began to talk of the Lords, the King sent

for us alone, and recommended a rasure of all proceedings. The same

thing you know that we proposed at first. We presently ordered it,

and went to tell him so the same day, and to thank him. At coming

down, (a pretty ridiculous thing!) Sir Thomas Clifford carryed

Speaker and Mace, and all members there, into the King's cellar, to

drink his health. The King sent to the Lords more peremptoryly, and

they, with much grumbling, agreed to the rasure. When the

Commissioners of Accounts came before us, sometimes we heard them

\_pro formâ\_, but all falls to dirt. The terrible Bill against

Conventicles is sent up to the Lords; and we and the Lords, as to

the Scotch busyness, have desired the King to name English

Commissioners to treat, but nothing they do to be valid, but on a

report to Parliament, and an act to confirm. We are now, as we

think, within a week of rising. They are making mighty alterations

in the Conventicle Bill (which, as we sent up, is the quintessence

of arbitrary malice), and sit whole days, and yet proceed but by

inches, and will, at the end, probably affix a Scotch clause of the

King's power in externals. So the fate of the Bill is uncertain, but

must probably pass, being the price of money. The King told some

eminent citizens, who applyed to him against it, that they must

address themselves to the Houses, that he must not disoblige his

friends; and if it had been in the power of their friends, he had

gone without money. There is a Bill in the Lords to encourage people

to buy all the King's fee-farm rents; so he is resolved once more to

have money enough in his pocket, and live on the common for the

future. The great Bill begun in the Lords, and which makes more ado

than ever any Act in this Parliament did, is for enabling Lord Ros,

long since divorced in the spiritual court, and his children

declared illegitimate by Act of Parliament, to marry again. Anglesey

and Ashly, who study and know their interests as well as any

gentlemen at court, and whose sons have marryed two sisters of Ros,

inheritrixes if he has no issue, yet they also drive on the Bill

with the greatest vigour. The King is for the Bill: the Duke of

York, and all the Papist Lords, and all the Bishops, except Cosins,

Reynolds, and Wilkins, are against it. They sat all Thursday last,

without once rising, till almost ten at night, in most solemn and

memorable debate, whether it should be read the second time, or

thrown out. At last, at the question, there were forty-two persons

and six proxys against it, and forty-one persons and fifteen proxys

for it. If it had not gone for it, the Lord Arlington had a power in

his pocket from the King to have nulled the proxys, if it had been

to the purpose. It was read the second time yesterday, and, on a

long debate whether it should be committed, it went for the Bill by

twelve odds, in persons and proxys. The Duke of York, the bishops,

and the rest of the party, have entered their protests, on the first

day's debate, against it. Is not this fine work? This Bill must come

down to us. It is my opinion that Lauderdale at one ear talks to the

King of Monmouth, and Buckingham at the other of a new Queen. It is

also my opinion that the King was never since his coming in, nay,

all things considered, no King since the Conquest, so absolutely

powerful at home, as he is at the present; nor any Parliament, or

places, so certainly and constantly supplyed with men of the same

temper. In such a conjuncture, dear Will, what probability is there

of my doing any thing to the purpose? The King would needs take the

Duke of Albemarle out of his son's hand to bury him at his own

charges. It is almost three months, and he yet lys in the dark

unburyed, and no talk of him. He left twelve thousand pounds a year,

and near two hundred thousand pounds in money. His wife dyed some

twenty days after him; she layed in state, and was buryed, at her

son's expence, in Queen Elizabeth's Chapel. And now,

"Disce, puer, virtutem ex me verumque laborem,

Fortunam ex aliis.

"\_March 21, 1670.\_"

This remarkable letter lets us into many secrets.

The Conventicle Bill is "the price of money." The king's interest in

the Roos divorce case was believed to be due to his own desire to be

quit of a barren and deserted wife.[148:1] Our most religious king had

nineteen bastards, but no lawful issue. It may seem strange that so high

a churchman as Bishop Cosin should have taken the view he did, but Cosin

had a strong dash of the layman in his constitution, and was always an

advocate of divorce, with permission to re-marry, in cases of adultery.

A further and amending Bill for rebuilding the city was before the

House--one of eighty-four clauses, "the longest Bill, perhaps, that ever

past in Parliament," says Marvell; but the Roos Divorce Bill and the

Conventicle Bill proved so exciting in the House of Lords that they had

little time for anything else. Union with Scotland, much desired by the

king, but regarded with great suspicion by all Parliamentarians, fell

flat, though Commissioners were appointed.

The Conventicle Bill passed the Lords, who tagged on to it a proviso

Marvell refers to in his next letter, which the Lower House somewhat

modified by the omission of certain words. Lord Roos was allowed to

re-marry. The big London Bill got through.

Another private letter of Marvell's, of this date, is worth reading:--

"DEAREST WILL,--I wrote to you two letters, and payd for them from

the posthouse here at Westminster; to which I have had no answer.

Perhaps they miscarryed. I sent on an answer to the only letter I

received from Bourdeaux, and having put it into Mr. Nelthorp's hand,

I doubt not but it came to your's. To proceed. The same day (March

26th letter) my letter bore date, there was an extraordinary thing

done. The King, about ten o'clock, took boat, with Lauderdale only,

and two ordinary attendants, and rowed awhile as towards the bridge,

and soon turned back to the Parliament stairs, and so went up into

the House of Lords, and took his seat. Almost all of them were

amazed, but all seemed so; and the Duke of York especially was very

much surprized. Being sat, he told them it was a privilege he

claimed from his ancestors to be present at their deliberations.

That therefore, they should not, for his coming, interrupt their

debates, but proceed, and be covered. They did so. It is true that

this has been done long ago, but it is now so old, that it is new,

and so disused, that at any other but so bewitched a time as this,

it would have been looked on as an high usurpation, and breach of

privilege. He indeed sat still, for the most part, and interposed

very little; sometimes a word or two. But the most discerning

opinion was, that he did herein as he rowed for having had his face

first to the Conventicle Bill, he turned short to the Lord Ross's.

So that, indeed, it is credible, the King, in prospect of diminishing

the Duke of York's influence in the Lord's House, in this, or any

future matter, resolved, and wisely enough at present, to weigh up

and lighten the Duke's efficacy, by coming himself in person. After

three or four days continuance, the Lords were very well used to the

King's presence, and sent the Lord Steward and Lord Chamberlain, to

him, when they might wait, as an House on him, to render their

humble thanks for the honour he did them. The hour was appointed

them, and they thanked him, and he took it well. So this matter, of

such importance on all great occasions, seems riveted to them, and

us, for the future, and to all posterity. Now the Lord Ross's Bill

came in order to another debate, and the King present. Nevertheless

the debate lasted an entire day; and it passed by very few voices.

The King has ever since continued his session among them, and says

it is better than going to a play. In this session the Lords sent

down to us a proviso[149:1] for the King, that would have restored

him to all civil or ecclesiastical prerogatives which his ancestors

had enjoyed at any time since the Conquest. There was never so

compendious a piece of absolute universal tyranny. But the Commons

made them ashamed of it, and retrenched it. The Parliament was never

embarrassed, beyond recovery. We are all venal cowards, except some

few. What plots of State will go on this interval I know not. There

is a new set of justices of peace framing through the whole kingdom.

The governing cabal, since Ross's busyness, are Buckingham,

Lauderdale, Ashly, Orrery, and Trevor. Not but the other cabal too

have seemingly sometimes their turn. Madam,[150:1] our King's

sister, during the King of France's progress in Flanders, is to come

as far as Canterbury. There will doubtless be family counsels then.

Some talk of a French Queen to be then invented for our King. Some

talk of a sister of Denmark; others of a good virtuous Protestant

here at home. The King disavows it; yet he has sayed in publick, he

knew not why a woman may not be divorced for barrenness, as a man

for impotency. The Lord Barclay went on Monday last for Ireland, the

King to Newmarket. God keep, and increase you, in all

things.--Yours, etc.

"\_April 14, 1670.\_"

FOOTNOTES:

[77:1] Clarendon's \_Life\_, vol. ii. p. 442.

[79:1] The clerks, however, only \_counted\_ the members who voted, and

kept no record of their \_names\_. Mr. Gladstone remembered the alteration

being made in 1836, and how unpopular it was. The change was a greater

revolution than the Reform Bill. See \_The Unreformed House of Commons\_

by Edward Posselt, vol. i. p. 587.

[79:2]

"And a Parliament had lately met

Without a single Bankes."--\_Praed\_.

[82:1] See Dr. Halley's \_Lancashire--its Puritanism and Nonconformity\_,

vol. ii. pp. 1-140, a most informing book.

[88:1] Clarendon's \_History\_, vol. vi. p. 249.

[90:1] An Historical Poem.--Grosart, vol. i. p. 343.

[92:1] Macaulay's \_History\_, vol. i. p. 154.

[95:1] I am acquainted with the romantic story which would have us

believe that Lady Fauconberg, foretelling the time to come, had caused

some other body than her father's to be buried in the Abbey (see \_Notes

and Queries\_, 5th October 1878, and Waylen's \_House of Cromwell\_, p.

341).

[96:1] See \_The Unreformed House of Commons\_, by Edward Porritt, vol. i.

p. 51. Marvell's old enemy, Parker, Bishop of Oxford, in his \_History of

his own Time\_, composed after Marvell's death, reviles his dead

antagonist for having taken this payment which, the bishop says, was

made by a custom which "had a long time been antiquated and out of

date." "Gentlemen," says the bishop, "despised so vile a stipend," yet

Marvell required it "for the sake of a bare subsistence, although in

this mean poverty he was nevertheless haughty and insolent." In Parker's

opinion poor men should be humble.

[98:1] \_Parliamentary History\_, vol. iv., App. No. III.

[104:1] Mr. Gladstone's testimony is that no real improvement was

effected until within the period of his own memory. 'Our services were

probably without a parallel in the world for their debasement.' (See

\_Gleanings\_, vi. p. 119.)

[106:1] There is a copy in the library of the \_Athenæum\_, London: "A

Relation of Three Embassies from his sacred Majestie Charles II. to the

Great Duke of Muscovie, the King of Sweden, and the King of Denmark.

Performed by the Right Ho^ble the Earle of Carlisle in the Years 1663

and 1664. Written by an Attendant on the Embassies, and published with

his Lordship's approbation. London. Printed for John Starkie at the

Miter in Fleet Street, near Temple Barr, 1669."

[109:1] "I have mentioned the dignity of his manners.... He was at his

very best on occasion of Durbars, investitures, and the like.... It

irritated him to see men giggling or jeering instead of acting their

parts properly."--\_Life of Lord Dufferin\_, vol. ii. p. 317.

[116:1] \_Hist. MSS. Com., Portland Papers\_, vol. iii. p. 296.

[116:2] See above, vol. iii. p. 294.

[118:1] Sir Walter Besant doubted this. See his \_London\_.

[123:1] Mr. Goldwin Smith says this was the first pitched battle between

Protection and Free Trade in England.--\_The United Kingdom\_, vol. ii. p.

25.

[126:1] Being curious to discover whether no "property" man raised his

voice against these measures, I turned to that true "home of lost

causes," the Protests of the House of Lords; and there, sure enough, I

found one solitary peer, Henry Carey, Earl of Dover, entering his

dissent to both Bills--to the Judicature Bill because of the unlimited

power given to the judges, to the Rebuilding Bill because of the

exorbitant powers entrusted to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen to give away

or dispose of the property of landlords.

[128:1] Clarendon's \_Life\_, vol. iii. p. 796.

[129:1] Clarendon's \_Life\_, vol. iii. p. 798.

[129:2] "Instructions to a Painter for the drawing of the Posture and

Progress of His Majesty's forces at Sea under the command of His

Highness Royal: together with the Battel and Victory obtained over the

Dutch, June 3, 1665."--Waller's \_Works\_, 1730, p. 161.

[130:1] Sir John Denham's wife was reported to have been poisoned by a

dish of chocolate, at the bidding of the Duchess of York.

[131:1] Clarendon's eldest son.

[139:1] It is disconcerting to find Evelyn recording this, his last

visit to Clarendon, in his Diary under date of the 9th December, by

which time the late Chancellor was in Rouen. One likes notes in a diary

to be made contemporaneously and not "written-up" afterwards. Evelyn

makes the same kind of mistake about Cromwell's funeral, misdating it a

month.

[140:1] The duke died in 1670 and had a magnificent funeral on the 30th

of April. See \_Hist. MSS. Com., Duke of Portland's Papers\_, vol. iii. p.

314. His laundress-Duchess did not long survive him.

[141:1] Afterwards Lord Dartmouth, a great friend of James the Second,

but one who played a dubious part at the Revolution.

[145:1] The poet Waller was one of the wittiest speakers the House of

Commons has ever known.

[148:1] For a full account of this remarkable case, see Clarendon's

\_Life\_, iii. 733-9.

[149:1] "Provided, etc., that neither this Act nor anything therein

contained shall extend to invalidate or avoid his Majesty's supremacy in

ecclesiastical affairs [or to destroy any of his Majesty's rights powers

or prerogatives belonging to the Imperial Crown of this realm or at any

time exercised by himself or any of his predecessors Kings or Queens of

England] but that his Majesty his heirs and successors may from time to

time and at all times hereafter exercise and enjoy all such powers and

authorities aforesaid as fully and amply as himself or any of his

predecessors have or might have done the same anything in this Act (or

any other law statute or usage to the contrary) notwithstanding." The

words in brackets were rejected by the Commons. See \_Parliamentary

History\_, iv. 446-7.

[150:1] Madame's business is now well known. The secret Treaty of Dover

was the result of this visit.

CHAPTER V

"THE REHEARSAL TRANSPROSED"

It is never easy for ecclesiastical controversy to force its way into

literature. The importance of the theme will be questioned by few. The

ability displayed in its illumination can be denied by none. It is the

temper that usually spoils all. A collection in any way approaching

completeness, of the pamphlets this contention has produced in England,

would contain tens of thousands of volumes; full of curious learning and

anecdotes, of wide reading and conjecture, of shrewdness and wit; yet

these books are certainly the last we would seek to save from fire or

water. Could they be piled into scales of moral measurement a single

copy of the \_Imitatio\_, of the \_Holy Dying\_, of the \_Saint's Rest\_,

would outweigh them all. Man may not be a religious animal, but he

recognises and venerates the spirit of religion whenever he perceives

it, and it is a spirit which is apt to evaporate amidst the strife of

rival wits. Who can doubt the sincerity of Milton, when he exclaimed

with the sad prophet Jeremy, "Woe is me my Mother that thou hast borne

me a man of strife and contention."

Marvell's chief prose work, the two parts of \_The Rehearsal

Transprosed\_, is a very long pamphlet indeed, composed by way of reply

to certain publications of Samuel Parker, afterwards Bishop of Oxford.

Controversially Marvell's book was a great success.[152:1] It amused the

king, delighted the wits, was welcomed, if not read, by the pious folk

whose side it espoused, whilst its literary excellence was sufficient to

win, in after years, the critical approval of Swift, whose style, though

emphatically his own, bears traces of its master having given, I will

not say his days and nights, but certainly some profitable hours, to the

study of Marvell's prose.

Biographers of controversialists seldom do justice to the other side.

Possibly they do not read it, and Parker has been severely handled by my

predecessors. He was not an honour to his profession, being, perhaps, as

good or as bad a representative of the seamy side of State Churchism as

there is to be found. He was the son of a Puritan father, and whilst at

Wadham lived by rule, fasting and praying. He took his degree in the

early part of 1659, and migrating to Trinity came under the influence of

Dr. Bathurst, then Senior Fellow, to whom, so he says in one of his

dedications, "I owe my first rescue from the chains and fetters of an

unhappy education."[152:2] Anything Parker did he did completely, and

we next hear of him in London in 1665, a nobleman's chaplain, setting

the table in a roar by making fun of his former friends, "a mimical way

of drolling upon the puritans." "He followed the town-life, haunted the

best companies and, to polish himself from any pedantic roughness, he

read and saw the plays with much care and more preparing than most of

the auditory." In 1667 the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Sheldon, a very

mundane person indeed, made Parker his chaplain, and three years later

Archdeacon of Canterbury. He reached many preferments, so that, says

Marvell, "his head swell'd like any bladder with wind and vapour." He

had an active pen and a considerable range of subject. In 1670 he

produced "A Discourse of Ecclesiastical Politie wherein the Authority of

the Civil Magistrate over the Consciences of Subjects in Matters of

External Religion is Asserted; The Mischiefs and Inconveniences of

Toleration are represented and all Pretenses pleaded in behalf of

\_Liberty of Conscience\_ are fully answered." Some one instantly took up

the cudgels in a pamphlet entitled \_Insolence and Impudence Triumphant\_,

and the famous Dr. Owen also protested in \_Truth and Innocence

Vindicated\_. Parker replied to Owen in \_A Defence and Continuation of

Ecclesiastical Politie\_, and in the following year, 1672, reprinted a

treatise of Bishop Bramholl's with a preface "shewing what grounds there

are of Fears and Jealousies of Popery."

This was the state of the controversy when Marvell entered upon it with

his \_Rehearsal Transprosed\_, a fantastic title he borrowed for no very

good reasons from the farce of the hour, and a very good farce too, the

Duke of Buckingham's \_Rehearsal\_, which was performed for the first time

at the Theatre Royal on the 7th of November 1671, and printed early in

1672. Most of us have read Sheridan's \_Critic\_ before we read

Buckingham's \_Rehearsal\_, which is not the way to do justice to the

earlier piece. It is a matter of literary tradition that the duke had

much help in the composition of a farce it took ten years to make.

Butler, Sprat, and Clifford, the Master of Charterhouse, are said to be

co-authors. However this may be, the piece was a great success, and both

Marvell and Parker, I have no doubt, greatly enjoyed it, but I cannot

think the former was wise to stuff his plea for Liberty of Conscience so

full as he did with the details of a farce. His doing so should, at all

events, acquit him of the charge of being a sour Puritan. In the

\_Rehearsal\_ Bayes (Dryden), who is turned by Sheridan in his adaptation

of the piece into Mr. Puff, is made to produce out of his pocket his

book of \_Drama Commonplaces\_, and the play proceeds (\_Johnson\_ and

\_Smith\_ being \_Sheridan's\_ Dangle and Sneer):

"\_Johnson.\_ \_Drama Commonplaces\_! pray what's that?

\_Bayes.\_ Why, Sir, some certain helps, that we men of Art have found

it convenient to make use of.

\_Johnson.\_ How, Sir, help for Wit?

\_Bayes.\_ I, Sir, that's my position. And I do here averr, that no man

yet the Sun e'er shone upon, has parts sufficient to furnish out a

Stage, except it be with the help of these my rules.

\_Johnson.\_ What are those Rules, I pray?

\_Bayes.\_ Why, Sir, my first Rule is the Rule of Transversion, or

\_Regula Duplex\_, changing Verse into Prose, or Prose into Verse,

\_alternative\_ as you please.

\_Smith.\_ How's that, Sir, by a Rule, I pray?

\_Bayes.\_ Why, thus, Sir; nothing more easy when understood: I take a

Book in my hand, either at home, or elsewhere, for that's all one,

if there be any Wit in 't, as there is no Book but has some, I

Transverse it; that is, if it be Prose, put it into Verse (but

that takes up some time), if it be Verse, put it into Prose.

\_Johnson.\_ Methinks, Mr. \_Bayes\_, that putting Verse into Prose

should be called Transprosing.

\_Bayes\_. By my troth, a very good Notion, and hereafter it shall be

so."

Marvell must be taken to have meant by his title that he saw some

resemblance between Parker and Bayes, and, indeed, he says he does, and

gives that as one of his excuses for calling Parker Bayes all through:--

"But before I commit myself to the dangerous depths of his Discourse

which I am now upon the brink of, I would with his leave, make a

motion; that instead of Author I may henceforth indifferently well

call him Mr. Bayes as oft as I shall see occasion. And that first

because he has no name, or at least will not own it, though he

himself writes under the greatest security, and gives us the first

letters of other men's names before he be asked them. Secondly,

because he is, I perceive, a lover of elegancy of style and can

endure no man's tautologies but his own; and therefore I would not

distaste him with too frequent repetition of one word. But chiefly

because Mr. Bayes and he do very much symbolise, in their

understandings, in their expressions, in their humour, in their

contempt and quarrelling of all others, though of their own

profession."

But justice must be done even to Parker before handing him over to the

Tormentor. What were his positions? He was a coarse-fibred, essentially

irreligious fellow, the accredited author of the reply to the question

"What is the best body of Divinity?" "That which would help a man to

keep a Coach and six horses," but he is a lucid and vigorous writer,

knowing very well that he had to steer his ship through a narrow and

dangerous channel, avoiding Hobbism on the one side and tender

consciences on the other. Each generation of State Churchmen has the

same task. The channel remains to-day just as it ever did, with Scylla

and Charybdis presiding over their rocks as of old. Hobbes's \_Leviathan\_

appeared in 1651, and in 1670 both his philosophy and his statecraft

were fashionable doctrine. All really pious people called Hobbes an

Atheist. Technically he was nothing of the sort, but it matters little

what he was technically, since no plain man who can read can doubt that

Hobbes's enthronement of the State was the dethronement of God:--

"Seeing then that in every Christian commonwealth the civil sovereign

is the supreme factor to whose charge the whole flock of his subjects

is commuted, and consequently that it is by his authority that all

other pastors are made and have power to teach and perform all other

pastoral offices, it followeth also that it is from the civil

sovereign that all other pastors derive their right of teaching,

preaching and other functions pertaining to that office, and that

they are but his ministers in the same way as the magistrates of

towns, judges in Court of Justice and commanders of assizes are all

but ministers of him that is the magistrate of the whole

commonwealth, judge of all causes and commander of the whole militia,

which is always the Civil Sovereign. And the reason hereof is not

because they that teach, but because they that are to learn, are his

subjects."--(\_The Leviathan\_, Hobbes's \_English Works\_ (Molesworth's

Edition), vol. iii. p. 539.)

Hobbes shirks nothing, and asks himself the question, What if a king, or

a senate or other sovereign person forbid us to believe in Christ? The

answer given is, "such forbidding is of no effect; because belief and

unbelief never follow men's commands." But suppose "we be commanded by

our lawful prince to say with our tongue we believe not, must we obey

such command?" Here Hobbes a little hesitates to say outright "Yes, you

must"; but he does say "whatsoever a subject is compelled to do in

obedience to his own Sovereign, and doth it not in order to his own

mind, but in order to the laws of his country, that action is not his,

but his Sovereign's--nor is it that he in this case denieth Christ

before men, but his Governor and the law of his country." Hobbes then

puts the case of a Mahomedan subject of a Christian Commonwealth who is

required under pain of death to be present at the Divine Service of the

Christian Church--what is he to do? If, says Hobbes, you say he ought

to die, then you authorise all private men to disobey their princes in

maintenance of their religion, true or false, and if you say the

Mahomedan ought to obey, you admit Hobbes's proposition and ought to

consent to be yourself bound by it. (See Hobbes's \_English Works\_, iii.

493.)

The Church of England, though anxious both to support the king and

suppress the Dissenters, could not stomach Hobbes; but if it could not,

how was it to deal with Hobbes's question, "if it is \_ever\_ right to

disobey your lawful prince, who is to determine \_when\_ it is right?"

Parker seeks to grapple with this difficulty. He disowns Hobbes.

"When men have once swallowed this principle, that Mankind is free

from all obligations antecedent to the laws of the Commonwealth, and

that the Will of the Sovereign Power is the only measure of Good and

Evil, they proceed suitably to its consequences to believe that no

Religion can obtain the force of law till it is established as such

by supreme authority, that the Holy Scriptures were not laws to any

man till they were enjoyn'd by the Christian Magistrate, and that if

the Sovereign Power would declare the Alcoran to be Canonical

Scripture, it would be as much the Word of God as the Four Gospels.

(See \_Hobbes\_, vol. iii. p. 366.) So that all Religions are in

reality nothing but Cheats and impostures to awe the common people to

obedience. And therefore although Princes may wisely make use of the

foibles of Religion to serve their own turns upon the silly

multitude, yet 'tis below their wisdom to be seriously concerned

themselves for such fooleries." (Parker's \_Ecc. Politie\_, p. 137.)

As against this fashionable Hobbism, Parker pleads Conscience.

"When anything that is apparently and intrinsically evil is the

Matter of a Human Law, whether it be of a Civil or Ecclesiastical

concern, here God is to be obeyed rather than Man."

He forcibly adds:--

"Those who would take off from the Consciences of Men all obligations

antecedent to those of Human Laws, instead of making the power of

Princes Supreme, Absolute and Uncontrollable, they utterly enervate

all their authority, and set their subjects at perfect liberty from

all their commands. For if we once remove all the antecedent

obligations of Conscience and Religion, Men will no further be bound

to submit to their laws than only as themselves shall see convenient,

and if they are under no other restraint it will be their wisdom to

rebel as oft as it is their interest." (\_Ecc. Politie\_, pp. 112-113.)

But though when dealing with Hobbes, Parker thinks fit to assert the

claims of conscience so strongly, when he has to grapple with those who,

like the immortal author of \_The Pilgrim's Progress\_, "devilishly and

perniciously abstained from coming to Church," and upheld "unlawful

Meetings and Conventicles," his tone alters, and it is hard to

distinguish his position from that of the philosopher of Malmesbury.

Parker's argument briefly stated, and as much as possible in his own

vigorous language, comes to this:

There is and always must be a competition between the prerogative of

the Prince or State and that of Conscience, which on this occasion is

defined as "every private man's own judgment and persuasion of things."

"Do subjects rebel against their Sovereign? 'Tis Conscience that takes

up arms. Do they murder Kings? 'Tis under the conduct of Conscience. Do

they separate from the communion of the Church? 'Tis Conscience that is

the Schismatick. Everything that a man has a mind to is his Conscience."

(\_Ecc. Politie\_, p. 6.)

How is this competition to be resolved? Parker answers in exact language

which would have met with John Austin's warm approval.

"The Supreme Government of every Commonwealth, wherever it is lodged,

must of necessity be universal, absolute and uncontrollable. For if

it be limited, it may be controlled, but 'tis a thick and palpable

contradiction to call such a power supreme in that whatever controls

it must as to that case be its Superior. And therefore affairs of

Religion being so strongly influential upon affairs of State, they

must be as uncontrollably subject to the Supreme Power as all other

Civil concerns." (\_Ecc. Politie\_, p. 27.)

If the magistrate may make penal laws against swearing and blasphemy,

why not as to rites and ceremonies of public worship? (39.) Devotion

towards God is a virtue akin to gratitude to man; religion is a branch

of morality. The Puritans' talk about grace is a mere imposture, (76)

which extracts from Parker vehement language. What is there to make such

a fuss about? he cries. Why cannot you come to Church? You are left free

to \_think\_ what you like. Your secret thoughts are your own, but living

as you do in society, and knowing as you must how, unless the law

interferes, "every opinion must make a sect, and every sect a faction,

and every faction when it is able, a war, and every war is the cause of

God, and the cause of God can never be prosecuted with too much

violence" (16), why cannot you conform to a form of worship which,

though it does not profess to be prescribed in all particulars, contains

nothing actually forbidden in the Scriptures? What authority have

Dissenters for singing psalms in metre? "Where has our Saviour or his

Apostles enjoined a directory for public worship? What Scripture command

is there for the \_three\_ significant ceremonies of the Solemn League and

Covenant, viz. that the whole congregation should take it (1) uncovered,

(2) standing, (3) with their right hand lift up bare" (184), and so on.

In answer to the objection that the civil magistrate might establish a

worship in its own nature sinful and sensual, Parker replies it is not

in the least likely, and the risk must be run. "Our enquiry is to find

out the best way of settling the world that the state of things admit

of--if indeed mankind were infallible, this controversy were at an end,

but seeing that all men are liable to errors and mistakes, and seeing

that there is an absolute necessity of a supreme power in all public

affairs, our question (I say) is, What is the most prudent and expedient

way of settling them, not that possibly might be, but that really is.

And this (as I have already sufficiently proved) is to devolve their

management on the supreme civil power which, though it may be imperfect

and liable to errors and mistakes, yet 'tis the least so, and is a much

better way to attain public peace and tranquillity than if they were

left to the ignorance and folly of every private man" (212).

I now feel that at least I have done Parker full justice, but as so far

I have hardly given an example of his familiar style, I must find room

for two or three final quotations. The thing Parker hated most in the

world was a \_Tender Conscience\_. He protests against the weakness which

is content with passing penal laws, but does not see them carried out

for fear of wounding these trumpery tender consciences. "Most men's

minds or consciences are weak, silly and ignorant things, acted by fond

and absurd principles and imposed upon by their vices and their

passions." (7.) "However, if the obligation of laws must yield to that

of a tender conscience, how impregnably is every man that has a mind to

disobey armed against all the commands of his superiors. No authority

shall be able to govern him farther than he himself pleases, and if he

dislike the law he is sufficiently excused (268). A weak conscience is

the product of a weak understanding, and he is a very subtil man that

can find the difference between a tender head and a tender conscience

(269). It is a glorious thing to suffer for a tender conscience, and

therefore it is easy and natural for some people to affect some little

scruples against the commands of authority, thereby to make themselves

obnoxious to some little penalties, and then what godly men are they

that are so ready to be punished for a good conscience" (278). "The

voice of the publick law cannot but drown the uncertain whispers of a

tender conscience; all its scruples are hushed and silenced by the

commands of authority. It dares not whimper when that forbids, and the

nod of a prince awes it into silence and submission. But if they dare to

murmur, and their proud stomachs will swell against the rebukes of their

superiors, then there is no remedy but the rod and correction. They must

be chastised out of their peevishness and lashed into obedience (305).

The doctor concludes his treatise with the words always dear to men of

fluctuating opinions, 'What I have written, I have written'" (326).

Whilst Parker was writing this book in his snug quarters in the

Archbishop's palace at Lambeth, Bunyan was in prison in Bedford for

refusing to take the communion on his knees in his parish church; and

Dr. Manton, who had been offered the Deanery of Rochester, was in the

Gate House Prison under the Five Mile Act.

The first part of \_The Rehearsal Transprosed\_, though its sub-title is

"Animadversions upon a late book intituled a Preface shewing what

grounds there are of Fears and Jealousies of Popery," deals after

Marvell's own fashion with all three of Parker's books, the

\_Ecclesiastical Politie\_, the \_Bramhall Preface\_, and the \_Defence of

the Ecclesiastical Politie\_. It is by no means so easy to give a fair

notion of the \_Rehearsal Transprosed\_ in a short compass, as it was of

Parker's line of argument. The parson wrote more closely than the Member

of Parliament. I cannot give a better description of Marvell's method

than in Parker's own words in his preface to his \_Reproof to the

Rehearsal Transprosed\_, which appeared in 1673 and gave rise to

Marvell's second part:--

"When," writes Parker, "I first condemned myself to the drudgery of

this Reply, I intended nothing but a serious prosecution of my

Argument, and to let the World see that it is not reading Histories

or Plays or Gazettes, nor going on pilgrimage to Geneva, nor learning

French and Italian, nor passing the Alps, nor being a cunning

Gamester that can qualify a man to discourse of Conscience and

Ecclesiastical Policy; in that it is not capping our Argument with a

story that will answer it, nor clapping an apothegm upon an assertion

that will prove it, nor stringing up Proverbs and Similitudes upon

one another that will make up a Coherent Discourse."

Allowing for bias this is no unfair account of Marvell's method, and it

was just because this was Marvell's method that he succeeded so well in

amusing the king and in pleasing the town, and that he may still be read

by those who love reading with a fair measure of interest and enjoyment.

Witty and humorous men are always at a disadvantage except on the stage.

The hum-drum is the style for Englishmen. Bishop Burnet calls Marvell "a

droll," Parker, who was to be a bishop, calls him "a buffoon." Marvell

is occasionally humorous and not infrequently carries a jest beyond the

limits of becoming mirth; but he is more often grave. Yet when he is,

his gravity was treated either as one of his feebler jokes or as an

impertinence. But as it is his wit alone that has kept him alive he need

not be pitied overmuch.

The substance of Marvell's reply to Parker, apart altogether from its

by-play, is to be found in passages like the following:--

"Here it is that after so great an excess of wit, he thinks fit to

take a julep and re-settle his brain and the government. He grows as

serious as 'tis possible for a madman, and pretends to sum-up the

whole state of the controversy with the Nonconformists. And to be

sure he will make the story as plausible for himself as he may; but

therefore it was that I have before so particularly quoted and bound

him up with his own words as fast as such a Proteus could be

pinion'd. For he is as waxen as the first matter, and no form comes

amiss to him. Every change of posture does either alter his opinion

or vary the expression by which we should judge of it; and sitting he

is of one mind, and standing of another. Therefore I take myself the

less concern'd to fight with a windmill like Quixote; or to whip a

gig as boyes do; or with the lacqueys at Charing-Cross or

Lincoln's-Inn-Fields to play at the Wheel of Fortune; lest I should

fall into the hands of my Lord Chief-Justice, or Sir Edmond Godfrey.

The truth is, in short, and let Bayes make more or less of it if he

can, Bayes had at first built-up such a stupendous magistrate as

never was of God's making. He had put all princes upon the rack to

stretch them to his dimension. And as a straight line continued grows

a circle, he had given them so infinite a power, that it was extended

unto impotency. For though he found it not till it was too late in

the cause, yet he felt it all along (which is the understanding of

brutes) in the effect. For hence it is that he so often complains

that princes know not aright that supremacy over consciences, to

which they were so lately, since their deserting the Church of Rome,

restored; that in most Nations government was not rightly understood,

and many expressions of that nature: whereas indeed the matter is,

that princes have always found that uncontroulable government over

\_conscience\_ to be both unsafe and impracticable. He had run himself

here to a stand, and perceived that there was a God, there was

Scripture; the magistrate himself had a conscience, and must 'take

care that he did not enjoyn things apparently evil.' But after all,

he finds himself again at the same stand here, and is run up to the

wall by an angel. God, and Scripture, and conscience will not let him

go further; but he owns, that if the magistrate enjoyns things

apparently evil, the subject may have liberty to remonstrate. What

shall he do, then? for it is too glorious an enterprize to be

abandoned at the first rebuffe. Why, he gives us a new translation of

the Bible, and a new commentary! He saith, that tenderness of

conscience might be allowed in a Church to be constituted, not in a

Church constituted already. That tenderness of conscience and scandal

are ignorance, pride, and obstinacy. He saith, the Nonconformists

should communicate with him till they have clear evidence that it is

evil. This is a civil way indeed of gaining the question, to perswade

men that are unsatisfied, to be satisfied till they be dissatisfied.

He threatens, he rails, he jeers them, if it were possible, out of

all their consciences and honesty; and finding that will not do, he

calls out the magistrate, tells him these men are not fit to live;

there can be no security of government while they are in being. Bring

out the pillories, whipping-posts, gallies (=galleys), rods, and

axes (which are \_ratio ultima cleri\_, a clergyman's last argument, ay

and his first too), and pull in pieces all the Trading Corporations,

those nests of Faction and Sedition. This is a faithful account of

the sum and intention of all his undertaking, for which, I confess,

he was as pick'd a man as could have been employed or found out in a

whole kingdome; but it is so much too hard a task for any man to

atchieve, that no goose but would grow giddy with it."[165:1]

In reply to what Parker had written about the unreasonable fuss made by

the Dissenters over the "two or three symbolical ceremonies" called

sacraments, Marvell says:--

"They (the Nonconformists) complain that these things should be

imposed on them with so high a penalty as want nothing of a

sacramental nature but divine institution. And because a human

institution is herein made of equal force to a divine institution

therefore it is that they are aggrieved.... For without the sign of

the Cross our Church will not receive any one in Baptism; as also

without kneeling no man is suffered to come to the Communion.... But

here, I say, then is their (the Nonconformists') main exception that

things indifferent and that have no proper signature or significancy

to that purpose should by command be made conditions of

Church-communion. I have many times wished for peaceableness' sake

that they had a greater latitude, but if, unless they should stretch

their consciences till they tear again, they cannot conform, what

remedy? For I must confess that Christians have a better right and

title to the Church and to the ordinances of God there, than the

Author hath to his surplice.... Bishop Bramhall saith, 'I do profess

to all the world that the transforming of indifferent opinions into

necessary articles of faith hath been that \_insana laurus\_ or cursed

bay tree, the cause of all our brawling and contention.' That which

he saw in matter of doctrine, he would not discern in discipline....

It is true and very piously done that our Church doth declare that

the kneeling at the Lord's Supper is not enjoined for adoration of

those elements and concerning the other ceremonies as before. But

the Romanists (from whom we have them and who said of old we would

come to feed on their meat as well as eat of their porridge) do offer

us here many a fair declaration and distinction in very weighty

matters to which nevertheless the conscience of our Church hath not

complyed. But in this particular matter of kneeling which came in

first with the doctrine of transubstantiation, the Romish Church do

reproach us with flat idolatry, in that we, not believing the real

presence in the bread and wine, yet do pay to something or other the

same adoration. Suppose the ancient pagans had declared to the

primitive Christians that the offerings of some grains of incense was

only to perfume the room--do you think the Christians would have

palliated so far and colluded with their consciences? Therefore

although the Church do consider herself so much as not to alter her

mode unto the fashion of others, yet I cannot see why she ought to

exclude those from communion whose weaker consciences cannot, for

fear of scandal, step further."[166:1]

With Parker's thunders and threats of the authority of princes and

states, Marvell deals more in the mood of a statesman than of a

philosopher, more as a man of affairs than as a jurist. He deplores the

ferocity of Parker's tone and that of a certain number of the clergy.

"Why is it," he asks, "that this kind of clergy should always be and

have been for the most precipitate, brutish, and sanguinary counsels?

The former Civil War cannot make them wise, nor his Majesty's happy

return good-natured, but they are still for running things up unto

the same extremes. The softness of the Universities where they have

been bred, the gentleness of Christianity, in which they have been

nurtured, hath but exasperated their nature, and they seem to have

contracted no idea of wisdom but what they learnt at school--the

pedantry of Whipping. For whether it be or no that the clergy are not

so well fitted by education as others for political affairs I know

not, though I should rather think they have advantage above others,

and even if they would but keep to their Bibles, might make the best

Ministers of State in the world; yet it is generally observed that

things miscarry under their government. If there be any council more

precipitate, more violent, more extreme than other, it is theirs.

Truly, I think the reason that God does not bless them in affairs of

State is because he never intended them for that employment."[167:1]

Of Archbishop Laud and Charles the First, Marvell says:--

"I am confident the Bishop studied to do both God and his Majesty

good service; but alas, how utterly was he mistaken. Though so

learned, so pious, so wise a man, he seem'd to know nothing beyond

Ceremonies, Armenianism, and Mainwaring. With that he begun, with

that ended, and thereby deform'd the whole reign of the best prince

that ever wielded the English sceptre. For his late Majesty, being a

prince truly pious and religious, was therefore the more inclined to

esteem and favour the clergy. And thence, though himself of a most

exquisite understanding, yet he could not trust it better than in

their treatment. Whereas every man is best at his own post, and so

the preacher in the pulpit."[167:2]

Kings, Marvell points out to Parker, must take wider views than parsons.

"'Tis not with them as with you. You have but one cure of souls, or

perhaps two as being a nobleman's chaplain, to look after, and if you

made conscience of discharging them as you ought, you would find you

had work sufficient without writing your 'Ecclesiastical Policies.'

But they are the incumbents of whole kingdoms, and the rectorship of

the common people, the nobility, and even of the clergy. The care I

say of all this rests on them, so that they are fain to condescend to

many things for peace sake and the quiet of mankind that your proud

heart would break before it would bend to. They do not think fit to

require any thing that is impossible, unnecessary or wanton of their

people, but are fain to consider the very temper of the climate in

which they live, the constitution and laws under which they have been

formerly bred, and upon all occasions to give them good words and

humour them like children. They reflect upon the histories of former

times and the present transactions to regulate themselves by in every

circumstance.... They (Kings) do not think fit to command things

unnecessary."[168:1]

These extracts, however fatal to Marvell's traditional reputation in the

eighteenth century as a Puritan and a Republican, call for no apology.

An example of Marvell's Interludes ought to be given. There are many to

choose from.

"There was a worthy divine, not many years dead, who in his younger

time, being of a facetious and unlucky humour, was commonly known by

the name of Tom Triplet; he was brought up at Paul's school under a

severe master, Dr. Gill, and from thence he went to the University.

There he took liberty (as 'tis usual with those that are emancipated

from School) to tel tales and make the discipline ridiculous under

which he was bred. But not suspecting the doctor's intelligence,

coming once to town he went in full school to give him a visite and

expected no less than to get a play day for his former acquaintances.

But instead of that he found himself hors'd up in a trice, though he

appeal'd in vain to the priviledges of the University, pleaded

\_adultus\_ and invoked the mercy of the spectators. Nor was he let

down till the master had planted a grove of birch in his back-side

for the terrour and publick example of all waggs that divulge the

secrets of Priscian and make merry with their teachers. This stuck so

with Triplet that all his life-time he never forgave the doctor, but

sent him every New Year's tide an anniversary ballad to a new tune,

and so in his turn avenged himself of his jerking pedagogue."[168:2]

Marvell's game of picquet with a parson plays such a part in Parker's

\_Reproof\_ to the \_Rehearsal Transprosed\_ that it deserves to be

mentioned:--

"'Tis not very many years ago that I used to play at picket; there

was a gentleman of your robe, a dignitory of Lincoln, very well

known and remembered in the ordinaries, but being not long since

dead, I will save his name. Now I used to play pieces, and this

gentleman would always go half-a-crown with me; and so all the while

he sate on my hand he very honestly '\_gave the sign\_' so that I was

always sure to lose. I afterwards discovered it, but of all the money

that ever I was cheated of in my life, none ever vexed me so as what

I lost by his occasion."[169:1]

There is no need to pursue the controversy further. It is still

unsettled.

Parker's \_Reproof\_, published in 1673, is less argumentative and

naturally enough more personal than the \_Ecclesiastical Politie\_. Any

use I now make of it will be purely biographical. Let us see Andrew

Marvell depicted by an angry parson--not in passages of mere abuse, as

\_e.g.\_ "Thou dastard Craven, thou Swad, thou Mushroom, thou coward in

heart, word and deed, thou Judas, thou Crocodile"; for epithets such as

these are of no use to a biographer--but in places where Marvell is at

least made to sit for the portrait, however ill-natured.

"And if I would study revenge I could easily have requited you with

the Novels of a certain Jack Gentleman, that was born of pure parents

and bred among cabin-boys, and sent from school to the University and

from the University to the Gaming Ordinaries, but the young man,

being easily rooked by the old Gamesters, he was sent abroad to gain

courage and experience, and beyond sea saw the Bears of Berne and the

large race of Capons at Geneva, and a great many fine sights beside,

and so returned home as accomplished as he went out, tries his

fortune once more at the Ordinaries, plays too high for a gentleman

of his private condition, and so is at length cheated of all at

Picquet." ... "And now to conclude; is it not a sad thing that a

well-bred and fashionable gentleman that has frequented Ordinaries,

that has worn Perukes and Muffs and Pantaloons and was once Master of

a Watch, that has travelled abroad and seen as many men and

countries as the famous Vertuosi, Sorbier and Coriat, that has heard

the City Lions roar, that has past the Alps and seen all the

Tredescin rarities and old stones of Italy, that has sat in the

Porphyric Chair at Rome, that can describe the methods of the

Elections of Popes and tell stories of the tricks of Cardinals, that

has been employed in Embassies abroad and acquainted with Intrigues

of State at home, that has read Plays and Histories and Gazettes;

that I say a Gentleman thus accomplished and embellished within and

without and all over, should ever live to that unhappy dotage as at

last to dishonour his grey hairs and his venerable age with such

childish and impotent endeavours at wit and buffoonery."--(\_Reproof\_,

pp. 270, 274-5.)[170:1]

Marvell was very little over fifty years of his age at this time, nor is

Parker's portrait to be regarded as truthful in any other

particular--yet something of a man's character may be discovered by

noticing the way he is abused by those who want to abuse him.

Marvell, though no orator, or even debater, was the stuff of which

controversialists are made. In a letter, printed in the Duke of

Portland's papers, and dated May 3, 1673, he writes:--

"Dr. Parker will be out the next week. I have seen it--already three

hundred and thirty pages and it will be much more. (It was five

hundred twenty-eight pages.) I perceive by what I have read that it

is the rudest book, one or other, that ever was published, I may say

since the first invention of printing. Although it handles me so

roughly, yet I am not at all amated by it. But I must desire the

advice of some few friends to tell me whether it will be proper for

me and in what way to answer it. However I will for mine own private

satisfaction forthwith draw up an answer that shall have as much of

spirit and solidity in it as my ability will afford and the age we

live in will endure. I am, if I may say it with reverence, drawn in I

hope by a good Providence to intermeddle on a noble and high

argument. But I desire that all the discourse of my friends may run

as if no answer ought to be expected to so scurrilous a

book."--(\_Hist. MSS. Comm., Portland Papers\_, iii. 337.)

The title-page of the Second Part of the \_Rehearsal Transprosed\_ is a

curiosity:--

THE

REHEARSALL

TRANSPROS'D:

\* \* \* \* \*

THE SECOND PART.

\* \* \* \* \*

Occasioned by Two Letters: The first Printed

by a nameless Author, Intituled, A

Reproof, etc.

The Second Letter left for me at a Friends

House, Dated Nov. 3, 1673. Subscribed

J.G. and concluding with these words;

If thou darest to Print or Publish any

Lie or Libel against Doctor Parker, By

the Eternal God I will cut thy Throat.

\* \* \* \* \*

Answered by ANDREW MARVEL.

\* \* \* \* \*

LONDON,

Printed for Nathaniel Ponder at the Peacock

in Chancery Lane near Fleet-Street, 1673.

The \_Second Part\_ is an exceedingly witty though too lengthy a

performance. Marvell's "companion picture" of Parker is full of matter,

and of the very spirit of the times. Some of it must be given:--

"But though he came of a good mother, he had a very ill sire. He was

a man bred toward the Law, and betook himself, as his best practice,

to be a sub-committee-man, or, as the stile ran, one of the Assistant

Committee in Northamptonshire. In the rapine of that employment, and

what he got by picking the teeth of his masters, he sustain'd himself

till he had raked together some little estate. And then, being a man

for the purpose, and that had begun his fortune out of the

sequestration of the estates of the King's Party, he, to perfect it

the more, proceeded to take away their lives; not in the hot and

military way (which diminishes always the offence), but in the cooler

blood and sedentary execution of an High Court of Justice.

Accordingly he was preferr'd to be one of that number that gave

sentence against the three Lords, Capel, Holland, and Hamilton, who

were beheaded. By this learning in the Law he became worthy of the

degree of a serjeant, and sometimes to go the Circuit, till for

misdemeanor he was petition'd against. But for a taste of his

abilities, and the more to reingratiate himself, he printed, in the

year 1650, a very remarkable Book, called 'The Government of the

People of England, precedent and present the same. \_Ad subscribentes

confirmandum, Dubitantes informandum, Opponentes convincendum\_; and

underneath \_Multa videntur quae non sunt, multa sunt quae non

videntur\_. Under that ingraven two hands joyn'd, with the motto, \_Ut

uniamur\_; and beneath a sheaf of arrows, with this device, \_Vis unita

fortior\_; and to conclude, \_Concordia parvae res crescunt discordia

dilabuntur\_.' A most hieroglyphical title, and sufficient to have

supplied the mantlings and atchievements of the family! By these

parents he was sent to Oxford, with intention to breed him up to the

ministry. There in a short time he enter'd himself into the company

of some young students who were used to fast and pray weekly

together; but for their refection fed sometimes on broth, from whence

they were commonly called Grewellers; only it was observed that he

was wont still to put more graves than all the rest in his porridge.

And after that he pick'd acquaintance not only with the brotherhood

at Wadham Colledge, but with the sisterhood too, at another old

Elsibeth's, one Elizabeth Hampton's, a plain devout woman, where he

train'd himself up in hearing their sermons and prayers, receiving

also the Sacrament in the house, till he had gain'd such proficience,

that he too began to exercise in that Meeting, and was esteem'd one

of the preciousest young men in the University. But when thus, after

several years' approbation, he was even ready to have taken the

charge, not of an 'admiring drove or heard,' as he now calls them,

but of a flock upon him, by great misfortune the King came in by the

miraculous providence of God, influencing the distractions of some,

the good affections of others, and the weariness of all towards that

happy Restauration, after so many sufferings, to his regal crown and

dignity. Nevertheless he broke not off yet from his former habitudes;

and though it were now too late to obviate this inconvenience, yet he

persisted as far as in him was--that is, by praying, caballing, and

discoursing--to obstruct the restoring of the episcopal government,

revenues, and authority. Insomuch that, finding himself

discountenanced on those accounts by the then Warden of Wadham, he

shifted colledges to Trinity, and, when there, went away without his

degree, scrupling, forsooth, the Subscription then required. From

thence he came to London, where he spent a considerable time in

creeping into all corners and companies, horoscoping up and down

concerning the duration of the Government; not considering anything

as best, but as most lasting and most profitable. And after having

many times cast a figure, he at last satisfyed himself that the

Episcopal Government would endure as long as this King lived; and

from thence forward cast about how to be admitted into the Church of

England, and find the highway to her preferments. In order to this he

daily enlarged, not only his conversation, but his conscience, and

was made free of some of the town-vices; imagining, like Muleasses

King of Tunis (for I take witness that on all occasions I treat him

rather above his quality than otherwise), that by hiding himself

among the onions, he should escape being traced by his perfumes.

Ignorant and mistaken man, that thought it necessary to part with any

virtue to get a living; or that the Church of England did not require

and incourage more sobriety than he could ever be guilty of; whereas

it hath alwayes been fruitful of men who, together with obedience to

that discipline, have lived to the envy of the Nonconformists in

their conversation, and without such could never either have been

preserved so long, or after so long a dissipation have ever

recover'd. But neither was this yet, in his opinion, sufficient; and

therefore he resolv'd to try a shorter path, which some few men had

trod not unsuccessfully; that is, to print a Book; if that would not

do, a second; if not that, a third of an higher extraction, and so

forward, to give experiment against their former party of a keen

stile and a ductile judgment. His first proof-piece was in the year

1665, the \_Tentamina Physico-Theologica\_; a tedious transcript of his

common-place book, wherein there is very little of his own, but the

arrogance and the unparalleled censoriousness that he exercises over

all other Writers. When he had cook'd up these musty collections, he

makes his first invitation to his 'old acquaintance' my lord

Archbishop of Canterbury, who had never seen before nor heard of him.

But I must confess he furbishes-up his Grace in so glorious an

Epistle, that had not my Lord been long since proof against the most

spiritual flattery, the Dedication only, without ever reading the

Book, might have serv'd to have fix'd him from that instant as his

favourite. Yet all this I perceive did not his work, but his Grace

was so unmindful, or rather so prudent, that the gentleman thought it

necessary to spur-up again the next year with another new Book, to

show more plainly what he would be at. This he dedicates to Doctor

Bathurst; and to evidence from the very Epistle that he was ready to

renounce that very education, the civility of which he is so tender

of as to blame me for disordering it, he picks occasion to tell him:

'to your prevailing advice, Sir, do I owe my first rescue from the

chains and fetters of an unhappy education.' But in the Book, which

he calls 'A free and impartial Censure of the Platonick Philosophy'

(censure 'tis sure to be, whatsoever he writes), he speaks out, and

demonstrates himself ready and equipp'd to surrender not only the

Cause, but betray his Party without making any conditions for them,

and to appear forthwith himself in the head of the contrary interest.

Which, supposing the dispute to be just, yet in him was so mercenary,

that none would have descended to act his part but a divine of

fortune. And even lawyers take themselves excused from being of

counsel for the King himself, in a cause where they have been

entertain'd and instructed by their client. But so flippant he was

and forward in this book, that in despight of all chronology, he

could introduce Plato to inveigh against Calvin, and from the

Platoniques he could miraculously hook-in a Discourse against the

Nonconformists. (\_Cens. Plat. Phil.\_, pp. 26, 27, 28, etc.) After

this feat of activity he was ready to leap over the moon; no scruple

of conscience could stand in his way, and no preferment seemed too

high for him; for about this time, I find that having taken a turn at

Cambridge to qualifie himself, he was received within doors to be my

Lord Archbishop's other chaplain, and into some degree of favour;

which, considering the difference of their humours and ages, was

somewhat surprizing. But whether indeed, in times of heat and

faction, the most temperate spirits may sometimes chance to take

delight in one that is spightful, and make some use of him; or

whether it be that even the most grave and serious persons do for

relaxation divert themselves willingly by whiles with a creature that

is unlucky, inimical, and gamesome,--so it was. And thenceforward the

nimble gentleman danced upon bell-ropes, vaulted from steeple to

steeple, and cut capers out of one dignity to another. Having thus

dexterously stuck his groat in Lambeth wainscot, it may easily be

conceived he would be unwilling to lose it; and therefore he

concern'd himself highly, and even to jealousie, in upholding now

that palace, which, if falling, he would out of instinct be the first

should leave it. His Majesty about that time labouring to effect his

constant promises of Indulgence to his people, the Author therefore

walking with his own shadow in the evening, took a great fright lest

all were agoe. And in this conceit being resolv'd to make good his

figure, and that one government should not last any longer than the

other, he set himself to write those dangerous Books which I have now

to do with; wherein he first makes all that he will to be Law, and

then whatsoever is Law to be Divinity."[176:1]

The Second Part is not all raillery. There is much wisdom in it and a

trace of Machiavelli:--

"But because you are subject to misconstrue even true English, I will

explain my self as distinctly as I can, and as close as possible,

what is mine own opinion in this matter of the magistrate and

government; that, seeing I have blamed you where I thought you

blame-worthy, you may have as fair hold of me too, if you can find

where to fix your accusation.

"The power of the magistrate does most certainly issue from the

divine authority. The obedience due to that power is by divine

command; and subjects are bound, both as men and as Christians, to

obey the magistrate actively in all things where their duty to God

intercedes not, and however passively, that is, either by leaving

their countrey, or if they cannot do that (the magistrate, or the

reason of their own occasions hindring them), then by suffering

patiently at home, without giving the least publick disturbance. But

the dispute concerning the magistrate's power ought to be

superfluous; for that it is certainly founded upon his commission

from God, and for the most part sufficiently fortified with all

humane advantages. There are few soveraign princes so abridged, but

that, if they be not contented, they may envy their own fortune. But

the modester question (if men will needs be medling with matters

above them) would be, how far it is advisable for a prince to exert

and push the rigour of that power which no man can deny him; for

princes, as they derive the right of succession from their ancestors,

so they inherit from that ancient and illustrious extraction a

generosity that runs in the blood above the allay of the rest of

mankind. And being moreover at so much ease of honour and fortune,

that they are free from the gripes of avarice and twinges of

ambition, they are the more disposed to an universal benignity

toward their subjects. What prince that sees so many millions of men,

either labouring industriously toward his revenue, or adventuring

their lives in his service, and all of them performing his commands

with a religious obedience, but conceives at the same time a

relenting tenderness over them, whereof others out of the narrowness

of their minds cannot be capable? But whoever shall cast his eye

thorow the history of all ages, will find that nothing has alwayes

succeeded better with princes then the clemency of government; and

that those, on the contrary, who have taken the sanguinary course,

have been unfortunate to themselves and the people, the consequences

not being separable. For whether that royal and magnanimous

gentleness spring from a propensity of their nature, or be acquired

and confirmed by good and prudent consideration, it draws along with

it all the effects of Policy. The wealth of a shepherd depends upon

the multitude of his flock, the goodness of their pasture, and the

quietness of their feeding; and princes, whose dominion over mankind

resembles in some measure that of men over other creatures, cannot

expect any considerable increase to themselves, if by continual

terrour they amaze, shatter, and hare their people, driving them into

woods, and running them upon precipices. If men do but compute how

charming an efficacy one word, and more, one good action has from a

superior upon those under him, it can scarce be reckon'd how powerful

a magick there is in a prince who shall, by a constant tenour of

humanity in government, go on daily gaining upon the affections of

his people. There is not any privilege so dear, but it may be

extorted from subjects by good usage, and by keeping them alwayes up

in their good humour. I will not say what one prince may compass

within his own time, or what a second, though surely much may be

done; but it is enough if a great and durable design be accomplish'd

in the third life; and supposing an hereditary succession of any

three taking up still where the other left, and dealing still in that

fair and tender way of management, it is impossible but that, even

without reach or intention upon the prince's part, all should fall

into his hand, and in so short a time the very memory or thoughts of

any such thing as publick liberty would, as it were by consent,

expire and be for ever extinguish'd. So that whatever the power of

the magistrate be in the institution, it is much safer for them not

to do that with the left hand which they may do with the right, nor

by an extraordinary, what they may effect by the ordinary, way of

government. A prince that goes to the top of his power is like him

that shall go to the bottom of his treasure."[178:1]

And as for the "common people" he has this to say:--

"Yet neither do they want the use of reason, and perhaps their

aggregated judgment discerns most truly the errours of government,

forasmuch as they are the first, to be sure, that smart under them.

In this only they come to be short-sighted, that though they know the

diseases, they understand not the remedies; and though good patients,

they are ill physicians. The magistrate only is authorized,

qualified, and capable to make a just and effectual Reformation, and

especially among the Ecclesiasticks. For in all experience, as far as

I can remember, they have never been forward to save the prince that

labour. If they had, there would have been no Wickliffe, no Husse, no

Luther in history. Or at least, upon so notable an emergency as the

last, the Church of Rome would then in the Council of Trent have

thought of rectifying itself in good earnest, that it might have

recover'd its ancient character; whereas it left the same divisions

much wider, and the Christian people of the world to suffer,

Protestants under Popish governors, Popish under Protestants, rather

than let go any point of interested ambition."[178:2]

FOOTNOTES:

[152:1] "But the most virulent of all that writ against the sect was

Parker, afterwards made Bishop of Oxford by King James: who was full of

satirical vivacity and was considerably learned, but was a man of no

judgment and of as little virtue, and as to religion rather impious:

after he had for some years entertained the nation with several virulent

books writ with much life, he was attacked by the liveliest droll of the

age, who writ in a burlesque strain but with so peculiar and

entertaining a conduct that from the King down to the tradesman his

books were read with great pleasure, that not only humbled Parker but

the whole party, for the author of the \_Rehearsal Transprosed\_ had all

the men of wit (or as the French phrase it all the laughers) on his

side."--Burnet's \_History of his Own Time\_.

[152:2] See the dedication to \_A Free and Impartial Censure of the

Plutonick Philosophy\_, by Sam Parker, A.M., Oxford 1666. Parker was a

man of some taste, and I have in my small collection a beautifully bound

copy of this treatise presented by the author to Seth Ward, then Bishop

of Exeter, and afterwards of Salisbury.

[165:1] Grosart, vol. iii. pp. 145-8.

[166:1] Grosart, vol. iii. pp. 155-9.

[167:1] Grosart, vol. iii. pp. 170, 210-1.

[167:2] Grosart, vol. iii. p. 211.

[168:1] Grosart, vol. iii. p. 171.

[168:2] Grosart, vol. iii. p. 63.

[169:1] Grosart, vol. iii. p. 198.

[170:1] For a still more unfriendly sketch of Andrew Marvell by the same

spiteful hand, see Parker's \_History of his Own Time\_, a posthumous

work, first published in Latin in 1726, and in an English Translation by

\_Thomas Newlin\_ in 1727. This book contains an interesting enumeration

of the numerous conspiracies against the life and throne of Charles the

Second during the earlier part of his reign, a panegyric upon Archbishop

Sheldon and plentiful abuse of Andrew Marvell. Parker died in unhappy

circumstances (see Macaulay's \_History\_, vol. ii. p. 205), but he left

behind him a pious nonjuring son, and his grandson founded the famous

publishing firm at Oxford.

[176:1] Grosart, vol. iii. p. 284.

[178:1] Grosart, vol. iii. p. 370.

[178:2] \_Ibid.\_, p. 382.

CHAPTER VI

LAST YEARS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Marvell's last ten years in the House of Commons were made miserable by

the passionate conviction that there existed in high quarters of the

State a deep, dangerous, and well-considered plot to subvert the

Protestant faith and to destroy by armed force Parliamentary Government

in England. Marvell was not the victim of a delusion. Such a plot, plan,

or purpose undoubtedly existed, though, as it failed, it is now easy to

consider the alarm it created to have been exaggerated.

Marvell was, of all public men then living, the one most deeply imbued

with the spirit of our free constitution. Its checks and balances jumped

with his humour. His nature was without any taint of fanaticism, nor was

he anything of the doctrinaire. He was neither a Richard Baxter nor a

John Locke. He had none of the pure Erastianism of Selden, who tells us

in his inimitable, cold-blooded way that "a King is a King men have made

for their own sakes, for quietness' sake." "Just as in a family one man

is appointed to buy the meat," and that "there is no such thing as

spiritual jurisdiction; all is civil, the Church's is the same with the

Lord Mayor's. The Pope he challenges jurisdiction over all; the Bishops

they pretend to it as well as he; the Presbyterians they would have it

to themselves, but over whom is all this, the poor layman" (see Selden's

\_Table Talk\_).

This may be excellent good sense but it does not represent Marvell's

way of looking at things. He thought more nobly of both church and king.

In Marvell's last book, his famous pamphlet "\_An Account of the Growth

of Popery and Arbitrary Government in England," printed at Amsterdam and

recommended to the reading of all English Protestants\_, 1678, which made

a prodigious stir and (it is sad to think) paved the way for the "Popish

Plot," Marvell sets forth his view of our constitution in language as

lofty as it is precise. I know no passage in any of our institutional

writers of equal merit.

"For if first we consider the State, the kings of England rule not

upon the same terms with those of our neighbour nations, who, having

by force or by address usurped that due share which their people had

in the government, are now for some ages in the possession of an

arbitrary power (which yet no prescription can make legal) and

exercise it over their persons and estates in a most tyrannical

manner. But here the subjects retain their proportion in the

Legislature; the very meanest commoner of England is represented in

Parliament, and is a party to those laws by which the Prince is sworn

to govern himself and his people. No money is to be levied but by the

common consent. No man is for life, limb, goods, or liberty, at the

Sovereign's discretion: but we have the same right (modestly

understood) in our propriety that the prince hath in his regality:

and in all cases where the King is concerned, we have our just remedy

as against any private person of the neighbourhood, in the Courts of

Westminster Hall or in the High Court of Parliament. His very

Prerogative is no more than what the Law has determined. His Broad

Seal, which is the legitimate stamp of his pleasure, yet is no longer

currant, than upon the trial it is found to be legal. He cannot

commit any person by his particular warrant. He cannot himself be

witness in any cause: the balance of publick justice being so

delicate, that not the hand only but even the breath of the Prince

would turn the scale. Nothing is left to the King's will, but all is

subjected to his authority: by which means it follows that he can do

no wrong, nor can he receive wrong; and a King of England keeping to

these measures, may without arrogance, be said to remain the onely

intelligent Ruler over a rational People. In recompense therefore and

acknowledgment of so good a Government under his influence, his

person is most sacred and inviolable; and whatsoever excesses are

committed against so high a trust, nothing of them is imputed to him,

as being free from the necessity or temptation; but his ministers

only are accountable for all, and must answer it at their perils. He

hath a vast revenue constantly arising from the hearth of the

Householder, the sweat of the Labourer, the rent of the Farmer, the

industry of the Merchant, and consequently out of the estate of the

Gentleman: a large competence to defray the ordinary expense of the

Crown, and maintain its lustre. And if any extraordinary occasion

happen, or be but with any probable decency pretended, the whole Land

at whatsoever season of the year does yield him a plentiful harvest.

So forward are his people's affections to give even to superfluity,

that a forainer (or Englishman that hath been long abroad) would

think they could neither will nor chuse, but that the asking of a

supply were a meer formality, it is so readily granted. He is the

fountain of all honours, and has moreover the distribution of so many

profitable offices of the Household, of the Revenue, of State, of

Law, of Religion, of the Navy and (since his present Majestie's time)

of the Army, that it seems as if the Nation could scarce furnish

honest men enow to supply all those imployments. So that the Kings of

England are in nothing inferiour to other Princes, save in being more

abridged from injuring their own subjects: but have as large a field

as any of external felicity, wherein to exercise their own virtue,

and so reward and incourage it in others. In short, there is nothing

that comes nearer in Government to the Divine Perfection, than where

the Monarch, as with us, injoys a capacity of doing all the good

imaginable to mankind, under a disability to all that is

evil."[181:1]

This was the constitution which Marvell, whose means of information

were great and whose curiosity was insatiable, believed to be in danger.

No wonder he was agitated.

The politics in which Marvell was immersed during his last years are

difficult to unravel and still more difficult to illuminate, for they

had their dim origin in the secret thoughts and wavering purposes of the

king.

Charles the Second, like many another Englishman guiltless of Stuart

blood in his veins, was mainly governed by his dislikes, his pleasures,

and his financial necessities. To suppose, as some hasty moralisers have

done, that Charles cared for nothing but his women is to misread his

character. He had many qualifications to be the chief magistrate of a

nation of shopkeepers. He was ever alive to the supreme importance of

English trade upon the high seas. His thoughts were often turned in the

direction of the Indies, east and west. He took a constant, though not

always an honest, interest in the navy. He hated Holland for more

reasons than one, but among these reasons was his hatred of England's

most formidable and malicious trade competitor. He also disliked her

arid and ugly Protestantism, and blood being thicker than water, he

hated Holland for what he considered her shabby treatment of his

youthful nephew, whose ultimate destiny was happily hidden from

Whitehall. Among Charles's many dislikes must be included the Anglican

bishops, who had prevented him from keeping his word, and foiled his

purpose of a wide toleration. He envied his brother of France the wide

culture, the literature and art of Catholicism. He regretted the

Reformation, and would have been best pleased to see the English Church

in communion with Rome and in possession of "Anglican liberties" akin

to those enjoyed by the Gallican Church. Charles was also jealous of

Louis the Fourteenth, and in many moods had no mind to play perpetually

a second fiddle. He longed for a navy to sweep the seas, for an army

strong enough to keep his Parliament in check, and for liberty for

himself and for all those of his subjects who were so minded, to hear

Mass on Sundays. Behind, and above, and always surrounding these desires

and dislikes, was an ever-present, ever-pressing need for money. Like a

royal Becky Sharp, Charles might have found it easy to be a patriotic

king on five millions a year.

The king was his own Foreign Minister, and being what he was, and swayed

by the considerations I have imperfectly described, his foreign policy

was necessarily tortuous and perplexing. As Ranke says, "Charles was

capable of proposing offensive alliances to the three neighbouring

powers, to the Dutch against France, to the French against Spain and

Holland, to the Spaniards against France to the detriment of Holland,

but in these propositions two fundamental views always recur--demands

for money, and assurance of world-wide commerce for England."[183:1]

Charles first allowed Sir William Temple, a cool, prudent man, to form,

in a famous five days' negotiation, the defensive treaty with Holland,

which, after Sweden had joined it, became known as the Triple Alliance

(1668). This alliance had for its objects mutual promises between the

contracting parties to come to each other's assistance by sea and land

if attacked by any power (France being here intended), to force Spain to

make peace with France on the terms already offered, and to compel

France to keep those terms when agreed to by Spain.

The Triple Alliance was not only very popular in England, but was good

diplomacy, for it was quite within the range of practical politics that

France and Holland might have combined against England; nor could it

easily be maintained that the alliance was hostile to France, as it

provided that Spain should be forced to accept the terms France had

already proposed.

What wrecked the Triple Alliance and prepared the way for the secret

Treaty of Dover (1670), was the impossibility of settling those

religious difficulties which, despite the Act of Uniformity, were more

rampant than ever. The king wanted to patch up peace, and to secure some

working plan of comprehension or composure, under cover of which the

Catholic religion should be tolerated and Presbyterianism formally

recognised. But, king though he was, he could not get his way. The

Church and the House of Commons, full as the latter was of his pimps and

pensioners, were as obstinate as mules in this matter of toleration.

They would neither favour Papists nor Dissenters, protested against

Indulgences as unconstitutional, and clamoured for a rigorous

administration of that penal legislation against Nonconformists which

they had purchased with so many and such lavish supplies. As a matter of

fact, these penal laws were very fitfully enforced. In London they were

often totally disregarded, and we read of congregations numbering two

thousand openly attending Presbyterian services. The Lord Mayor for the

time being took his orders direct from the king.

What was Charles to do? After the fall of Clarendon, the king's

favourite privy councillors, called the "Cabal," because the initial

letters of their names formed a word which for some time previously had

been in common use, represent only too faithfully the confusion and

corruption of the times. Clifford was a zealous Roman, Arlington a

cautious one, Buckingham a free-thinker and mocker, friendly to France

and on good terms with the more advanced English sectaries; Ashley made

no pretence to be a Christian, but favoured philosophic toleration;

whilst Lauderdale, one of the most learned ministers that ever sat in

council (so Ranke says[185:1]), was, as a matter of profession, a

Presbyterian, but in reality a man wholly and slavishly devoted to the

king's interests, and prepared at any moment to pour into the kingdom

soldiers from Scotland to purge or suppress all Free Institutions.

Irritated, disgusted, thwarted, and annoyed, the king, acting, it well

may be, under the influence of his accomplished sister, the beautiful

and ill-fated Duchess of Orleans, struck up, to use Marvell's own words,

"an invisible league with France." The negotiations were either by word

of mouth or by letters which have been burnt. Dr. Lingard in his history

gives an interesting account of this mysterious transaction. Two things

are apparent as the objects of the Treaty of Dover. The Dutch Republic

is to be destroyed, and the cause of Catholicism in England is to be

promoted and maintained. It was this latter object that seems most to

have excited the hopes of the Duchess of Orleans. A woman's hand is

traceable throughout. Charles promised to profess himself openly a Roman

Catholic at the time that should appear to be most expedient, and

subsequently to that profession he was to join with Louis in making war

upon the Dutch Republic. At the date of this bewildering agreement, it

was high treason by statute even to \_say\_ that Charles was a Roman

Catholic. In case the king's public conversion should lead to

disturbances, Louis promised an "aid" of two millions of \_livres\_ and an

armed force of six thousand men. He also agreed to pay the whole cost of

the Dutch War \_on land\_, and to contribute thirty men-of-war to the

English fleet. Holland once crushed, England's share of the plunder was

to be Walcheren, Sluys, and Cadsand. A remarkable conversion! It is

difficult to suppose that either Charles or Louis were quite serious

over this part of the business. Yet there it is. The Catholic provisions

of the secret Treaty of Dover were only known to Clifford, whose soul

was fired by them, and to Arlington, who did not share the confident

hopes of his co-religionist. Clifford thought there were thousands of

Englishmen "of light and leading" among the English Catholics who would

be both willing and able to assume the burdens of the State and to rally

round a Catholic king. Arlington thought otherwise.

The king's public conversion never took place. No hint was given of any

such impending event. Parliament met on the 24th of October 1670, and

after hearing a good deal about the Triple Alliance and voting large

sums of money, was prorogued in April 1671, and did not meet again till

February 1673.

To pick a quarrel with the Dutch was never difficult. Marvell tells us

how it was done. "A sorry yacht, but bearing the English Jack, in August

1671 sails into the midst of the Dutch fleet, singles out the Admiral,

shooting twice as they call it, sharp upon him. Which must sure have

appeared as ridiculous and unnatural as for a lark to dare the hobby."

The Dutch admiral asking "Why," was told "because he and his whole fleet

had failed to strike sail to his small craft." The Dutch commander then

"civilly excused it as a matter of the first instance, and in which he

could have no instruction, therefore proper to be referred to their

masters, and so they parted. The yacht having thus acquitted itself,

returned fraught with the quarrel she was sent for."[187:1] Surinam was

a perpetual \_casus belli\_. Some offence against the law of nations was

always happening there. A third matter, very full of gunpowder, was made

great use of by the promoters of the war already agreed upon. A picture

had been hung at Dort representing De Witt sailing up the Medway very

much in the manner described in Marvell's poem. Medals also had been

struck and distributed in commemoration of the same event. War was

declared against Holland by England and France in March 1672. The

Declaration of War was preceded by the Declaration of Indulgence,

whereby, wrote Marvell, "all the penal laws against Papists for which

former Parliaments had given so many supplies, and against

Nonconformists for which this Parliament had paid more largely, were at

one instant suspended in order to defraud the nation of all that

religion which they had so dearly purchased, and for which they ought at

least, the bargain being broke, to have been reimbursed."[187:2]

The unconstitutional suspension of bad laws put lovers of freedom in a

predicament. Marvell was what he calls a "composure," that is a

"comprehension," man. In the \_Growth of Popery\_ he sorrowfully admits

that it is the gravest reproach of human wisdom that no man seems able

or willing to find out the due temper of Government in divine matters.

"Insomuch that it is no great adventure to say, that the world was

better ordered under the ancient monarchies and commonwealths, that

the number of virtuous men was then greater, and that the Christians

found fairer quarter under those than among themselves, nor hath

there any advantage accrued unto mankind from that most perfect and

practical model of humane society, except the speculation of a better

way to future happiness, concerning which the very guides disagree,

and of those few that follow, it will suffer no man to pass without

paying at their turnpikes." (Vol. iv. p. 280.)

The French Alliance made the war, though with Holland, unpopular.

Writers had to be hired to defend it. France was supposed to look on

with much composure as her two maritime competitors battered each

other's fleets. At sea the honours were divided between the Dutch and

the English. On land Louis had it all his own way. Besides, rumours got

abroad of an uncomfortable plot to restore Popery. Jesuits seemed to

abound. Roman Catholics asserted themselves, the laws being suspended.

An army was collected at Blackheath. The Treasury was closed. Charles

had been badly bled by the goldsmiths or bankers, who had charged him

£12 per cent.; but in commercial centres Acts of Bankruptcy are seldom

popular, and though the bankers were compelled to be content with £6 per

cent., the closing of the Treasury brought ruin into many homes.

When Parliament met in February 1673, its temper was bad. It would have

nothing to do with the Declaration of Indulgence, and though the king

had told them, in the round set terms he could so well command, that he

was resolved to stick to his declaration, he had to give way and to see

the House busy itself with a Test Bill that drove all Roman Catholics,

from the Duke of York (who had "gone over" in the spring of 1672)

downwards, out of office. The only effect of Charles's policy was to

mitigate the hostility of the House of Commons to Protestant Dissenters,

and to drive it to concentrate its jealousy upon the Catholics. Any

lurking idea of the king declaring himself a Romanist had to be

abandoned. His hatred of Parliament increased. He lost all sense of

shame, and frankly became a pensioner of France. In 1676 he concluded a

second secret treaty, whereby both Louis and himself bound themselves to

enter into no engagements with other powers without consent, and in case

of rebellion within their realms to come to each other's assistance.

Louis agreed to make Charles an annual allowance of a hundred thousand,

afterwards increased to two hundred thousand \_livres\_. This money was

largely spent in bribing the House of Commons. The French ambassador was

allowed an extra grant of a thousand crowns a month to keep a table for

hungry legislators.[189:1] Did not Marvell do well to be angry?

Some of Marvell's letters belonging to this gloomy period are full of

interest.

\_To William Ramsden, Esq.\_

"\_Nov. 28, 1670.\_

"DEAR WILL,--I need not tell you I am always thinking of you. All

that has happened, which is remarkable, since I wrote, is as

follows: The Lieutenancy of London, chiefly Sterlin the Mayor, and

Sir J. Robinson, alarmed the King continually with the Conventicles

there. So the King sent them strict and large powers. The Duke of

York every Sunday would come over thence to look to the peace. To

say truth, they met in numerous open assemblys, without any dread of

government. But the train bands in the city, and soldiery in

Southwark and suburbs, harassed and abused them continually; they

wounded many, and killed some Quakers especially, while they took

all patiently. Hence arose two things of great remark. The

Lieutenancy, having got orders to their mind, pick out Hays and

Jekill, the innocentist of the whole party, to show their power on.

They offer them illegal bonds of five thousand pounds a man, which

if they would not enter into, they must go to prison. So they were

committed, and at last (but it is a very long story) got free. Some

friends engaged for them. The other was the tryal of Pen and Mead,

quakers, at the Old Baily. The jury not finding them guilty, as the

Recorder and Mayor would have had them, they were kept without meat

or drink some three days, till almost starved, but would not alter

their verdict; so fined and imprisoned. There is a book out which

relates all the passages, which were very pertinent, of the

prisoners, but prodigiously barbarous by the Mayor and Recorder. The

Recorder, among the rest, commended the Spanish Inquisition, saying

it would never be well till we had something like it. The King had

occasion for sixty thousand pounds. Sent to borrow it of the city.

Sterlin, Robinson, and all the rest of that faction, were at it many

a week, and could not get above ten thousand. The fanatics under

persecution, served his Majesty. The other party, both in court and

city, would have prevented it. But the King protested mony would be

acceptable. So the King patched up, out of the Chamber, and other

ways, twenty thousand pounds. The fanatics, of all sorts, forty

thousand. The King, though against many of his council, would have

the Parliament sit this twenty-fourth of October. He, and the Keeper

spoke of nothing but to have mony. Some one million three hundred

thousand pounds, to pay off the debts at interest; and eight hundred

thousand for a brave navy next Spring. Both speeches forbid to be

printed, for the King said very little, and the Keeper, it was

thought, too much in his politic simple discourse of foreign

affairs. The House was thin and obsequious. They voted at first they

would supply him according to his occasions, \_Nemine\_, as it was

remarked, \_contradicente\_; but few affirmatives, rather a silence as

of men ashamed and unwilling. Sir R. Howard, Seymour, Temple, Car,

and Hollis, openly took leave of their former party, and fell to

head the King's busyness. There is like to be a terrible Act of

Conventicles. The Prince of Orange here is much made of. The King

owes him a great deal of mony. The Paper is full.--I am yours," etc.

The trial of William Penn and William Mead at the Old Bailey for a

tumultuous assembly, written by themselves, may be read in the \_State

Trials\_, vol. vi. The trial was the occasion of Penn's famous remark to

the Recorder of London, who, driven wellnigh distracted by Penn's

dialectics, exclaimed, "If I should suffer you to ask questions till

to-morrow morning you would never be the wiser." "That," replied Penn,

"would be according as the answers are."

\_To William Ramsden, Esq.\_

(Undated.)

"DEAR WILL,--The Parliament are still proceeding, but not much

advanced on their eight hundred thousand pounds Bill on money at

interest, offices, and lands; and the Excise Bills valued at four

hundred thousand pounds a year. The first for the navy, which scarce

will be set out. The last to be for paying one million three hundred

thousand pounds, which the King owes at interest, and perhaps may be

given for four, five, or six years, as the House chances to be in

humour. But an accident happened which liked to have spoiled all:

Sir John Coventry having moved for an imposition on the playhouses,

Sir John Berkenhead, to excuse them, sayed they had been of great

service to the King. Upon which Sir John Coventry desired that

gentleman to explain whether he meant the men or the women players.

Hereupon it is imagined, that, the House adjourning from Tuesday

before till Thursday after Christmas-day, on the very Tuesday night

of the adjournment, twenty-five of the Duke of Monmouth's troop, and

some few foot, layed in wait from ten at night till two in the

morning, by Suffolk-street, and as he returned from the Cock, where

he supped, to his own house, they threw him down, and with a knife

cut off almost the end of his nose; but company coming made them

fearful to finish it, so they marched off. Sir Thomas Sands,

lieutenant of the troop, commanded the party; and O'Brian, the Earl

of Inchequin's son, was a principal actor. The Court hereupon

sometimes thought to carry it with a high hand, and question Sir

John for his words, and maintain the action. Sometimes they flagged

in their counsels. However, the King commanded Sir Thomas Clarges,

and Sir W. Pultney, to release Wroth and Lake, who were two of the

actors, and taken. But the night before the House met they

surrendered them again. The House being but sullen the next day, the

Court did not oppose adjourning for some days longer till it was

filled. Then the House went upon Coventry's busyness, and voted that

they would go upon nothing else whatever till they had passed a

Bill, as they did, for Sands, O'Brian, Parry, and Reeves, to come in

by the sixteenth of February, or else be condemned, and never to be

pardoned, but by an express Act of Parliament, and their names

therein inserted, for fear of being pardoned in some general act of

grace. Farther of all such actions, for the future on any man,

felony, without clergy; and who shall otherwise strike or wound any

parliament-man, during his attendance, or going or coming,

imprisonment for a year, treble damages, and incapacity. This Bill

having in some few days been dispatched to the Lords, the House has

since gone on in grand Committee upon the first eight hundred

thousand pounds Bill, but are not yet half way. But now the Lords,

instead of the sixteenth of February, put twenty-five days after the

King's royal assent, and that registered in their journal; they

disagree in several other things, but adhere in that first, which is

most material. Adhere, in this place, signifies not to be retracted,

and excludes a free conference. So that this week the Houses will be

in danger of splitting, without much wisdom or force. For

considering that Sir Thomas Sands was the very person sent to

Clarges and Pultney, that O'Brian was concealed in the Duke of

Monmouth's lodgings, that Wroth and Lake were bayled at the sessions

by order from Mr. Attorney, and that all persons and things are

perfectly discovered, that act will not be passed without great

consequence. George's father obliges you much in Tangier. Prince

Edgar is dying. The Court is at the highest pitch of want and

luxury, and the people full of discontent, Remember me to

yourselves."

\_To William Ramsden, Esq.\_

(Undated.)

"DEAR WILL,--I think I have not told you that, on our Bill of

Subsidy, the Lord Lucas made a fervent bold speech against our

prodigality in giving, and the weak looseness of the government, the

King being present; and the Lord Clare another to persuade the King

that he ought not to be present. But all this had little

encouragement, not being seconded. Copys going about everywhere, one

of them was brought into the Lords' House, and Lord Lucas was asked

whether it was his. He sayd part was, and part was not. Thereupon

they took advantage, and sayed it was a libel even against Lucas

himself. On this they voted it a libel, and to be burned by the

hangman. Which was done; but the sport was, the hangman burned the

Lords' order with it. I take the last quarrel betwixt us and the

Lords to be as the ashes of that speech. Doubtless you have heard,

before this time, how Monmouth, Albemarle, Dunbane, and seven or

eight gentlemen, fought with the watch, and killed a poor bedle.

They have all got their pardons, for Monmouth's sake; but it is an

act of great scandal. The King of France is at Dunkirke. We have no

fleet out, though we gave the Subsidy Bill, valued at eight hundred

thousand pounds, for that purpose. I believe, indeed, he will

attempt nothing on us, but leave us to dy a natural death. For

indeed never had poor nation so many complicated, mortal, incurable,

diseases. You know the Dutchess of York is dead. All gave her for a

Papist. I think it will be my lot to go on an honest fair employment

into Ireland. Some have smelt the court of Rome at that distance.

There I hope I shall be out of the smell of our.... --Yours," etc.

\_To a Friend in Persia.\_

"\_August 9, 1671.\_

"DEAR SIR,--I have yours of the 12th of October 1670, which was in

all respects most welcome to me, except when I considered that to

write it you endured some pain, for you say your hand is not yet

recovered. If I could say any thing to you towards the advancement

of your affairs, I could, with a better conscience, admit you should

spend so much of your precious time, as you do, upon me. But you

know how far those things are out of my road, tho', otherwise, most

desirous in all things to be serviceable to you. God's good

providence, which hath through so dangerous a disease and so many

difficultys preserved and restored you, will, I doubt not, conduct

you to a prosperous issue, and the perfection of your so laudable

undertakings. And, under that, your own good genius, in conjunction

with your brother here, will, I hope, though at the distance of

England and Persia, in good time operate extraordinary effects; for

the magnetism of two souls, rightly touched, works beyond all

natural limits, and it would be indeed too unequal, if good nature

should not have at least as large a sphere of activity, as malice,

envy, and detraction, which are, it seems, part of the returns from

Gombroon and Surat. All I can say to you in that matter is, that you

must, seeing it will not be better, stand upon your guard; for in

this world a good cause signifys little, unless it be as well

defended. A man may starve at the feast of good conscience. My

fencing master in Spain, after he had instructed me all he could,

told me, I remember, there was yet one secret, against which there

was no defence, and that was, to give the first blow. I know your

maxim, \_Qui festinat ditescere, non erit innocens\_. Indeed while you

preserve that mind, you will have the blessing both of God and man.

In general I perceive, and am very glad of it, that by your good

management, your friends here get ground, and the flint in your

adversarys' hearts begins to be mollifyed. Now after my usual

method, leaving to others what relates to busyness, I address

myself, which is all I am good for, to be your gazettier. I am sorry

to perceive that mine by the Armenian miscarryed. Tho' there was

nothing material in it, the thoughts of friends are too valuable to

fall into the hands of a stranger. I wrote the last February at

large, and wish it a better passage. In this perhaps I may interfere

something with that, chusing rather to repeat than omit. The King

having, upon pretence of the great preparations of his neighbours,

demanded three hundred thousand pounds for his navy (though in

conclusion he hath not set out any) and that the Parliament should

pay his debts, which the ministers would never particularize to the

House of Commons, our House gave several bills. You see how far

things were stretched, though beyond reason, there being no

satisfaction how those debts were contracted, and all men foreseeing

that what was given would not be applyed to discharge the debts,

which I hear are at this day risen to four millions, but diverted as

formerly. Nevertheless such was the number of the constant courtiers

increased by the apostate patriots, who were bought off, for that

turn, some at six, others ten, one at fifteen thousand pounds in

money, besides what offices, lands, and reversions, to others, that

it is a mercy they gave not away the whole land, and liberty, of

England. The Earl of Clare made a very bold and rational harangue,

the King being present, against the King's sitting among the Lords,

contrary to former precedents, during their debates; but he was not

seconded. The King had this April prorogued, upon the Houses

cavilling, and their harsh conferences concerning some bills, the

Parliament from this April till the 16th of April 1672. Sir John

Coventry's Bill against Cutting Noses passed, and O'Brian and Sir

Thomas Sands, not appearing at the Old Baily by the time limited,

stand attainted and outlawed, without possibility of pardon. The

Duke of Buckingham is again one hundred and forty thousand pounds in

debt, and, by this prorogation, his creditors have time to tear all

his lands in pieces. The House of Commons has run almost to the end

of their line, and are grown extreme chargeable to the King, and

odious to the people. Lord St. John, Marquess of Westminster's son,

one of the House of Commons, Sir Robert Howard, Sir John Benet, Lord

Arlington's brother, Sir William Bucknoll, the brewer, all of the

House, in fellowship with some others of the city, have farmed the

old customs, with the new act of Imposition upon Wines, and the Wine

Licenses, at six hundred thousand pounds a year, to begin this

Michaelmas. You may be sure they have covenants not to be losers.

They have signed and sealed ten thousand pounds a year more to the

Duchess of Cleveland, who has likewise near ten thousand pounds a

year out of the new farm of the country excise of Beer and Ale, five

thousand pounds a year out of the Post Office, and, they say, the

reversion of all the King's leases, the reversion of places all in

the Custom House, the green wax, and indeed, what not? All

promotions, spiritual and temporal, pass under her cognizance.

Buckingham runs out of all with the Lady Shrewsbury, by whom he

believes he had a son, to whom the King stood godfather; it dyed,

young Earl of Coventry, and was buryed in the sepulchre of his

fathers. The King of France made a warlike progresse this summer

through his conquests of Flanders, but kept the peace there, and

detains still the Dutchy of Lorain, and has stired up the German

Princes against the free towns. The Duke of Brunswick has taken the

town of Brunswick; and now the Bishop of Cullen is attacking the

city of Colen. We truckle to France in all things, to the prejudice

of our honour. Barclay is still Lieutenant of Ireland; but he was

forced to come over to pay ten thousand pounds rent to his Landlady

Cleveland. My Lord Angier, who bought of Sir George Carteret for

eleven thousand pounds, the Vice-treasurership of Ireland, worth

five thousand pounds a year, is, betwixt knavery and foolery, turned

out. Dutchess of York and Prince Edgar, dead. None left but

daughters. One Blud, outlawed for a plot to take Dublin Castle, and

who seized on the Duke of Ormond here last year, and might have

killed him, a most bold, and yet sober fellow, some months ago

seized the crown and sceptre in the Tower, took them away, and if he

had killed the keeper, might have carried them clear off. He, being

taken, astonished the King and Court, with the generosity, and

wisdom, of his answers. He, and all his accomplices, for his sake,

are discharged by the King, to the wonder of all.--Yours," etc.

\_To William Ramsden, Esq.\_

"\_June 1672.\_

"DEAR WILL,--Affairs begin to alter, and men talk of a peace with

Holland, and taking them into our protection; and it is my opinion

it will be before Michaelmas, for some reasons, not fit to write. We

cannot have a peace with France and Holland both. The Dutch are now

brought very low; but Amsterdam, and some other provinces, are

resolved to stand out till the last. De-wit is stabbed, and dead of

his wounds. It was at twelve a clock at night, the 11th of this

month, as he came from the council at the Hague. Four men wounded

him with their swords. But his own letter next morning to the States

says nothing appeared mortal. The whole Province of Utrecht is

yielding up. No man can conceive the condition of the State of

Holland, in this juncture, unless he can at the same time conceive

an earthquake, an hurricane, and the deluge. France is potent and

subtle. Here have been several fires of late. One at St.

Catherine's, which burned about six score or two hundred houses, and

some seven or eight ships. Another in Bishopsgate-street. Another in

Crichet Fryars. Another in Southwark; and some elsewhere. You may be

sure all the old talk is hereupon revived. There was the other day,

though not on this occasion, a severe proclamation issued out

against all who shall vent false news, or discourse ill concerning

affairs of state. So that in writing to you I run the risque of

making a breech in the commandment.--Yours," etc.

The following letter deals with another matter of human concern than

politics, for it seeks to condole with a father who has lost an only

son.

\_To Sir John Trott\_

(Undated.)

"HONOURED SIR,--I have not that vanity to believe, if you weigh your

late loss by the common ballance, that any thing I can write to you

should lighten your resentments: nor if you measure things by the

rules of christianity, do I think it needful to comfort you in your

duty and your son's happyness. Only having a great esteem and

affection for you, and the grateful memory of him that is departed

being still green and fresh upon my spirit, I cannot forbear to

inquire, how you have stood the second shock at your sad meeting of

friends in the country. I know that the very sight of those who have

been witnesses of our better fortune, doth but serve to reinforce a

calamity. I know the contagion of grief and infection of tears, and

especially when it runs in a blood. And I myself could sooner imitate

than blame those innocent relentings of nature, so that they spring

from tenderness only and humanity, not from an implacable sorrow. The

tears of a family may flow together like those little drops that

compact the rainbow, and if they be placed with the same advantage

towards Heaven as those are to the sun, they too have their

splendour; and like that bow, while they unbend into seasonable

showers, yet they promise, that there shall not be a second flood.

But the dissoluteness of grief, the prodigality of sorrow, is neither

to be indulged in a man's self, nor complyed with in others. If that

were allowable in these cases, Eli's was the readyest way and highest

compliment of mourning, who fell back from his seat and broke his

neck. But neither does that precedent hold. For though he had been

Chancellor, and in effect King of Israel, for so many years (and such

men value, as themselves, their losses at an higher rate than

others), yet, when he heard that Israel was overcome, that his two

sons Hophni and Phineas were slain in one day, and saw himself so

without hope of issue, and which imbittered it farther, without

succession to the government, yet he fell not till the news that the

ark of God was taken. I pray God that we may never have the same

parallel perfected in our publick concernments. Then we shall need

all the strength of grace and nature to support us. But on a private

loss, and sweetened with so many circumstances as yours, to be

impatient, to be uncomfortable would be to dispute with God. Though

an only son be inestimable, yet it is like Jonah's sin, to be angry

at God for the withering of his shadow. Zipporah, though the delay

had almost cost her husband his life, yet, when he did but circumcise

her son, in a womanish peevishness reproached Moses as a bloody

husband. But if God take the son himself, but spare the father, shall

we say that He is a bloody God? He that gave His own son, may He not

take ours? It is pride that makes a rebel; and nothing but the

over-weening of ourselves and our own things that raises us against

Divine Providence. Whereas Abraham's obedience was better than

sacrifice. And if God please to accept both, it is indeed a farther

tryal, but a greater honour. I could say over upon this beaten

occasion most of those lessons of morality and religion which have

been so often repeated, and are as soon forgotten. We abound with

precept, but we want examples. You, sir, that have all these things

in your memory, and the clearness of whose judgment is not to be

obscured by any greater interposition, should be exemplary to others

in your own practice. 'Tis true, it is an hard task to learn and

teach at the same time. And, where yourselves are the experiment, it

is as if a man should dissect his own body, and read the anatomy

lecture. But I will not heighten the difficulty while I advise the

attempt. Only, as in difficult things, you would do well to make use

of all that may strengthen and assist you; the word of God; the

society of good men; and the books of the ancients; there is one way

more, which is by diversion, business, and activity; which are also

necessary to be used in their season. But I myself, who live to so

little purpose, can have little authority or ability to advise you in

it, who are a person that are and may be much more so, generally

useful. All that I have been able to do since, hath been to write

this sorry Elogy of your son, which if it be as good as I could wish,

it is as yet no indecent employment. However, I know you will take

any thing kindly from your very affectionate friend, and most humble

servant."

Milton died on the 8th of November 1674. Marvell remained among the

poet's intimate friends until the end, and intended to write his life.

It is idle to mourn the loss of an unwritten book, but Marvell's life of

Milton would have been a treasure.[199:1]

When Parliament met on the 13th of April 1675, members found in their

places a mock-speech from the throne. They \_knew\_ the hand that had

penned it. It was a daring production and ran as follows:--

\_His Majesty's Most Gracious Speech to Both Houses of Parliament\_.

"MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,--I told you at our last meeting, the winter

was the fittest time for business, and truly I thought so, till my

Lord Treasurer assured me the spring was the best season for sallads

and subsidies. I hope therefore that April will not prove so

unnatural a month, as not to afford some kind showers on my parched

exchequer, which gapes for want of them. Some of you, perhaps, will

think it dangerous to make me too rich; but I do not fear it; for I

promise you faithfully, whatever you give me I will always want; and

although in other things my word may be thought a slender authority,

yet in that, you may rely on me, I will never break it.

"MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,--I can bear my straits with patience; but my

Lord Treasurer does protest to me, that the revenue, as it now

stands, will not serve him and me too. One of us must pinch for it,

if you do not help me. I must speak freely to you: I am under bad

circumstances, for besides my harlots in service, my reformado

concubines lye heavy upon me. I have a passable good estate, I

confess, but, God's-fish, I have a great charge upon 't. Here's my

Lord Treasurer can tell, that all the money designed for next

summer's guards must, of necessity, be applyed to the next year's

cradles and swadling-cloths. What shall we do for ships then? I hint

this only to you, it being your busyness, not mine. I know, by

experience, I can live without ships. I lived ten years abroad

without, and never had my health better in my life; but how you will

be without, I leave to yourselves to judge, and therefore hint this

only by the bye: I do not insist upon it. There's another thing I

must press more earnestly, and that is this:--It seems a good part of

my revenue will expire in two or three years, except you will be

pleased to continue it. I have to say for 't, pray, why did you give

me so much as you have done, unless you resolve to give on as fast as

I call for it? The nation hates you already for giving so much, and

I'll hate you too, if you do not give me more. So that if you stick

not to me, you must not have a friend in England. On the other hand,

if you will give me the revenue I desire, I shall be able to do those

things for your religion and liberty, that I have had long in my

thoughts, but cannot effect them without a little more money to carry

me through. Therefore look to 't and take notice that if you do not

make me rich enough to undo you, it shall lie at your doors. For my

part I wash my hands on 't. But that I may gain your good opinion,

the best way is to acquaint you what I have done to deserve it, out

of my royal care for your religion and your property. For the first,

my proclamation is a true picture of my mind, He that cannot, as in a

glass, see my zeal for the Church of England, does not deserve any

farther satisfaction, for I declare him wilful, abominable, and not

good. Some may, perhaps, be startled, and cry, how comes this sudden

change? To which I answer, I am a changling, and that's sufficient, I

think. But to convince men farther, that I mean what I say, there are

these arguments:--

"First, I tell you so, and you know I never break my word.

"Secondly, My Lord Treasurer says so, and he never told a lye in

his life.

"Thirdly, My Lord Lauderdale will undertake it for me; and I

should be loath, by any act of mine, he should forfeit the

credit he has with you.

"If you desire more instances of my zeal, I have them for you. For

example, I have converted my natural sons from Popery; and I may say,

without vanity, it was my own work, so much the more peculiarly mine

than the begetting them. 'Twould do one's heart good to hear how

prettily George can read already in the Psalter. They are all fine

children, God bless 'em, and so like me in their understandings. But,

as I was saying, I have, to please you, given a pension to your

favourite my Lord Lauderdale; not so much that I thought he wanted

it, as that you would take it kindly. I have made Carwell dutchess of

Portsmouth, and marryed her sister to the Earl of Pembroke. I have,

at my brother's request, sent my Lord Inchequin into Barbary, to

settle the Protestant Religion among the Moors, and an English

Interest at Tangier. I have made Crew Bishop of Durham, and, at the

first word of my Lady Portsmouth, Prideaux Bishop of Chichester. I

know not, for my part, what factious men would have; but this I am

sure of, my predecessors never did anything like this, to gain the

good will of their subjects. So much for your religion, and now for

your property. My behaviour to the Bankers is a publick instance; and

the proceedings between Mrs. Hyde and Mrs. Sutton for private ones,

are such convincing evidences, that it will be needless to say any

more to 't.

"I must now acquaint you, that, by my Lord Treasurer's advice, I have

made a considerable retrenchment upon my expenses in candles and

charcoal, and do not intend to stop there, but will, with your help,

look into the late embezzlements of my dripping-pans and

kitchen-stuff; of which, by the way, upon my conscience, neither my

Lord Treasurer nor my Lord Lauderdale are guilty. I tell you my

opinion; but if you should find them dabling in that busyness, I tell

you plainly, I leave 'em to you; for, I would have the world to know,

I am not a man to be cheated.

"My Lords and Gentlemen, I desire you to believe me as you have found

me; and I do solemnly promise you, that whatsoever you give me shall

be specially managed with the same conduct, trust, sincerity, and

prudence, that I have ever practised, since my happy

restoration."[202:1]

Mock King's Speeches have often been made, but this is the first, and I

think still the best of them all.

There was no shaking off religion from the debates of those days. A new

Oaths Bill suddenly appeared in the House of Lords, where it gave rise

to one of the greatest debates that assembly has ever witnessed,

lasting seventeen days. The bishops were baited by the peers with great

spirit, and the report of the proceedings may still be read with gusto.

Marvell, in his \_Growth of Popery\_, thus describes what happened:--

"While these things were upon the anvil, the 10th of November was

come for the Parliament's sitting, but that was put off till the 13th

of April 1675. And in the meantime, which fell out most opportune for

the conspirators, these counsels were matured, and something further

to be contrived, that was yet wanting; the Parliament accordingly

meeting, and the House of Lords, as well as that of the Commons,

being in deliberation of several wholesome bills, such as the present

state of the nation required, the great design came out in a bill

unexpectedly offered one morning in the House of Lords, whereby all

such as injoyed any beneficial office, or imployment, ecclesiastical,

civil, or military, to which was added privy counsellors, justices of

the peace, and members of Parliament, were under a penalty to take

the oath, and make the declaration, and abhorrence, insuring:--

'I A.B. do declare, that it is not lawful upon any pretence

whatsoever to take up arms against the King, and that I do

abhor that traiterous position of taking arms by his authority

against his person, or against those that are commissioned by

him in pursuance of such commission. And I do swear, that I

will not at any time indeavour the alteration of the government

either in Church or State. So help me God.'

"This same oath had been brought into the House of Commons in the

plague year at Oxford, to have been imposed upon the nation, but

there, by the assistance of those very same persons that now

introduce it, 'twas thrown out, for fear of a general infection of

the vitals of this kingdom; and though it passed then in a particular

bill, known by the name of the Five Mile Act, because it only

concerned the non-conformist preachers, yet even in that, it was

thoroughly opposed by the late Earl of Southampton, whose judgement

might well have been reckoned for the standard of prudence and

loyalty."[204:1]

Of the proposed oath Marvell says, "No Conveyancer could ever in more

compendious or binding terms have drawn a dissettlement of the whole

birthright of England."

This was no mere legal quibbling.

"These things are no niceties, or remote considerations (though in

making of laws, and which must come afterwards under construction of

judges, \_durante bene placito\_, all cases are to be put and imagined)

but there being an act in Scotland for 20,000 men to march into

England upon call, and so great a body of English soldiery in France,

within summons, besides what foreigners may be obliged by treaty to

furnish, and it being so fresh in memory, what sort of persons had

lately been in commission among us, to which add the many books then

printed by license, writ, some by men of the black, one of the green

cloth, wherein the absoluteness of the English monarchy is against

all law asserted.

"All these considerations put together were sufficient to make any

honest and well advised man to conceive indeed, that upon the passing

of this oath and declaration, the whole sum of affairs depended.

"It grew therefore to the greatest contest, that has perhaps ever

been in Parliament, wherein those Lords, that were against this oath,

being assured of their own loyalty and merit, stood up now for the

English liberties with the same genius, virtue, and courage, that

their noble ancestors had formerly defended the great Charter of

England, but with so much greater commendation, in that they had here

a fairer field and a more civil way of decision; they fought it out

under all the disadvantages imaginable; they were overlaid by

numbers; the noise of the House, like the wind, was against them, and

if not the sun, the fireside was always in their faces; nor being so

few, could they, as their adversaries, withdraw to refresh themselves

in a whole day's ingagement: yet never was there a clearer

demonstration how dull a thing is humane eloquence, and greatness

how little, when the bright truth discovers all things in their

proper colours and dimensions, and shining, shoots its beams thorow

all their fallacies. It might be injurious, where all of them did so

excellently well, to attribute more to any one of those Lords than

another, unless because the Duke of Buckingham and the Earl of

Shaftesbury, have been the more reproached for this brave action, it

be requisite by a double proportion of praise to set them two on

equal terms with the rest of their companions in honour. The

particular relation in this debate, which lasted many days, with

great eagerness on both sides, and the reasons but on one, was in the

next Session burnt by order of the Lords, but the sparks of it will

eternally fly in their adversaries' faces."[205:1]

In a letter to his constituents, dated April 22, 1675, Marvell was

content to say: "The Lords sate the whole day yesterday till ten at

night without rising (and the King all the while but of our addresses

present) upon their Bill of Test in both houses and are not yet come to

the question of committing it."

After prolonged discussion the Oath Bill was sent to the Commons, where

doubtless it must have passed, had not a furious privilege quarrel over

Sir John Fagg's case made prorogation in June almost a necessity. In

October Parliament met again, and at once resolved itself into a

Committee upon Religion to prevent the growth of Popery. This time the

king made almost an end of the Parliament by a prorogation which lasted

from November 1675 until February 1677--a period of fifteen months.

On the re-assembling of Parliament the Duke of Buckingham fathered the

argument much used during the long recess, that a prorogation extending

beyond twelve months was in construction of law a dissolution.

For the expression of this opinion and the refusal to recant it the

Duke of Buckingham and three other lords were ordered to the Tower, the

king being greatly angered by the duke's request that his cook might be

allowed to wait on him. On this incident Marvell remarks: "Thus a

prorogation without precedent was to be warranted by an imprisonment

without example. A sad instance! Whereby the dignity of Parliament and

especially of the House of Peers did at present much suffer and may

probably more for the future, \_for nothing but Parliament can destroy

Parliament\_. If a House shall once be felon of itself and stop its own

breath, taking away that liberty of speech which the King verbally, and

of course, allows them (as now they had done in both houses) to what

purpose is it coming thither?"[206:1]

The character of this House of Commons did not improve with age.

Marvell writes in the \_Growth of Popery\_:--

"In matters of money they seem at first difficult, but having been

discoursed with in private, they are set right, and begin to

understand it better themselves, and to convert their brethren: for

they are all of them to be bought and sold, only their number makes

them cheaper, and each of them doth so overvalue himself, that

sometimes they outstand or let slip their own market.

"It is not to be imagined, how small things, in this case, even

members of great estates will stoop at, and most of them will do as

much for hopes as others for fruition, but if their patience be tired

out, they grow at last mutinous, and revolt to the country, till some

better occasion offer.

"Among these are some men of the best understanding were they of

equal integrity, who affect to ingross all business, to be able to

quash any good motion by parliamentary skill, unless themselves be

the authors, and to be the leading men of the House, and for their

natural lives to continue so. But these are men that have been once

fooled, most of them, and discovered, and slighted at Court, so that

till some turn of State shall let them in their adversaries' place,

in the mean time they look sullen, make big motions, and contrive

specious bills for the subject, yet only wait the opportunity to be

the instruments of the same counsels which they oppose in others.

"There is a third part still remaining, but as contrary in themselves

as light and darkness; those are either the worst, or the best of

men; the first are most profligate persons, they have neither

estates, consciences, nor good manners, yet are therefore picked out

as the necessary men, and whose votes will go furthest; the charges

of their elections are defrayed, whatever they amount to, tables are

kept for them at Whitehall, and through Westminster, that they may be

ready at hand, within call of a question: all of them are received

into pension, and know their pay-day, which they never fail of:

insomuch that a great officer was pleased to say, 'That they came

about him like so many jack-daws for cheese at the end of every

Session.' If they be not in Parliament, they must be in prison, and

as they are protected themselves, by privilege, so they sell their

protections to others, to the obstruction so many years together of

the law of the land, and the publick justice; for these it is, that

the long and frequent adjournments are calculated, but all whether

the court, or the monopolizers of the country party, or those that

profane the title of old cavaliers, do equally, though upon differing

reasons, like death apprehend a dissolution. But notwithstanding

these, there is an handful of salt, a sparkle of soul, that hath

hitherto preserved this gross body from putrefaction, some gentlemen

that are constant, invariable, indeed Englishmen; such as are above

hopes, or fears, or dissimulation, that can neither flatter, nor

betray their king or country: but being conscious of their own

loyalty and integrity, proceed throw good and bad report, to acquit

themselves in their duty to God, their prince, and their nation;

although so small a scantling in number, that men can scarce reckon

of them more than a \_quorum\_; insomuch that it is less difficult to

conceive how fire was first brought to light in the world than how

any good thing could ever be produced out of an House of Commons so

constituted, unless as that is imagined to have come from the rushing

of trees, or battering of rocks together, by accident, so these, by

their clashing with one another, have struck out an useful effect

from so unlikely causes. But whatsoever casual good hath been wrought

at any time by the assimilation of ambitious, factious and

disappointed members, to the little, but solid, and unbiassed party,

the more frequent ill effects, and consequences of so unequal a

mixture, so long continued, are demonstrable and apparent. For while

scarce any man comes thither with respect to the publick service, but

in design to make and raise his fortune, it is not to be expressed,

the debauchery, and lewdness, which, upon occasion of election to

Parliaments, are now grown habitual thorow the nation. So that the

vice, and the expence, are risen to such a prodigious height, that

few sober men can indure to stand to be chosen on such conditions.

From whence also arise feuds, and perpetual animosities, over most of

the counties and corporations, while gentlemen of worth, spirit, and

ancient estates and dependances, see themselves overpowered in their

own neighbourhood by the drunkness and bribery, of their competitors.

But if nevertheless any worthy person chance to carry the election,

some mercenary or corrupt sheriff makes a double return, and so the

cause is handed to the Committee of elections, who ask no better, but

are ready to adopt his adversary into the House if he be not

legitimate. And if the gentleman agrieved seek his remedy against the

sheriff in Westminster-Hall, and the proofs be so palpable, that the

King's Bench cannot invent how to do him injustice, yet the major

part of the twelve judges shall upon better consideration vacate the

sheriff's fine and reverse the judgement; but those of them that dare

dissent from their brethren are in danger to be turned off the bench

without any cause assigned. While men therefore care not thus how

they get into the House of Commons, neither can it be expected that

they should make any conscience of what they do there, but they are

only intent how to reimburse themselves (if their elections were at

their own charge) or how to bargain their votes for a place or a

pension. They list themselves straightways into some Court faction,

and it is as well-known among them, to what Lord each of them

retain, as when formerly they wore coats and badges. By this long

haunting so together, they are grown too so familiar among

themselves, that all reverence of their own Assembly is lost, that

they live together not like Parliament men, but like so many good

fellows met together in a publick house to make merry. And which is

yet worse, by being so thoroughly acquainted, they understand their

number and party, so that the use of so publick a counsel is

frustrated, there is no place for deliberation, no perswading by

reason, but they can see one another's votes through both throats and

cravats before they hear them.

"Where the cards are so well known, they are only fit for a cheat,

and no fair gamester but would throw them under the table."[209:1]

It is a melancholy picture.

Here, perhaps, may be best inserted the story about the proffered bribe.

The story is entitled to small credit, but as helping to swell and

maintain a tradition concerning an historical character about whom

little is positively known, it can hardly escape mention in any

biography of Marvell. A pamphlet printed in Ireland (1754) supplies an

easy flowing version of the tale.

"The borough of Hull, in the reign of Charles II., chose Andrew

Marvell, a young gentleman of little or no fortune, and maintained

him in London for the service of the public. His understanding,

integrity, and spirit, were dreadful to the then infamous

administration. Persuaded that he would be theirs for properly

asking, they sent his old school-fellow, the Lord Treasurer Danby, to

renew acquaintance with him in his garret. At parting, the Lord

Treasurer, out of \_pure affection\_, slipped into his hand an order

upon the treasury for £1000, and then went to his chariot. Marvell,

looking at the paper, calls after the Treasurer, 'My Lord, I request

another moment.' They went up again to the garret, and Jack, the

servant boy, was called. 'Jack, child, what had I for dinner

yesterday?' 'Don't you remember, sir? you had the little shoulder of

mutton that you ordered me to bring from a woman in the market.'

'Very right, child.' 'What have I for dinner to-day?' 'Don't you

know, sir, that you bid me lay by the \_blade-bone to broil\_.' ''Tis

so, very right, child, go away.' 'My Lord, do you hear that? Andrew

Marvell's dinner is provided; there's your piece of paper. I want it

not. I knew the sort of kindness you intended. I live here to serve

my constituents: the ministry may seek men for their purpose; \_I am

not one\_.'"[210:1]

One more letter remains to be quoted:--

\_To William Ramsden, Esq.\_

"\_June 10, 1678.\_

"DEAR WILL,--I have time to tell you thus much of publick matters.

The patience of the Scots, under their oppressions, is not to be

paralleled in any history. They still continue their extraordinary

and numerous, but peaceable, field conventicles. One Mr. Welch is

their arch-minister, and the last letter I saw tells, people were

going forty miles to hear him. There came out, about Christmas last,

here, a large book concerning the growth of popery and arbitrary

government. There have been great rewards offered in private, and

considerable in the Gazette, to any one who could inform of the

author or printer, but not yet discovered. Three or four printed

books since have described, as near as it was proper to go, the man

being a Member of Parliament, Mr. Marvell, to have been the author;

but if he had, surely he should not have escaped being questioned in

Parliament or some other place. My good wishes attend you."

The last letter Andrew Marvell wrote to his constituents is dated July

6, 1678. The member for Hull died in August 1678. The Parliament in

which he had sat continuously for eighteen years was at last dissolved

on the 30th of December in the year of his death.

FOOTNOTES:

[181:1] Grosart, vol. iv. p. 248.

[183:1] Ranke's \_History of England\_, vol. iii. p. 471.

[185:1] Ranke, vol. iii. p. 520.

[187:1] Grosart, vol. iv. (\_Growth of Popery\_), p. 275.

[187:2] \_Ibid.\_, p. 279.

[189:1] See note to Dr. Airy's edition of Burnet's \_History\_, vol. ii.

p. 73.

[199:1] Marvell's commendatory verses on "Mr. Milton's Paradise Lost"

(so entitled in the volume of 1681) were first printed in the Second

Edition (1674) of Milton's great poem. Marvell did not agree with Dryden

in thinking that \_Paradise Lost\_ would be improved by rhyme, and says so

in these verses.

[202:1] Printed in Captain Thompson's edition, vol. i. p. 432.

[204:1] Grosart, vol. iv. p. 304.

[205:1] Grosart, vol. iv. p. 308.

[206:1] Grosart, vol. iv. p. 322.

[209:1] Grosart, vol. iv. p. 327.

[210:1] This story is first told in a balder form by Cooke in his

edition of 1726. It may be read as Cooke tells it in the \_Dictionary of

National Biography\_, xxxvi., p. 329. There was probably some foundation

for it.

CHAPTER VII

FINAL SATIRES AND DEATH

Marvell was no orator or debater, and though a member of Parliament for

nearly eighteen years, but rarely opened his mouth in the House of

Commons. His old enemy, Samuel Parker, whilst venting his posthumous

spite upon the author of the \_Rehearsal Transprosed\_, would have us

believe "that our Poet could not speak without a sound basting:

whereupon having frequently undergone this discipline, he learnt at

length to hold his tongue." There is no good reason for believing the

Bishop of Oxford, but it is the fact that, however taught, Marvell had

learnt to hold his tongue. His longest reported speech will be found in

the \_Parliamentary History\_, vol. iv. p. 855.[211:1] When we remember

how frequently in those days Marvell's pet subjects were under fierce

discussion, we must recognise how fixed was his habit of

self-repression.

On one occasion only are we enabled to catch a glimpse of Marvell

"before the Speaker." It was in March 1677, and is thus reported in the

\_Parliamentary History\_, though no mention of the incident is made in

the Journals of the House:--

"\_Debate on Mr. Andrew Marvell's striking Sir Philip Harcourt, March

29.\_--Mr. Marvell, coming up the house to his place, stumbling at Sir

Philip Harcourt's foot, in recovering himself, seemed to give Sir

Philip a box on the ear. The Speaker acquainting the house 'That he

saw a box on the ear given, and it was his duty to inform the house

of it,' this debate ensued.

"Mr. \_Marvell\_. What passed was through great acquaintance and

familiarity betwixt us. He neither gave him an affront, nor intended

him any. But the Speaker cast a severe reflection upon him yesterday,

when he was out of the house, and he hopes that, as the Speaker keeps

us in order, he will keep himself in order for the future.

"Sir \_John Ernly\_. What the Speaker said yesterday was in Marvell's

vindication. If these two gentlemen are friends already, he would not

make them friends, and would let the matter go no further.

"Sir \_Job. Charlton\_ is sorry a thing of this nature has happened,

and no more sense of it. You in the Chair, and a stroke struck!

Marvell deserves for his reflection on you, Mr. Speaker, to be called

in question. You cannot do right to the house unless you question it;

and moves to have Marvell sent to the Tower.

"The \_Speaker\_. I saw a blow on one side, and a stroke on the other.

"Sir \_Philip Harcourt\_. Marvell had some kind of a stumble, and mine

was only a thrust; and the thing was accidental.

"Sir \_H. Goodrick\_. The persons have declared the thing to be

accidental, but if done in jest, not fit to be done here. He believes

it an accident, and hopes the house thinks so too.

"Mr. Sec. \_Williamson\_. This does appear, that the action for that

time was in some heat. He cannot excuse Marvell who made a very

severe reflection on the Speaker, and since it is so enquired,

whether you have done your duty, he would have Marvell withdraw, that

you may consider of it.

"Col. \_Sandys\_. Marvell has given you trouble, and instead of

excusing himself, reflects upon the Speaker: a strange confidence, if

not an impudence!

"Mr. \_Marvell\_. Has so great a respect to the privilege, order, and

decency, of the house, that he is content to be a sacrifice for it.

As to the casualty that happened, he saw a seat empty, and going to

sit in it, his friend put him by, in a jocular manner, and what he

did was of the same nature. So much familiarity has ever been between

them, that there was no heat in the thing. He is sorry he gave an

offence to the house. He seldom speaks to the house, and if he commit

an error, in the manner of his speech, being not so well tuned, he

hopes it is not an offence. Whether out or in the house, he has a

respect to the Speaker. But he has been informed that the Speaker

resumed something he had said, with reflection. He did not think fit

to complain of Mr. Seymour to Mr. Speaker. He believes that is not

reflective. He desires to comport himself with all respect to the

house. This passage with Harcourt was a perfect casualty, and if you

think fit, he will withdraw, and sacrifice himself to the censure of

the house.

"Sir \_Henry Capel\_. The blow given Harcourt was with his hat; the

Speaker cast his eye upon both of them, and both respected him. He

would not aggravate the thing. Marvell submits, and he would have you

leave the thing as it is.

"\_Sir Robert Holmes\_ saw the whole action. Marvell flung about three

or four times with his hat, and then gave Harcourt a box on the ear.

"Sir \_Henry Capel\_ desires, now that his honour is concerned, that

Holmes may explain, whether he saw not Marvell with his hat only give

Harcourt the stroke 'at that time.' Possibly 'at another time' it

might be.

"The \_Speaker\_. Both Holmes and Capel are in the right. But Marvell

struck Harcourt so home, that his fist, as well as his hat, hit him.

"Sir \_R. Howard\_ hopes the house will not have Harcourt say he

received a blow, when he has not. He thinks what has been said by

them both sufficient.

"Mr. \_Garraway\_ hopes, that by the debate we shall not make the thing

greater than it is. Would have them both reprimanded for it.

"Mr. Sec. \_Williamson\_ submits the honour of the house to the house.

Would have them made friends, and give that necessary assurance to

the house, and he, for his part, remains satisfied.

"Sir \_Tho. Meres\_. By our long sitting together, we lose, by our

familiarity and acquaintance, the decencies of the house. He has seen

500 in the house, and people very orderly; not so much as to read a

letter, or set up a foot. One could scarce know anybody in the house,

but him that spoke. He would have the Speaker declare that order

ought to be kept; but as to that gentleman (Marvell) to rest

satisfied."

The general impression left upon the mind is that of a friendly-familiar

but choleric gentleman, full of likes and dislikes, readier with his

tongue in the lobby than with "set" speeches in the Chamber. A solitary

politician with a biting pen. Satirists must not complain if they have

enemies.

Marvell's vein of satire was never worked out, and the political poems

of his last decade are fuller than ever of a savage humour. How he kept

his ears is a repeated wonder. He is said to have been on terms of

intimate friendship with Prince Rupert, and it is a steady tradition

that the king was one of his amused readers. It is hard to believe that

even Charles the Second could have seen any humour, good or bad, in such

a couplet:--

"The poor Priapus King, led by the nose,

Looks as a thing set up to scare the crows."

Nor can the following verses have been read with much pleasure, either

at Whitehall or in a punt whilst fishing at Windsor. Their occasion was

the setting up in the stocks-market in the City of London of a statue of

the king by Sir Robert Viner, a city knight, to whom Charles was very

heavily in debt. Sir Robert, having a frugal mind, had acquired a statue

of John Sobieski trampling on the Turk, which, judiciously altered, was

made to pass muster so as to represent the Pensioner of Louis the

Fourteenth and the Vendor of Dunkirk trampling on Oliver Cromwell.

"As cities that to the fierce conqueror yield

Do at their own charges their citadels build;

So Sir Robert advanced the King's statue in token

Of bankers defeated, and Lombard Street broken.

Some thought it a knightly and generous deed,

Obliging the city with a King and a steed;

When with honour he might from his word have gone back;

He that vows in a calm is absolved by a wrack.

But now it appears, from the first to the last,

To be a revenge and a malice forecast;

Upon the King's birthday to set up a thing

That shows him a monkey much more than a King.

When each one that passes finds fault with the horse,

Yet all do affirm that the King is much worse;

And some by the likeness Sir Robert suspect

That he did for the King his own statue erect.

Thus to see him disfigured--the herb-women chid,

Who up on their panniers more gracefully rid;

And so loose in his seat--that all persons agree,

E'en Sir William Peak[215:1] sits much firmer than he.

But Sir Robert affirms that we do him much wrong;

'Tis the 'graver at work, to reform him, so long;

But, alas! he will never arrive at his end,

For it is such a King as no chisel can mend.

But with all his errors restore us our King,

If ever you hope in December for spring;

For though all the world cannot show such another,

Yet we'd rather have him than his bigoted brother."

Of a more exalted vein of satire the following extract may serve as an

example:--

BRITANNIA AND RALEIGH

"\_Brit.\_ Ah! Raleigh, when thou didst thy breath resign

To trembling James, would I had quitted mine.

Cubs didst thou call them? Hadst thou seen this brood

Of earls, and dukes, and princes of the blood,

No more of Scottish race thou would'st complain,

Those would be blessings in this spurious reign.

Awake, arise from thy long blessed repose,

Once more with me partake of mortal woes!

\_Ral.\_ What mighty power has forced me from my rest?

Oh! mighty queen, why so untimely dressed?

\_Brit.\_ Favoured by night, concealed in this disguise,

Whilst the lewd court in drunken slumber lies,

I stole away, and never will return,

Till England knows who did her city burn;

Till cavaliers shall favourites be deemed,

And loyal sufferers by the court esteemed;

Till Leigh and Galloway shall bribes reject;

Thus Osborne's golden cheat I shall detect:

Till atheist Lauderdale shall leave this land,

And Commons' votes shall cut-nose guards disband:

Till Kate a happy mother shall become,

Till Charles loves parliaments, and James hates Rome.

\_Ral.\_ What fatal crimes make you for ever fly

Your once loved court, and martyr's progeny?

\_Brit.\_ A colony of French possess the Court,

Pimps, priests, buffoons, i' the privy-chamber sport.

Such slimy monsters ne'er approached the throne

Since Pharaoh's reign, nor so defiled a crown.

I' the sacred ear tyrannic arts they croak,

Pervert his mind, his good intentions choke;

Tell him of golden Indies, fairy lands,

Leviathan, and absolute commands.

Thus, fairy-like, the King they steal away,

And in his room a Lewis changeling lay.

How oft have I him to himself restored.

In's left the scale, in 's right hand placed the sword?

Taught him their use, what dangers would ensue

To those that tried to separate these two?

The bloody Scottish chronicle turned o'er,

Showed him how many kings, in purple gore,

Were hurled to hell, by learning tyrant lore?

The other day famed Spenser I did bring,

In lofty notes Tudor's blest reign to sing;

How Spain's proud powers her virgin arms controlled,

And golden days in peaceful order rolled;

How like ripe fruit she dropped from off her throne,

Full of grey hairs, good deeds, and great renown.

...

\_Ral.\_ Once more, great queen, thy darling strive to save,

Snatch him again from scandal and the grave;

Present to 's thoughts his long-scorned parliament,

The basis of his throne and government.

In his deaf ears sound his dead father's name:

Perhaps that spell may 's erring soul reclaim:

Who knows what good effects from thence may spring?

'Tis godlike good to save a falling king.

\_Brit.\_ Raleigh, no more, for long in vain I've tried

The Stuart from the tyrant to divide;

As easily learned virtuosos may

With the dog's blood his gentle kind convey

Into the wolf, and make his guardian turn

To the bleating flock, by him so lately torn:

If this imperial juice once taint his blood,

'Tis by no potent antidote withstood.

Tyrants, like lep'rous kings, for public weal

Should be immured, lest the contagion steal

Over the whole. The elect of the Jessean line

To this firm law their sceptre did resign;

And shall this base tyrannic brood invade

Eternal laws, by God for mankind made?

To the serene Venetian state I'll go,

From her sage mouth famed principles to know;

With her the prudence of the ancients read,

To teach my people in their steps to tread;

By their great pattern such a state I'll frame,

Shall eternize a glorious lasting name.

Till then, my Raleigh, teach our noble youth

To love sobriety, and holy truth;

Watch and preside over their tender age,

Lest court corruption should their souls engage;

Teach them how arts, and arms, in thy young days,

Employed our youth--not taverns, stews, and plays;

Tell them the generous scorn their race does owe

To flattery, pimping, and a gaudy show;

Teach them to scorn the Carwells, Portsmouths, Nells,

The Clevelands, Osbornes, Berties, Lauderdales:

Poppaea, Tigelline, and Arteria's name,

All yield to these in lewdness, lust, and fame.

Make them admire the Talbots, Sydneys, Veres,

Drake, Cavendish, Blake, men void of slavish fears,

True sons of glory, pillars of the state,

On whose famed deeds all tongues and writers wait.

When with fierce ardour their bright souls do burn,

Back to my dearest country I'll return."

The dialogue between the two horses, which bore upon their respective

backs the stone effigies of Charles the First at Charing Cross and

Charles the Second at Wool-Church, is, in its own rough way, masterly

satire for the popular ear.

"If the Roman Church, good Christians, oblige ye

To believe man and beast have spoken in effigy,

Why should we not credit the public discourses,

In a dialogue between two inanimate horses?

The horses I mean of Wool-Church and Charing,

Who told many truths worth any man's hearing,

Since Viner and Osborn did buy and provide 'em

For the two mighty monarchs who now do bestride 'em.

The stately brass stallion, and the white marble steed,

The night came together, by all 'tis agreed;

When both kings were weary of sitting all day,

They stole off, incognito, each his own way;

And then the two jades, after mutual salutes,

Not only discoursed, but fell to disputes."

The dialogue is too long to be quoted. Charles the Second's steed

boldly declares:--

"De Witt and Cromwell had each a brave soul,

I freely declare it, I am for old Noll;

Though his government did a tyrant resemble,

He made England great, and his enemies tremble."

Mr. Hollis, when he sent the picture of Cromwell by Cooper to Sidney

Sussex College, is said to have written beneath it the lines just

quoted.

The satire ends thus:--

"\_Charing Cross.\_ But canst them devise when things will be mended?

\_Wool-Church.\_ When the reign of the line of the Stuarts is ended.

\_Charing Cross.\_ Then England, rejoice, thy redemption draws nigh;

Thy oppression together with kingship shall die.

\_Chorus.\_ A Commonwealth, a Commonwealth we proclaim to the nation,

For the gods have repented the King's restoration."

These probably are the lines which spread the popular, but mistaken,

belief that Marvell was a Republican.

Andrew Marvell died in his lodgings in London on the 16th of August

1678. Colonel Grosvenor, writing to George Treby, M.P. (afterwards Chief

of the Common Pleas), on the 17th of August, reports "Andrew Marvell

died yesterday of apoplexy." Parliament was not sitting at the time.

What was said of the elder Andrew may also be said of the younger: he

was happy in the moment of his death. The one just escaped the Civil

War, the other the Popish Plot.

Marvell was thought to have been poisoned. Such a suspicion in those bad

times was not far-fetched. His satires, rough but moving, had been

widely read, and his fears for the Constitution, his dread of

"The grim Monster, Arbitrary Power,

The ugliest Giant ever trod the earth,"

infested many breasts, and bred terror.

"Marvell, the Island's watchful sentinel,

Stood in the gap and bravely kept his post."

The post was one of obvious danger, and

"Whether Fate or Art untwin'd his thread

Remains in doubt."[220:1]

The doubt has now been dissipated by the research of an accomplished

physician, Dr. Gee, who in 1874 communicated to the \_Athenæum\_ (March 7,

1874) an extract from Richard Morton's {Greek: Pyretologia} (1692),

containing a full account of Marvell's sickness and death. Art "untwin'd

his thread," but it was the doctor's art. Dr. Gee's translation of

Morton's medical Latin is as follows:--

"In this manner was that most famous man Andrew Marvell carried off

from amongst the living before his time, to the great loss of the

republic, and especially the republic of letters; through the

ignorance of an old conceited doctor, who was in the habit on all

occasions of raving excessively against Peruvian bark, as if it were

a common plague. Howbeit, without any clear indication, in the

interval after a third fit of regular tertian ague, and by way of

preparation (so that all things might seem to be done most

methodically), blood was copiously drawn from the patient, who was

advanced in years." [Here follow more details of treatment, which I

pass over.] "The way having been made ready after this fashion, at

the beginning of the next fit, a great febrifuge was given, a

draught, that is to say, of Venice treacle, etc. By the doctor's

orders, the patient was covered up close with blankets, say rather,

was buried under them; and composed himself to sleep and sweat, so

that he might escape the cold shivers which are wont to accompany the

onset of the ague-fit. He was seized with the deepest sleep and

colliquative sweats, and in the short space of twenty-four hours from

the time of the ague-fit, he died comatose. He died, who, had a

single ounce of Peruvian bark been properly given, might easily have

escaped, in twenty-four hours, from the jaws of the grave and the

disease: and so burning with anger, I informed the doctor, when he

told me this story without any sense of shame."

Marvell was buried on the 18th of August, "under the pews in the south

side of St. Giles's Church in the Fields, under the window wherein is

painted on glass a red lion." So writes the invaluable Aubrey, who tells

us he had the account from the sexton who made the grave.

In 1678 St. Giles's Church was a brick structure built by Laud. The

present imposing church was built on the site of the old one in 1730-34.

In 1774 Captain Thompson, so he tells us, "visited the grand mausoleum

under the church of St. Giles, to search for the coffin in which Mr.

Marvell was placed: in this vault were deposited upwards of a thousand

bodies, but I could find no plate of an earlier date than 1722; I do

therefore suppose the new church is built upon the former burial place."

The poet's grand-nephew, Mr. Robert Nettleton, in 1764 placed on the

north side of the present church, upon a black marble slab, a long

epitaph, still to be seen, recording the fact that "near to this place

lyeth the body of Andrew Marvell, Esquire." At no great distance from

this slab is the tombstone, recently brought in from the graveyard

outside, of \_Georgius Chapman, Poeta\_, a fine Roman monument, prepared

by the care and at the cost of the poet's friend, Inigo Jones. Still

left exposed, in what is now a doleful garden (not at all Marvellian),

is the tombstone of Richard Penderel of Boscobel, one of the five yeomen

brothers who helped Charles to escape after Worcester. Lord Herbert of

Cherbury, in 1648, and Shirley the dramatist, in 1666, had been carried

to the same place of sepulture.

Aubrey describes Marvell "as of middling stature, pretty strong-set,

roundish faced, cherry-cheeked, hazell eye, brown hair. He was, in his

conversation, very modest, and of very few words. Though he loved wine,

he would never drink hard in company, and was wont to say that he would

not play the good fellow in any man's company in whose hands he would

not trust his life. He kept bottles of wine at his lodgings, and many

times he would drink liberally by himself and to refresh his spirit and

exalt his muse. James Harrington (author of \_Oceana\_) was his intimate

friend; J. Pell, D.D., was one of his acquaintances. He had not a

general acquaintance."

Dr. Pell, one may remark, was a great friend of Hobbes.

In March 1679 joint administration was granted by the Prerogative Court

of Canterbury, \_Mariæ Marvell relictæ et Johni Greni Creditori\_. This is

the first time we hear of there being any wife in the case. A creditor

of a deceased person could not obtain administration without citing the

next of kin, but a widow was entitled, under a statute of Henry

VIII., as of right, to administration, and it may be that Mr.

Green thought the quickest way of being paid his debt was to invent a

widow. The practice of the court required an affidavit from the widow

deposing that she was the lawful relict of the deceased, but this

assertion on oath seems in ordinary cases to have been sufficient, if

the customary fees were forthcoming. Captain Thompson roundly asserts

that the alleged Mary Marvell was a cheat, and no more than the

lodging-house keeper where he had last lived--and Marvell was a

migratory man.[223:1] Mary Marvell's name appears once again, in the

forefront of the first edition of Marvell's \_Poems\_ (1681), where she

certifies all the contents to be her husband's works. This may have been

a publisher's, as the affidavit may have been a creditor's, artifice. As

against this, Mr. Grosart, who believed in Mary Marvell, reminds us that

Mr. Robert Boulter, the publisher of the poems, was a most respectable

man, and a friend both of Milton's and Marvell's, and not at all likely

either to cheat the public with a falsely signed certificate, or to be

cheated by a London lodging-house keeper. Whatever "Mary Marvell" may

have been, "widow, wife, or maid," she is heard of no more.

Hull was not wholly unmindful of her late and (William Wilberforce

notwithstanding) her most famous member. "On Thursday the 26th of

September 1678, in consideration of the kindness the Town and Borough

had for Andrew Marvell, Esq., one of the Burgesses of Parliament for the

same Borough (lately deceased), and for his great merits from the

Corporation. It is this day ordered by the Court that Fifty pounds be

paid out of the Town's Chest towards the discharge of his funerals

(\_sic\_), and to perpetuate his memory by a gravestone" (\_Bench Books of

Hull\_).

The incumbent of Trinity Church is said to have objected to the erection

of any monument. At all events there is none. Marvell had many enemies

in the Church. Sharp, afterwards Archbishop of York, was a Yorkshire

man, and had been domestic chaplain to Sir Heneage Finch, a

lawyer-member, much lashed by Marvell's bitter pen. Sharp had also taken

part in the quarrel with the Dissenters, and is reported to have been

very much opposed to any Hull monument to Marvell. Captain Thompson says

"the Epitaph which the Town of Hull caused to be erected to Marvell's

memory was torn down by the Zealots of the King's party." There is no

record of this occurrence.

There are several portraits of Marvell in existence--one now being in

the National Portrait Gallery. A modern statue in marble adorns the Town

Hall of Hull.

FOOTNOTES:

[211:1] In reading the early volumes of the \_Parliamentary History\_ the

question has to be asked, What authority is there for the reports of

speeches? In Charles the Second's time some of the speakers, both in the

Lords and Commons, evidently communicated their orations to the press.

[215:1] Lord Mayor, 1667.

[220:1] See \_Marvell's Ghost\_, in \_Poems on Affairs of State\_.

[223:1] The cottage at Highgate, long called 'Marvell's Cottage,' has

now disappeared. Several of Marvell's letters were written from

Highgate.

CHAPTER VIII

WORK AS A MAN OF LETTERS

Marvell's work as a man of letters easily divides itself into the

inevitable three parts. \_First\_, as a poet properly so called; \_Second\_,

as a political satirist using rhyme; and \_Third\_, as a writer of prose.

Upon Marvell's work as a poet properly so called that curious, floating,

ever-changing population to whom it is convenient to refer as "the

reading public," had no opportunity of forming any real opinion until

after the poet's death, namely, when the small folio of 1681 made its

appearance. This volume, although not containing the \_Horatian Ode upon

Cromwell's Return from Ireland\_ or the lines upon Cromwell's death, did

contain, saving these exceptions, all the best of Marvell's verse.

How this poetry was received, to whom and to how many it gave pleasure,

we have not the means of knowing. The book, like all other good books,

had to take its chance. Good poetry is never exactly unpopular--its

difficulty is to get a hearing, to secure a \_vogue\_. I feel certain that

from 1681 onwards many ingenuous souls read \_Eyes and Tears\_, \_The

Bermudas\_, \_The Nymph complaining for the Death of her Fawn\_, \_To his

Coy Mistress\_, \_Young Love\_, and \_The Garden\_ with pure delight. In 1699

the poet Pomfret, of whose \_Choice\_ Dr. Johnson said in 1780, "perhaps

no composition in our language has been oftener perused," and who

Southey in 1807 declared to be "the most popular of English poets"; in

1699, I say, this poet Pomfret says in a preface, sensibly enough, "to

please everyone would be a New Thing, and to write so as to please no

Body would be as New, for even Quarles and Wythers (\_sic\_) have their

Admirers." So liable is the public taste to fluctuations and reversals,

that to-day, though Quarles and Wither are not popular authors, they

certainly number many more readers than Pomfret, Southey's "most popular

of English poets," who has now, it is to be feared, finally disappeared

even from the Anthologies. But if Quarles and Wither had their admirers

even in 1699, the poet Marvell, we may be sure, had his also.

Marvell had many poetical contemporaries--five-and-twenty at

least--poets of mark and interest, to most of whom, as well as to some

of his immediate predecessors, he stood, as I must suppose, in some

degree of poetical relationship. With Milton and Dryden no comparison

will suggest itself, but with Donne and Cowley, with Waller and Denham,

with Butler and the now wellnigh forgotten Cleveland, with Walker and

Charles Cotton, with Rochester and Dorset, some resemblances, certain

influences, may be found and traced. From the order of his mind and his

prose style, I should judge Marvell to have been both a reader and a

critic of his contemporaries in verse and prose--though of his

criticisms little remains. Of Butler he twice speaks with great respect,

and his sole reference to the dead Cleveland is kindly. Of Milton we

know what he thought, whilst Aubrey tells us that he once heard Marvell

say that the Earl of Rochester was the only man in England that had the

true vein of satire.

Be these influences what they may or must have been, to us Marvell

occupies, as a poet, a niche by himself. A finished master of his art he

never was. He could not write verses like his friend Lovelace, or like

Cowley's \_Chronicle\_ or Waller's lines "On a Girdle." He had not the

inexhaustible, astonishing (though tiresome) wit of Butler. He is often

clumsy and sometimes almost babyish. One has frequently occasion to

wonder how a man of business could allow himself to be tickled by such

obvious straws as are too many of the conceits which give him pleasure.

To attribute all the conceits of this period to the influence of Dr.

Donne is but a poor excuse after all. The worst thing that can be said

against poetry is that there is so much tedium in it. The glorious

moments are all too few. It is his honest recognition of this woeful

fact that makes Dr. Johnson, with all his faults lying thick about him,

the most consolatory of our critics to the ordinary reading man.

"Tediousness is the most fatal of all faults.... Unhappily this

pernicious failure is that which an author is least able to discover. We

are seldom tiresome to ourselves.... Perhaps no man ever thought a line

superfluous when he wrote it" (\_Lives of the Poets\_. Under \_Prior\_--see

also under \_Butler\_).

That Marvell is never tiresome I will not assert. But he too has his

glorious moments, and they are all his own. In the whole compass of our

poetry there is nothing quite like Marvell's love of gardens and woods,

of meads and rivers and birds. It is a love not learnt from books, not

borrowed from brother-poets. It is not indulged in to prove anything. It

is all sheer enjoyment.

"Bind me, ye woodbines, in your twines,

Curb me about, ye gadding vines,

And oh, so close your circles lace,

That I may never leave this place!

But, lest your fetters prove too weak,

Ere I your silken bondage break,

Do you, O brambles, chain me too,

And, courteous briars, nail me through.

...

Here at the fountain's sliding foot,

Or at some fruit-tree's mossy root,

Casting the body's vest aside,

My soul into the boughs does glide;

There, like a bird, it sits and sings."

No poet is happier than Marvell in creating the impression that he made

his verses out of doors.

"He saw the partridge drum in the woods;

He heard the woodcock's evening hymn;

He found the tawny thrush's broods,

And the shy hawk did wait for him.

What others did at distance hear

And guessed within the thicket's gloom

Was shown to this philosopher,

And at his bidding seemed to come."

(From Emerson's \_Wood Notes\_.)

Marvell's immediate fame as a true poet was, I dare say, obscured for a

good while both by its original note (for originality is always

forbidding at first sight) and by its author's fame as a satirist, and

his reputation as a lover of "liberty's glorious feast." It was as one

of the poets encountered in the \_Poems on Affairs of State\_ (fifth

edition, 1703) that Marvell was best known during the greater part of

the eighteenth century. As Milton's friend Marvell had, as it were, a

side-chapel in the great Miltonic temple. The patriotic member of

Parliament, who refused in his poverty the Lord-Treasurer Danby's

proffered bribe, became a character in history before the exquisite

quality of his garden-poetry was recognised. There was a cult for

Liberty in the middle of the eighteenth century, and Marvell's name was

on the list of its professors. Wordsworth's sonnet has preserved this

tradition for us.

"Great men have been among us; hands that penn'd

And tongues that utter'd wisdom, better none:

The later Sydney, Marvell, Harrington."

In 1726 Thomas Cooke printed an edition of Marvell's works which

contains the poetry that was in the folio of 1681, and in 1772 Cooke's

edition was reprinted by T. Davies. It was probably Davies's edition

that Charles Lamb, writing to Godwin on Sunday, 14th December 1800, says

he "was just going to possess": a notable addition to Lamb's library,

and an event in the history of the progress of Marvell's poetical

reputation. Captain Thompson's edition, containing the \_Horatian Ode\_

and other pieces, followed in 1776. In the great Poetical Collection of

the Booksellers (1779-1781) which they improperly[229:1] called

"Johnson's \_Poets\_" (improperly, because the poets were, with four

exceptions, the choice not of the biographer but of the booksellers,

anxious to retain their imaginary copyright), Marvell has no place. Mr.

George Ellis, in his \_Specimens\_ of the early English poets first

published in 1803, printed from Marvell \_Daphne and Chloe\_ (in part) and

\_Young Love\_. When Mr. Bowles, that once famous sonneteer, edited Pope

in 1806, he, by way of belittling Pope, quoted two lines from Marvell,

now well known, but unfamiliar in 1806:--

"And through the hazels thick espy

The hatching throstle's shining eye."

He remarked upon them, "the last circumstance is new, highly poetical,

and could only have been described by one who was a real lover of

nature and a witness of her beauties in her most solitary retirement."

On this Mark Pattison makes the comment that the lines only prove that

Marvell when a boy went bird-nesting (\_Essays\_, vol. ii. p. 374), a

pursuit denied to Pope by his manifold infirmities. The poet Campbell,

in his \_Specimens\_ (1819), gave an excellent sketch of Marvell's life,

and selected \_The Bermudas\_, \_The Nymph and Fawn\_, and \_Young Love\_.

Then came, fresh from talk with Charles Lamb, Hazlitt, with his \_Select

Poets\_ (1825), which contains the \_Horatian Ode\_, \_Bermudas\_, \_To his

Coy Mistress\_, \_The Nymph and Fawn\_, \_A Drop of Dew\_, \_The Garden\_, \_The

Gallery\_, \_Upon the Hill and Grove at Billborow\_. In this choice we may

see the hand of Charles Lamb, as Tennyson's may be noticed in the

selection made in Palgrave's \_Golden Treasury\_ (1863). Dean Trench in

his \_Household Book of English Poetry\_ (1869) gives \_Eyes and Tears\_,

the \_Horatian Ode\_, and \_A Drop of Dew\_. In Mr. Ward's \_English Poets\_

(1880) Marvell is represented by \_The Garden\_, \_A Drop of Dew\_, \_The

Bermudas\_, \_Young Love\_, the \_Horatian Ode\_, and the \_Lines on Paradise

Lost\_. Thanks to these later Anthologies and to the quotations from \_The

Garden\_ and \_Upon Appleton House\_ in the \_Essays of Elia\_, Marvell's

fame as a true poet has of recent years become widespread, and is now,

whatever vicissitudes it may have endured, well established.

As a satirist in rhyme Marvell has shared the usual and not undeserved

fate of almost all satirists of their age and fellow-men. The authors of

lines written in heat to give expression to the anger of the hour may

well be content if their effusions give the pain or teach the lesson

they were intended to give or teach. If you lash the age, you do so

presumably for the benefit of the age. It is very hard to transmit even

a fierce and genuine indignation from one age to another. Marvell's

satires were too hastily composed, too roughly constructed, too redolent

of the occasion, to enter into the kingdom of poetry. To the careful and

character-loving reader of history, particularly if he chance to have a

feeling for the House of Commons, not merely as an institution, but as a

place of resort, Marvell's satirical poems must always be intensely

interesting. They strike me as honest in their main intention, and never

very wide of the mark. Hallam says, in his lofty way, "We read with

nothing but disgust the satirical poetry of Cleveland, Butler, Oldham,

Marvell," and he adds, "Marvell's satires are gross and stupid."[231:1]

Gross they certainly occasionally are, but stupid they never are.

Marvell was far too well-informed a politician and too shrewd a man ever

to be stupid.

As a satirist Marvell had, if he wanted them, many models of style, but

he really needed none, for he just wrote down in rough-and-ready rhyme

whatever his head or his spleen suggested to his fancy. Every now and

again there is a noble outburst of feeling, and a couplet of great

felicity. I confess to taking great pleasure in Marvell's satires.

As a prose writer Marvell has many merits and one great fault. He has

fire and fancy and was the owner and master of a precise vocabulary well

fitted to clothe and set forth a well-reasoned and lofty argument. He

knew how to be both terse and diffuse, and can compress himself into a

line or expand over a paragraph. He has touches of a grave irony as well

as of a boisterous humour. He can tell an anecdote and elaborate a

parable. Swift, we know, had not only Butler's \_Hudibras\_ by heart, but

was also (we may be sure) a close student of Marvell's prose. His great

fault is a very common one. He is too long. He forgets how quickly a

reader grows tired. He is so interested in the evolutions of his own

mind that he forgets his audience. His interest at times seems as if it

were going to prove endless. It is the first business of an author to

arrest and then to retain the attention of the reader. To do this

requires great artifice.

Among the masters of English prose it would be rash to rank Marvell, who

was neither a Hooker nor a Taylor. None the less he was the owner of a

prose style which some people think the best prose style of all--that of

honest men who have something to say.

FOOTNOTES:

[229:1] "Indecently" is the doctor's own expression.

[231:1] See Hallam's \_History of Literature\_, vol. iv. pp. 433, 439.

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goes to Trinity College, Cambridge, 10;

life at Cambridge, 11-12;

becomes a Roman Catholic, 12;

recantation and return to Trinity, 14;

life at Cambridge ends, 17;

death of mother, 17;

abroad in France, Spain, Holland, and Italy, 19;

acquainted with French, Dutch, and Spanish languages, 19;

poet, parliamentarian, and controversialist, 20;

in Rome (1645), 20;

invites Flecknoe to dinner, 22;

neither a Republican nor a Puritan, 23;

a Protestant and a member of the Reformed Church of England, 23;

stood for both King and Parliament, 23;

considered by Collier a dissenter, 24 \_n.\_;

civil servant during Commonwealth, 24;

rejoices at Restoration, 25;

keeps Royalist company (1646-50), 25;

contributes commendatory lines to Richard Lovelace in poems published

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defends Lovelace, 26;

loved to be alone with his friends, lived for the most part in a hired

lodging, 26;

one of thirty-three poets who wept for the early death of Lord H.

Hastings, 27;

went to live with Lord Fairfax at Nunappleton House as tutor to only

child and daughter of the house (1650), 27;

anonymity of verses, 34;

small volume containing "The Garden Poetry" (1681), 34;

tells story of Nunappleton House, 36-45;

applies to Secretary for Foreign Tongues for a testimonial, 48;

recommended by Milton to Bradshaw for post of Latin Secretary, 50;

appointed four years later, 51:

frequently visits Eton, 51;

Milton intrusts him with a letter and copy of \_Secunda defensio\_ to

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appointed by the Lord-Protector tutor to Mr. Dutton, 54;

resides with Oxenbridges, 54;

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begins his career as anonymous political poet and satirist (1653), 56;

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impregnated with the new ideas about sea power, 59;

reported to have been among crowd which witnessed Charles I.'s death, 64;

first collected edition of works, verse and prose, produced by

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became Milton's assistant (1657), 68;

friendship with Milton, 69;

takes Milton's place in receptions at foreign embassies, 69;

plays part of Laureate during Protector's life, 71;

produces two songs on marriage of Lady Mary Cromwell, 72-3;

attends Cromwell's funeral, 73;

is keenly interested in public affairs, 75;

becomes a civil servant for a year, 75;

M.P. for Hull, 75;

friend of Milton and Harrington, 76;

well disposed towards Charles II., 77;

remains in office till end of year (1659), 77;

elected with Ramsden M.P. for Kingston-upon-Hull, 78;

attended opening of Parliament (1659), 80;

is not a "Rumper," 84;

again elected for Hull (1660), 84;

begins his remarkable correspondence with the Corporation of Hull, 84;

a satirist, not an enthusiast, 85;

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complains to House of exaction of £150 for release of Milton, 91;

elected for third, and last, time member for Hull, 95;

receives fee from Corporation of Hull for attendance at House, 96;

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is recalled, 101;

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assists at formal reception of Lord Carlisle as English ambassador, 109;

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