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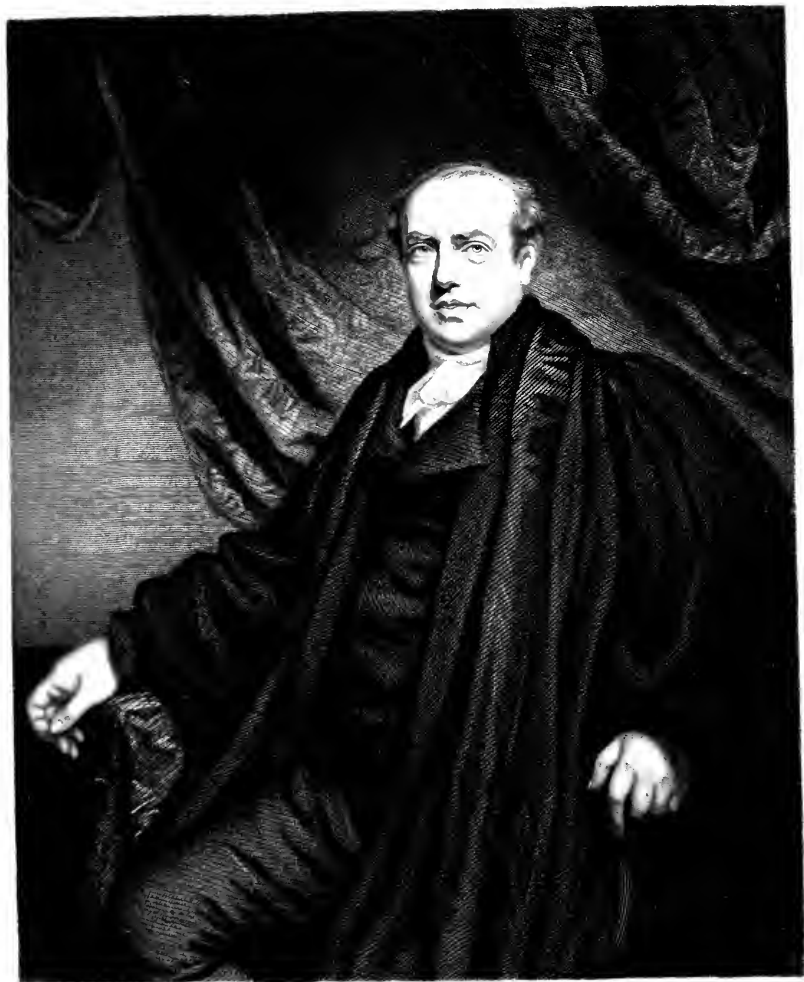
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THE LIFE

OF

ISAAC MILNER, D.D., F.R.S.,

DEAN OF CARLISLE, PRESIDENT OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE,

AND

PROFESSOR OF MATHEMATICS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE;

COMPRISING A PORTION OF

HIS CORRESPONDENCE

AND

OTHER WRITINGS HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED.

BY

HIS NIECE,

MARY MILNER,

AUTHOR OF "THE CHRISTIAN MOTHER."

LONDON:

JOHN W. PARKER, WEST STRAND.

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M.DCCC.XLII.

P R E F A C E.

MORE than twenty years having elapsed since the death of the subject of this biography, some explanation is, perhaps, due, from the Author, respecting the publication of a work which has been so long delayed.

On this point it might be sufficient to observe, in general, that those lives, the histories of which best deserve the attention of mankind, are, at the same time, those which are least dependent for their interest, upon the circumstances of time or place. With more particular reference, however, to the present work, it may be fairly asserted, that the value which may be reasonably supposed to belong to a faithful Memoir of the Life and Character of the late ISAAC MILNER, is, by no means, of an ephemeral nature. The history of a man whose mental endowments raised him from poverty and obscurity to wealth and fame, must always command attention, and possess an enduring worth; and if it were the sole object of the following pages to exhibit an eminent instance of the success which, almost invariably, in a greater or less degree, rewards the vigorous and persevering exercise of superior talents, such an object would amply justify their publication. That life must surely be worthy of being recorded, of which the whole course affords a striking illustration of the animating truth, that, in this free country, ability and industry are the passports to honourable distinction. In the case of Dean Milner, however, another and a more powerful source of interest is superadded. If he were distin-

guished by his intellectual superiority, he was yet more distinguished by his Christian piety. Confessedly in the first rank of the mathematicians and philosophers of his day, he was “content to receive the kingdom of God as a little child*.” Gifted with extraordinary mental powers, and beyond the generality of his fellow-men, a master of reason in its own province, he learned to submit his gigantic understanding to the humbling doctrines of Revelation.

A faithful record of the history and character of such a man has a peculiar value. There are persons who secretly, if not avowedly, associate the ideas of piety and imbecility; and who, however illogical such a conclusion may be, do not hesitate to decide, that he who professes to be governed by Christian principles, must be deficient in natural understanding.

Upon Dean Milner no suspicion of mental weakness can rest. Born in a cottage—labouring with his hands in early youth—indebted for the advantages of education chiefly to the elder brother to whom he afterwards owned his obligations “with tears of gratitude and affection†,” his supereminent abilities gained for him the highest academical honours, and subsequently placed him in the Mathematical Chair at Cambridge.

The opinions of such a man, on any subject to which he had applied the powers of his mind, must necessarily carry along with them as much authority as can belong to any human opinions whatever. The “natural man,” indeed, whatever may be his mental endowments, “receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, * * *

* Luke xviii. 17.

† See DEAN MILNER'S *Life of his Brother*.

neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*,"—yet it is something to show, by a brilliant example, that the possession of the most acute and vigorous intellect is no bar to the reception of those Christian doctrines which, though far above, are no wise opposed to human reason.

The religious character of Dean Milner presented a remarkable union of light in the understanding and warmth in the affections. Having deeply studied the scheme of Christianity, and possessing a knowledge of it, perhaps as accurate and complete as the capacity of the human mind will admit, he was distinguished by a fervour of feeling not often found in conjunction with high intellectual attainments.

His religious sentiments, however, together with the growing influence which those sentiments obtained over his character and conduct, are sufficiently unfolded in the following pages—and that, not only in formal treatises, of which some few which were found among his papers after his decease have been inserted in this Memoir—but also in his familiar letters, and in the still more private records of his secret meditations.

Of the regular discussions on religious subjects contained in this volume, those respectively entitled, "A Dissertation on Jonathan Edwards's Posthumous Remarks on Faith and Justification by Faith,"—"Remarks upon Dr. Kipling's Work on the Articles of the Church of England,"—"Thoughts on Baptism and Regeneration,"—and "An Exposition of the Confession in the Church Service," are, perhaps, among the most important.

* 1 Cor. ii. 14.

The value of familiar letters, as materials for a biographer, is universally acknowledged. Sir James Mackintosh somewhere observes, that—"It is impossible to read a considerable number of any man's letters, however separately insignificant, without insensibly gaining a just notion of his character."

The truth of this opinion will, probably, be generally admitted; and, as I trust, that the numerous letters and extracts from letters, which have been selected for the present work, far from being deemed "separately insignificant," will be found to possess an individual, and, in some instances, a powerful interest, I venture to hope, that their aggregate value will be materially enhanced.

Among the letters professedly treating of religious topics, one addressed to the late Charles Grant, Esq., on Calvinism and Arminianism, one to the late Archbishop of Canterbury, on the subject of the Bible Society, and one to the present Archdeacon R. Wilberforce, on the rite of Confirmation, may be mentioned as peculiarly valuable.

Of the private religious memoranda which have been admitted into the following Memoir, it is needless, here, to say more, than that an inspection of the irregular and diminutive fragments of paper upon which many of them are written, might convince even a sceptical observer, that he saw before him a genuine record of the writer's most secret thoughts; and, as Dean Milner has himself remarked, in his *Life* of his brother,—“It is, perhaps, impossible, under any circumstances, in the present state of our existence and capacity of mutual communication, to penetrate more effectually, or with greater certainty, the secret recesses of the human heart, than by reading memorandums of this nature.”

Another source of whatever interest may be thought to belong to this Life of Dean Milner, will be found in the various reminiscences of him, so characteristic in themselves, and so graphically expressed, with which I have been favoured by many eminent persons; among whom I may particularize Mr. Baron Alderson, the Right Hon. T. B. Macaulay, Lord Teignmouth, the Rev. Temple Chevallier, the present Dean of Ely, and the present Master of Trinity College, Cambridge. Were I, however, to offer my grateful acknowledgments to each, by name, of those who have enabled me to enrich my book with their personal recollections, these prefatory observations would be extended much beyond their due limits; and still less can I allow myself space to enumerate the kind friends who have placed at my disposal letters written by my late relative, or who have otherwise assisted me in the execution of my task as his biographer. I must not, however, omit to mention, among those to whom I am especially indebted, His Grace the Archbishop of York, who has, most kindly, permitted me to publish some highly interesting epistolary correspondence between himself and his late friend the Dean of Carlisle, and the Right Hon. the Earl of Lonsdale, who, both by the communication of letters, and by other kindnesses, has rendered me essential aid. My best thanks are likewise due to the Rev. William Richardson, the nephew of the late Rev. William Richardson, of York, for some invaluable letters from the late Dean to that excellent and highly valued friend; and to the Rev. Edward Stillingfleet, for some most interesting and characteristic letters from the pen of the late Rev. Joseph Milner. From Archdeacon R. Wilberforce, I have received the most effective assistance, in the shape of valu-

able letters, from Dean Milner to his dear and intimate friend, the late William Wilberforce; and, among the multitude of other friends who have conferred upon me kindness of a similar nature, I am bound to mention the Rev. William Mandell, of Queen's College, Cambridge,—William Smyth, Esq., Professor of Modern History, in the same University,—the Rev. George Cornelius Gorham, to whose active friendship I am especially indebted,—the Rev. William Jowett,—the Rev. Richard Kerrich, the son of one of Dean Milner's oldest and most intimate friends,—Colonel T. P. Thompson, to whom a similar description would be applicable,—the Rev. John Fawcett,—G. G. Babington, Esq.,—and Mrs. Maclean, the daughter of the late Professor Carlyle.

To those numerous kind friends, whose names are not inserted in this already long catalogue of benefactors, but who, by their assistance in various ways, have greatly facilitated the execution of this undertaking, I must be content, in this place, thus generally to present the expression of my gratitude. There yet, however, remains one obligation which must be particularly acknowledged; I mean the important favour, on the part of the President and Fellows of Queen's College, Cambridge, of the loan of Opie's fine portrait of Dean Milner, for the purpose of its being engraved for this work.

Of the manner in which I have acquitted myself in this endeavour to lay before the public an authentic account of the life and character of ISAAC MILNER, I must leave others to judge. If I cannot claim for myself the praise of absolute impartiality, I can truly say, that I have laboured to guard against the influence of that favourable bias which is commonly, and often justly, imputed to those who venture to become the biographers

of near and dear relatives. It may be, however, that, notwithstanding my utmost vigilance, some traces of such a bias may be detected in the following pages; if I have not magnified Dean Milner's great and good qualities, I may be suspected of having diminished or veiled his foibles and imperfections. I know not, that I have given any cause for such a suspicion, but if it be so, my excuse, though not my justification, must be, that having lived, from infancy to womanhood, with him whose character I have attempted to portray, my intimate and most familiar knowledge of him,—the most severe of all the tests to which human infirmity can be subjected,—has left upon my mind such a conviction of his greatness and his goodness, as, combined, doubtless, with the inevitable effect of the recollection of benefits innumerable and always utterly unrequitable, conferred with unwearied and most tender affection throughout the seasons of infancy and childhood, and the still more capricious and exacting period of youth, may have rendered me unwilling to censure, or, perhaps, unapt to perceive those slight blemishes which, at the time during which I possessed the advantage of daily contemplating the admirable character of Dean Milner, were lost in its general excellence.

The main facts of the early portion of the career of Dean Milner are already notorious; and if his private, and especially his religious character, be more fully displayed in the following pages, or exhibited in a stronger light than has hitherto been cast upon it, it is chiefly by means of his own writings, his confidential letters, and his private meditations,—a species of evidence the most convincing imaginable.

The name of ISAAC MILNER has been long enrolled

in the list of those distinguished men who, by superior intelligence and never-tiring industry, have achieved an honourable fame. I venture to indulge the hope, that while his title to this proud distinction is strengthened, his simple and affectionate character, his eminent private, and social virtues, and, above all, his Christian excellence, may be illustrated by the publication for which I now solicit the favourable judgment of the public.

MARY MILNER.

The Vicarage, Appleby, Westmoreland,
May 21, 1842.

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L I F E

OF

ISAAC MILNER.

CHAPTER I.

Birth of Isaac Milner.—Notice of his Parents.—Character of his Father.—Of his Mother.—Outline of his Childhood by himself.—His early turn for Mathematics.—Premature Death of his Father.—His Mother obliged to abandon the plan of giving him a literary education.—He is apprenticed to a Woollen Manufacturer at Leeds.—Distinction obtained by Joseph Milner, the elder Brother of Isaac, at Cambridge.—His subsequent success in Life.—He releases his Brother Isaac from his engagements at Leeds.—Takes him under his own tuition.—Makes him his Usher in the Grammar School at Hull.—Isaac Milner sent by his Brother to Queen's College, Cambridge.—Gratitude of Isaac to his Brother.—Strong affection between these Brothers.—Isaac, while an Under-graduate, refuses to sign a Petition against subscription to the Articles.—Takes his degree of B.A.—Is Senior Wrangler, with the distinction of *Incomparabilis*.—Becomes a Member of the Hyson Club.—Declines the office of Tutor to a Polish Prince.—Early Friendship with the late William Hey, Esq., of Leeds.—Notice of Mr. Milner by an early Friend, still living.—Mr. Milner enters into Holy Orders.

A.D. 1750. ÆTAT. 1.

ISAAC MILNER, the third son of his parents, was born, as appears from the register of baptisms kept in the parish church at Leeds, in Mabgate, in that town, on the 11th day of January, in the year of our Lord 1750, and was baptized on the 13th day of the same month.

Of the condition of his father little is known, except that he had been unsuccessful in business, and that his circumstances had suffered exceedingly from accidents during the Rebellion of 1745; insomuch, that he had very little to spare from the necessary demands of his family*. It appears by the register already mentioned, that his eldest son, Samuel, was born in Mabgate, on the 10th of October, 1739, and his second son, Joseph,

* See Dr. MILNER's *Life of* [his brother,] *the Rev. Joseph Milner.*

afterwards the Historian of the Church of Christ, at Quarry Hill, on the 2nd of January, 1743. It is, however, probable, that notwithstanding the different wording of the registers, there was no change of residence, Quarry Hill and Mabgate joining upon each other, and their respective limits being not very clearly defined. They are now densely inhabited parts of the town of Leeds; but the house now, or till very lately, known and shown as the birth-place of Isaac Milner, and situated near to St. Mary's, or as it is sometimes called, Quarry Hill Church, must, probably, at the date of even the latest of the registers, have stood almost in the country. The house has been, within the last few years, altered and improved in appearance, by having been plastered in imitation of stone. An outer door, studded with large-headed nails, like the door of a prison, has also been removed.

That the father of the young Milners was a man of strong sense and extraordinary industry and self-denial, there is abundant evidence. Having experienced, in his own case, the want of a good education, he early resolved, that, at whatever inconvenience to himself or his family, his children should possess that advantage; and this resolution he kept, although at the cost of many personal sacrifices, till his sudden death; an event which took place soon after his son Isaac had attained his tenth year.

The mother of Isaac Milner, "*a good and valuable mother,*" he calls her, in the work already cited, seems to have been, upon the whole, a partner well suited to her husband. She was not, indeed, a woman of good temper, but she was remarkable for her sound and vigorous understanding, for the active turn of her mind, and for a vein of shrewd humour which rendered her conversation, uneducated as she was, acceptable to persons of the highest attainments. She reached a great age; and although her mind did not retain its powers to the last, she was permitted to enjoy, in the advancement of her two younger sons, the reward of her early struggles; and died beloved and respected, at the house of her son Joseph, at Hull, in the year 1796*.

* Some particulars in this account rated by the recollections of a gentleman now living, and formerly a pupil

An outline of Dr. Milner's childhood, has been thus traced by his own hand:

“Isaac, when a little boy of six years old, began to accompany his brother Joseph every day to the Grammar School*; and at ten years of age could construe Ovid and Sallust into tolerable English, and was then beginning to learn the rudiments of the Greek language. The premature death of their father ruined all the prospects of Isaac's advancement in learning. His mother was obliged to abandon the prosecution of her husband's plan; and, that her son might acquire a livelihood by honest industry, she wisely employed him in learning several branches of the woollen manufactory at Leeds.”

Two circumstances which, in this simple and beautiful account of his own childhood, have been omitted by Dr. Milner, are here supplied.

His turn for mathematical studies exhibited itself very early. He frequently, towards the close of his life, spoke of a sundial which he had constructed at the age of eight years; and said,

of the Rev. Joseph Milner, at the Grammar School at Hull. “I remember,” says he, in a letter to the author of this Memoir, “what must have been your great-grandmother, the mother of your uncles Joseph and Isaac. She lived in the house with your uncle Joseph, and was of a great age, and, I believe, had rather outlived her faculties. She used to be my terror, for I had to go once a week into the house to help to bring out a globe, to, what we called, ‘*do globes*,’ and the old lady used to seize me by the long hair, such as boys wore in those days, and declare she wanted it for a wig, and pull most uncommonly hard, as if by way of realizing her design, while I was both unable to bear, and afraid to resist.”

Another anecdote, characteristic of the shrewd humour of Mrs. Milner, before her faculties were blunted by age, I have myself frequently heard from the lips of her son Isaac.

“One evening, a party of friends assembled at the house of the Rev. Joseph Milner were discussing, among other religious topics, the character of St. Paul; Joseph Milner expressed very strongly his idea of the privilege and happiness of those persons who enjoyed opportunities of personal intercourse with the Apostle; and said, that he could scarcely conceive a higher gratification than to have sat in his company and heard him converse. ‘Ay, bairn,’ interposed his mother, in her broad Yorkshire dialect, ‘but thou would'st not have let him have all the talk to himself,—thou would'st have put in thy word, I'll warrant thee.’ Joseph Milner, who was, in fact, when he liked his company, a great talker, joined very heartily in the laugh thus raised at his expense.”

* The Grammar School at Leeds, of which school the Rev. Mr. Moore was, at that time, head master.

that during one of his visits to Leeds, after he became Dean of Carlisle, he had earnestly endeavoured to discover the marks of it upon a wall near the house in which he was born. Another circumstance omitted by Dr. Milner, is, his having been taken during his childhood,—by whom, or on what occasion, cannot now be known,—to London. It is certain, that in later life he used to relate, “that the first time he ever heard about *war* or *the French*, was when he was a little child in London. He was taken,” he said, “out of bed late at night, and carried to the window. All the street was alive, though it was midnight; the watchman was calling, ‘Past twelve o’clock, *Quebec taken.*’ The news,” he said, “came late; and the Lord Mayor had given orders that the watchmen should cry it, with the hour, all through the city.”

The date of the taking of Quebec of course fixes this journey to London to the ninth year of Dr. Milner’s life.

And now there appeared every reason to expect that the future life of Isaac Milner would be spent “in labouring with his hands in the manufactories of Yorkshire;” but Providence had, for him, other things in store.

By the kindness of Mr. Moore, who had early discovered his great abilities, and by the liberality of other friends, Joseph Milner, the elder brother of Isaac, had been sent to the University of Cambridge, where he had fulfilled the promise of his youth, by obtaining, besides a very honourable place in the list of Mathematical and Philosophical honours*, the highest distinction which that University can bestow upon classical learning†.

Joseph Milner had now left college, and was established as head master of the Grammar School at Hull, in which town he was, shortly afterwards, elected afternoon lecturer at the principal church. His success in obtaining these situations was “owing,” says his brother, “partly to the splendour of his character, and partly to the recommendation of powerful friends at Leeds‡.”

Being now raised above poverty, his annual income amount-

* He was third Senior Optime.

† He was one of the Chancellor’s Medallists in the year 1766, the candi-

dates being in that year unusually numerous and able.

‡ See *Life of the Rev. Joseph Milner*.

ing, upon the whole, to upwards of 200*l.*, “the bowels of Joseph yearned upon his younger brother*.” He immediately resolved to release him from his obligations at Leeds, and, with that view, requested the Rev. Myles Atkinson, the minister of St. Paul’s Church, in that town, to examine into the qualifications of Isaac, to become his usher in the Grammar School at Hull. Upon proceeding to the work-room in which Isaac Milner then laboured, Mr. Atkinson found him seated at his loom with *Tacitus*, and some Greek author lying by his side. Upon further examination, it appeared that, notwithstanding his long absence from school, and the interruption of his literary pursuits, his knowledge and his love of classical learning remained unimpaired. After a private interview with Mr. Atkinson, during which the terms of the apprentice’s emancipation were agreed upon, the master of the establishment entered the work-room, and addressing young Milner, said to him, “Isaac, lad, thou art off.” The delight exhibited by the youth, on hearing these words, was declared by Mr. Atkinson to be quite indescribable.

Isaac Milner, who, as he himself says, had been well grounded by Mr. Moore in the Latin and Greek languages†, now proved himself an able assistant to his brother in teaching the lower boys‡ of his crowded school at Hull; and while he instructed *them*, he redoubled his efforts, under his brother’s tuition, and with his assistance, to improve *himself*, and to make up for lost time.

During this period of his life, Isaac Milner not only made himself a competent classical scholar, but also found time to master the elementary parts of mathematics. When, in the ordinary business of the school, any difficulty occurred in algebra, &c., it was customary with his brother Joseph to call up Isaac to solve it; for although the point might be one which, with

* See *Life of the Rev. Joseph Milner*.
 † *Ibid.*

‡ Among whom, at that time, was William Wilberforce, afterwards his own most intimate friend. Of him Dr. Milner used to relate, that, at

seven years of age, he read so well, that it was customary to place him upon a table in the school-room, and to make him read aloud for the benefit of the other boys.

sufficient thought, he could, perhaps, have made out for himself, all trouble was saved by the readiness of Isaac on such subjects.

In the year 1770, Isaac Milner was sent by his brother to Queen's College, Cambridge.

Towards that excellent brother, he expresses his grateful affection in a touching passage, in the *Life of the Reverend Joseph Milner*, already referred to. In that passage, after declaring, that, under Providence, he owed his honourable and elevated situations, as Dean of Carlisle, President of Queen's College, and Professor of Mathematics in the University of Cambridge, nay, that he owed "*all that he had*, to the kindness of this same brother," he "*willingly acknowledges the obligation, with tears of gratitude and affection;*" and concludes with the beautiful and apposite quotation, "*He made Isaac glad with his acts, and his memorial is blessed for ever*!*"

The affection which bound these brothers to each other, was, perhaps, as strong as ever subsisted in that relation of life. It began in childhood; was cemented in youth, by more than ordinary fraternal kindness on the one part, and by cordial gratitude on the other; and, far from suffering interruption or abatement in after life, it increased in fervour, till the death of the elder brother separated these tenderly-attached relatives.

"Never," says the survivor, "was separation more bitter or afflicting." An entire agreement in their religious sentiments, of which agreement the sequel of this narrative will afford abundant evidence, was, doubtless, effectual in drawing still closer the bonds of natural affection which united these excellent men.

Isaac Milner entered Queen's College as a Sizar. Sizarers are, for the most part, as is generally known, students, who enjoy certain pecuniary privileges, and who, formerly, were required, at Cambridge, to perform various menial services, from which they are now, and have been for many years, exempted. These services, which consisted in the ringing of the chapel bell, the serving up of the first dish to the fellows at dinner, &c., were exacted at Queen's, when Isaac Milner became an

* 1 Maccab. iii. 7.

undergraduate, and were undoubtedly finally abolished by him, when he became President of the College; but whether the following anecdote, frequently told in reference to this subject, be strictly correct, may, perhaps, be doubted. Isaac Milner, happening one day, while engaged in the execution of his duties as a Sizar, to overturn upon the floor of the hall a tureen of soup, intended for the fellows' table, is said to have exclaimed, in reply to some tart rebuke, "When I get into power, I will abolish this nuisance." This expression of the unpolished Yorkshire lad, "*When I get into power,*" occasioned, as it is said, much merriment among the fellows; who, of course, did not detect, under the rough exterior of the Sizar, the future President of their College.

There is no evidence, that, at this early period of his life, Isaac Milner had been led to entertain those religious views which he afterwards adopted, and of which he became so able and zealous an advocate; but an incident which occurred during his undergraduateship, effectually put to the proof, and firmly established his character, as a man of inflexible integrity and conscientious resolution. Many of the then governing members of Queen's College were supposed to be far from orthodox in their religious faith; and, with their approbation, a petition, against subscription to the Articles of the Established Church, was presented for signature to the students. This petition, supported as it was by his superiors, Isaac Milner alone, among the students of his own college, refused to sign*.

The brilliant success of Isaac Milner at the University fully evinced the penetration, and justified the advice, of those early friends of his parents, who had exhorted them to strain every nerve in order to give him a literary education. A circumstance which occurred during the last term of his undergraduateship, tended to prepare his cotemporaries for the honours which awaited him.

Keeping an Opponency in the Schools†, he made use of an

* To this refusal, after an interval of above forty years, he alludes, with evident satisfaction, in his *Strictures on the Writings of Dr. Marsh.*

† The practice of keeping Acts and Opponencies, has been lately disused in the University of Cambridge.

argument, subsequently well known at Cambridge, and frequently used on similar occasions; but at that time quite new. The Moderator was the late Dr. Pearce, afterwards Public Orator, Master of Jesus College, and Dean of Ely. The argument was new to him, and he thus addressed the opponent: "*Domine opponens, argumentum sanè novum et difficile; nec pudet fateri meipsum nodum solvere non posse.*"

This anecdote was sometimes told by Dr. Milner in after life. The words of the Moderator were accurately remembered by him, not only on account of the compliment which they implied, but also, because Dr. Pearce was celebrated in the University for the purity and elegance of his Latinity.

Dr. Milner, however, never failed to add, that he had received from Dr. Pearce, in the evening of the same day, a complete answer to the novel argument which he had adduced.

Genius, or even superior excellence, is usually accompanied by much modesty and diffidence. Dr. Milner, when induced, in later life, to speak of his own degree, invariably said, that he had been, at the time, very far from sanguine respecting his success—nay, that he even feared he might have completely failed. His fears were, indeed, groundless; since he had, from the first, fixed his eye upon the highest honours of the University, and had spent the time of his undergraduateship in indefatigable study. He took his degree of B.A. in 1774, and was the Senior Wrangler of his year, with the honourable distinction of "*Incomparabilis*," the Moderators being Thomas Kipling, M.A., of St. John's, and Thomas Parkinson, M.A., of Christ's—themselves Senior Wranglers of a few years standing.

At this distance of time, there can be no indelicacy in stating, that, on occasion of the competition for Smith's Prize, Isaac Milner had to contend with more than the ordinary difficulties. The Professor of Mathematics, one of the Examiners for this prize, was more than suspected of favouring a particular candidate, a relative of his own. Such conduct must always have formed a rare exception to the undeviating rectitude usually observed upon such occasions. Ability and industry seldom, however, fail of success, be the obstacles what they may; and the man who, in the Senate House, had been pronounced

“*Incomparabilis*,” was declared to be first Smith’s Prize-man—honours which, it is needless to say, are the very highest which the University of Cambridge can confer*.

Having taken his degree of B.A., Mr. Milner was admitted a member of the “Hyson Club,” a society originally formed by the Wranglers of the year 1758, and composed of the most eminent men then resident in the University. A brilliant society, doubtless, in its day, was this Hyson Club, enrolling in its list of members the names of Waring, Watson, Paley, and others equally known to fame. Of these distinguished men, few now remain; but the memory of the powerful mind, and extraordinary conversational powers of Mr. Milner, is still preserved, as having materially contributed to the interest and hilarity of the meetings of this once brilliant company.

Another consequence of the splendid success of Mr. Milner, at the commencement of his University career, was a notification communicated to him, that the office of tutor to a relative of the Polish Prince Poniatowski awaited his acceptance. This offer, however, advantageous as it must have appeared at the time, he at once declined.

Great as was Mr. Milner’s proficiency in mathematical studies, they did not, even at this time, occupy the whole of his attention.

The following extract from a letter, dated March 27th, 1774, and, consequently, written within a few weeks after Mr. Milner became Bachelor of Arts, illustrates the comprehensive turn of his mind, and shows the estimation in which, at this period of his life, he was held by his cotemporaries :

“DEAR MILNER,

“*March 27, 1774.*

“As you are holding strange converse with Philosophy, I shall propose what I have to say to you, under the form of queries.” * * * Here follow a number of metaphysical questions concerning the nature of the immaterial principle, in

* In after life, Dr. Milner used sometimes to observe, that he was on this occasion tempted to commit his first act of extravagance. In the pride

of his heart, he ordered from a jeweller a rather splendid seal, bearing a finely-executed head of Sir Isaac Newton.

man, and in the lower animals, such as, “Can the soul, which is the eye of the mind, any more than the eye of the body, *see itself*, its own nature, and inherent powers?” “Have not the brute creatures a living immaterial substance within them? And are they incapable of immortality and happiness? Does the condition of their nature render them incapable of receiving any recompense in another life, for the sufferings they endure in this?” “*Quid meruistis, oves, placidum pecus, &c.*” “Can you clear and justify the ways of God towards them? Could you satisfy me in these doubts you would be *mihi Magnus Apollo**.”

While an Undergraduate, Mr. Milner became acquainted with the late celebrated William Hey, Esq., of Leeds, having occasion to consult him for a complaint partly produced by intense application to study. His superior talents and attainments were quickly discerned and justly appreciated by Mr. Hey, who invited him to his house, and put him, as Dr. Milner afterwards said, “upon a completely new system of habits.” He remained during several weeks the guest of Mr. Hey; and the acquaintance thus commenced, ripened into a friendship which suffered neither diminution nor interruption till the friends were separated by death. During this intimacy of nearly fifty years continuance, many letters were exchanged, some extracts from which will appear under their proper dates.

Another gentleman† who became acquainted with Mr. Milner about this period of his life, and who was himself Senior Wrangler not long afterwards, speaks of him in the following terms. “My acquaintance with Dr. Milner commenced on his return to Cambridge at the close of the year 1775, to my great advantage, being greatly indebted to him for his valuable assistance in my mathematical studies. I had afterwards opportunities of knowing and admiring the extraordinary strength of his

* The writer of this curious letter was of Queen's College, and took his degree of B.A. in 1774. He has been dead many years, and the answer to this communication has not been found among his papers.

† The present Archdeacon Oldershaw.

understanding, and the great variety and extent of his knowledge ; and I retain a high veneration for his memory.”

“The mathematical papers which Mr. Milner used to make out for his pupils were so remarkable, at the time, for their neatness and elegance, that they were very much in request whenever they could be had* ;” indeed, so highly prized were his demonstrations of mathematical propositions, that an instance occurred in which a bed-maker of Queen’s was bribed to obtain some of those papers, to be copied by a student of another college.

On Sunday, the 17th day of December, in the year 1775, Isaac Milner entered into holy orders, being ordained a deacon, at a general ordination held in the Chapel of Trinity College, Cambridge, by the Lord Bishop of Peterborough.

* This was communicated to me by Dr. Procter, the present Master of Catherine Hall, Cambridge.

CHAPTER II.

Mr. Milner is elected Fellow of Queen's College.—Takes his degree of M.A.—Is elected Tutor of Queen's.—Makes a communication to the Royal Society.—Is ordained Priest.—Presented to the Rectory of St. Botolph's, Cambridge.—Makes various communications to the Royal Society.—Injures his health by inhaling a noxious gas.—Is elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.—Is Moderator.—Reads public Lectures in Chymistry.—Is Proctor.—Commencement of his acquaintance with William Wilberforce, Esq.—Correspondence.—Letter from Joseph Milner to Rev. James Stillingfleet.—Isaac Milner is elected to the Jacksonian Professorship.—Gives alternate courses of Lectures in Chymistry and Experimental Philosophy.—Correspondence.—Assists in the formation of a Society for the promotion of Philosophy and General Literature.—Travels on the Continent with Mr. Wilberforce.—Voyage down the Rhone.—House at Nice.—Marseilles.—English Society at Nice.—Mr. Milner's religious principles.—Religious conversation with Mr. Wilberforce.—Returns with Mr. Wilberforce to England.—Is Moderator.—Climate of Nice.—Perilous accident.—Second journey with Mr. Wilberforce to the Continent.—Religious conversation.—Meeting with Lavater.—Mystical turn of Lavater's mind.—Letter from him to Mr. Milner.—Rev. Thomas Scott's account of Mr. Milner's travels with Mr. Wilberforce.—Correspondence.—Tissot.

A.D. 1777. ÆTAT. 27.

On the 10th of January, 1776, Mr. Milner was elected a Fellow of Queen's College. He proceeded, in the year 1777, to the degree of Master of Arts, and, during the same year, was appointed Tutor of his College, in which capacity he acquired a distinguished reputation.

In the spring of this year he communicated to the Royal Society a paper, entitled, "Observations on the Limits of Algebraical Equations; and a General Demonstration of Des Cartes's Rule for finding their number of Affirmative and Negative Roots*." This paper, which was presented to the Society by

* See *Transactions of the Royal Society for the year 1777*. With reference to this subject, the following passage occurs in the Preface to Dr. Waring's *Meditationes Algebraicæ*, 3rd edition, p. 13 :

"Milner invenit æquationem $a x^n - (a + b) p x^{n-1} + (a + 2 b) q x^{n-2} - (a + 3 b) r x^{n-3} + \&c. = 0$, non semper habere radicem inter minimam affirmativam et minimam negativam radicem æquationis $x^n - p x^{n-1} + q x^{n-2} - r x^{n-3} + \&c. = 0$ posi-

Dr. Shepherd, at that time Plumian Professor at Cambridge, was read at the meeting of that learned body on the 26th of February, 1777.

On Sunday, the 22nd of March, Mr. Milner was admitted to priest's orders in the Chapel of Trinity College, by the same bishop who had ordained him a deacon, and who, on this occasion, acted for the Bishop of Ely.

He now, on some few occasions, assisted his friends by taking their duty in the neighbouring country churches; and, on the 10th of October, 1778, was presented by his college to the rectory of the parish of St. Botolph, Cambridge, which preferment, although, in consequence of the infirm state of his health, seldom able to officiate in person, he retained till the latter end of the year 1792, relinquishing it on his advancement to the deanery of Carlisle.

During this year Mr. Milner again addressed a paper to the Royal Society. This paper, which, like the last, was communicated by Dr. Shepherd, is entitled, "Reflections on the Communication of Motion, by Impact and Gravity." It was read at the meeting of the Royal Society, February 26, 1778*.

In the year 1779, a paper "On the Precession of the Equinoxes produced by the Sun's Attraction," was, through the

tam. Sit æquatio $(A) x^n - p x^{n-1} + q x^{n-2} - \&c. = 0$, *ejus radices sint* $\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta, \&c.$ *quarum* α *major sit quam* β, β *quam* $\gamma, \&c.$; *sint* $\pi, \rho, \sigma, \&c.$, *radices æquationis* $(B) n x^{n-1} - (n-1) p x^{n-2} + \&c. = 0$, *inter* a *et* β, β *et* $\gamma, \&c.$ *respective positæ*; *tum, si* h *et* m *eadem habeant signa, in hoc opere probatur radices æquationis* $h A + m B = 0$ *inter* a *et* π, β *et* $\rho, \&c.$, *respective positas esse*; *si vero* h *et* m *diversa habeant signa, tum probatur unam radieem æquationis* $h A + m B = 0$ *majorem esse quam* a ; *cæteras vero inter* π *et* β, ρ *et* $\gamma, \&c.$ *respective poni*; *si vero* h *et* m *eadem habeant signa, tum duas radices æquationis* $h A + m B x = 0$ *inter minimam affirmativam* θ *et minimam negativam* $-i$ *datæ æquationis* $A = 0$ *poni, quarum una affirmativa, altera vero*

negativa erit: si modo detur mutatio signorum de + in -, vel - in + a penultimo ad ultimum datæ æquationis terminum; tum affirmativam radicem inter θ *et* o , *negativam vero inter* $-\mu$ *et* $-i$ *poni; sin aliter, tum affirmativam radicem inter* θ *et* μ , *et negativam inter* o *et* $-i$ *poni, ubi u sit radix æquationis* $n x^{n-1} - (n-1) p x^{n-2} + \&c. = 0$ *inter minimam affirmativam et minimam negativam datæ æquationis* $x^n - p x^{n-1} + \&c. = 0$ *radicem posita, quæ erit negativa vel affirmativa prout detur mutatio signorum de + in - vel - in + a penultimo ad ultimum datæ æquationis [terminum] necne; plura eonsimilia de hæc re in hoc opere continentur."*

▪ See Transactions of the Royal Society for 1778

same Dr. Shepherd, communicated by Mr. Milner to the Royal Society, and read on the 24th of June*.

Intent, however, as Mr. Milner's mind seems at this period to have been, upon mathematical science, he at the same time, engaged in the pursuit of chymical knowledge with an ardour which, whatever might be the object of his attention, always characterized him; and which, when directed to this science, speedily placed him among the first chymists of his day. It was about this time, that, by incautiously inhaling some noxious gas, he laid the foundation of a serious pulmonary complaint, from which he never entirely recovered. During many subsequent years, he confined himself, by the advice of his physicians, to a milk diet; and although at length, the natural strength of his constitution so far prevailed over the disease, as to render needless such strict attention to regimen, the wound in his lungs was never completely healed.

On the 15th of June, in the year 1780, Mr. Milner was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

At this period of his life, before his originally strong constitution had given way under the repeated attacks of illness, to which, from the time of undergraduateship, he was subject, Mr. Milner was most actively engaged in the pursuit and furtherance of learning and science, and in the duties which devolved upon him, as a clergyman, and a member of the University. As a clergyman, he was indeed unable to undertake much public duty; but he deeply and critically studied both the Scriptures and the writings of the ancient fathers of the church; thus doubtless laying the foundation of that sound and extensive theological knowledge, which is apparent in the productions of his later life.

In this year he filled the office of Moderator; an office of great importance, and demanding, for the due discharge of its duties, much active exertion †.

In the year 1781-2, it fell to Mr. Milner's lot to hold the office of Proctor; and by his firm, yet good-humoured, discharge

* See *Transactions of the Royal Society for 1779.* his *Anecdotes of his own Life*, thus speaks:

† Of this office, Bishop Watson, in "I look upon the office of Mo-

of his duty, he contrived to escape unpopularity, even under circumstances the most likely to produce it.

In 1782 he read public lectures in Chymistry. A Syllabus of one course of these Lectures, bearing the appropriate motto, "Non fingendum aut excogitandum, sed inveniendum quid natura faciat aut ferat*," was published at Cambridge in the year 1784.

It may here be mentioned, that in the midst of his academical duties and pursuits, Mr. Milner never neglected to show liberality and kindness even to the most distant of his poor relatives and connexions, both at Leeds and at Hull. This, if it were ever proper to publish such deeds of private beneficence, might be proved by letters still in existence. Those, however, who were personally acquainted with the subject of this Memoir, will have no need of such proof; and to the public in general, such details would be uninteresting.

The precise period of the commencement of the intimate friendship which Mr. Milner, to the end of his life, maintained with the late William Wilberforce, Esq., is uncertain. Their epistolary correspondence seems to have begun soon after Mr. Wilberforce left college. Of the numerous letters which remain, the earliest are dated 1781, or 1782; but some of these letters obviously refer to others of a still earlier date.

The father of Mr. Wilberforce had materially contributed, by the exercise of his influence in the town of Hull, to establish Joseph Milner, as the Master of the Grammar School in that place; and the relationship which existed between the family of Wilberforce, and one with which, by the marriage of his niece, Mr. Milner was subsequently connected, would tend to cement yet more firmly, the friendship already established between William Wilberforce and Isaac Milner.

In a letter addressed to Mr. Wilberforce, and dated "Queen's College, March 11, 1782," Mr. Milner after some slight obser-

erator to be the most difficult to execute, and the most important to the interest of the University, when well executed, of any that there is; not excepting the Professorship of Divinity itself." If this remark be thought to

exhibit somewhat of that disposition to self-complacency which was certainly a distinguishing trait in Dr. Watson's character, it is not on that account the less worthy of notice.

* BACON.

vations upon the “tottering” position of the Prime Minister, makes some remarks upon the consequently clouded state of his own prospects in life; jocularly adding, “A chaplaincy on board a man of war, from Keppel, is all that I now look for.” Some inquiries propounded with a view to the advantage of his brother Joseph, respecting a vacant living supposed to be in the gift of John Thornton, Esq., conclude this communication.

The following truly excellent letter contains but a very slight allusion to Isaac Milner; but it throws so much light upon the character and religious views of the brother for whom he was anxious to obtain preferment, that it may properly be admitted here:

“TO THE REVEREND JAMES STILLINGFLEET*.

“DEAR STILO,

“Hull, October 4th, 1782.

“I thank you for yours, and indeed generally hear from you with pleasure; and the more serious and weighty your mood and feelings about divine things, the more acceptable.

“The mind that is in Jesus is a rare mind indeed. It is remarkable, that though there is scarce a topic of Scripture but is nibbled at, in these days of infidelity, yet you don’t find the hardest sceptics middle with the moral character, temper, and conduct of Jesus Christ. It is a tacit confession of its victorious excellence, and there is great truth in an assertion of a modern publication concerning his moral character, which I saw quoted the other day, to this effect; ‘that it was not possible such a character could have been feigned. It must have been real: it proves its Divinity by its own light.’

“All we want and should aim at (repentance from dead works being supposed) is reduced, I think, to these two particulars; to have ‘grace always most thankfully to receive his inestimable benefit, and also daily to endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life.’ The first is *the substratum*. We must be IN HIM; and quietly and confidently in him, as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. As we have it not in our nature to *do* any thing good to procure

* Mr. Stillingfleet was rector of Hotham, and one of the most intimate and attached friends of Isaac Milner and his brother Joseph.

the Divine favour, so, thanks be to God, we need not. All is done to our hand. We have only to receive eternal life, as the inestimable gift worthy of infinite liberality. It is bad mixing foundation and building together, as Owen observes. Sanctification is a consequence of grace rather than grace itself. I use the word *grace*, in its strictest and most Scriptural sense, as the gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ. The fruits of the Spirit must not be made use of to get peace to our consciences, that is to say, relief from the guilt of sin. They should never be conceived to exist in that relation. If we follow the mind that is in Jesus, it is an obedience of love, thanksgiving, humility, filial reverence. It is not an obedience of selfish, proud, constrained, service; no more should ours. So that the very endeavour to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life, is as inimical to a self-righteous spirit as possible. How shocking then that we should pervert it to that end! You will pardon my constant drift against self-righteousness. My own experience makes it necessary for me to abound in such meditations.

“Well, my dear friend, let us daily begin our Christianity in this way. Begin with Christ as ours already by his own precious donation, grounding our title purely on the Word. Then taking a good heart to ourselves, and not being discouraged at our imperfections, which in this life we shall always see to be very, *very*, VERY great, unless the Devil deceive us with an accursed pride indeed, let us be looking, however, constantly at the beautiful copy which he has set us; and though we make poor scribbling work of it, and many a foul blot, yet let us write on, and try again and again to cut our strokes cleaner and cleaner. If we go on thus, using in proper place and order, without jumbling them together, the two parts of the Collect, we shall do well enough, and sing at last, O be joyful!

“Remember me kindly to Mrs. Still.

“I am always yours affectionately,

“JOSEPH MILNER.

“N.B. My brother told me, before he returned to Cambridge, that he had tried the water, found an earth in it, but no metal at all. The slates he has done nothing with here; but as he most probably took them with him, I may hear afterwards about them.”

From this characteristic letter, which, it should be observed, was addressed to one who thoroughly entered into the religious views of the writer, and by whom therefore his meaning would not be misunderstood, it appears, that Isaac Milner this year passed, according to his usual custom, a part of the Cambridge long vacation with his mother and brother at Hull.

On these occasions he frequently assisted his brother in the duties of his school; in fact, he almost resumed his former character of usher. A gentleman still living well remembers his instructing the scholars, particularly in the use of the globes; and relates, that “he was a great favourite with the boys—the delight of the school—more especially from his playful, kind manner, and very clear mode of explaining things.” All who, at any period of his life, knew Dr. Milner, will acknowledge this account of him to be strikingly characteristic.

In the following year, in which he was again Moderator, Mr. Milner was elected to the Professorship of Natural and Experimental Philosophy, then recently founded by the Reverend Richard Jackson, and called, in consequence, the Jacksonian Professorship.

He now gave, and continued to give during several years, alternate courses of Lectures, in Chymistry and Experimental Philosophy; sciences for which he retained his love, throughout the whole of his subsequent life.

On the 17th of February, 1783, this short entry appears in the published diary of William Wilberforce, Esq.: “Walked down morning to House, to get Milner into Gallery.”

The following extract from a letter, dated “Queen’s, Feb. 24th,” will probably be deemed an interesting comment upon this apparently unimportant circumstance:

“MY DEAR SIR,

“I was much obliged to Bankes for his punctuality, and for introducing me into the gallery, where I stayed till about eleven o’clock.

“In point of eloquence, I think Pitt was not so much at liberty as usual; which only serves to convince me farther, that *good sense* and *matter* are rather *against* fluency of expression.

“On the whole, I was so well satisfied with what he said, that I was the less sorry at being obliged to retreat before he answered the objections; because I really thought that he had fully anticipated the principal of them. I only wish and hope, that the article concerning what the Irish are to perform on their part, will not be frittered away, notwithstanding what Fox says about the confidence he has in the liberality of that country. * *

“Yours affectionately,

“ISAAC MILNER.

“*To William Wilberforce, Esq.*”

In the year 1784, Professor Milner assisted several gentlemen at Cambridge in the formation of a literary club, called, “The Society for the promotion of Philosophy and General Literature.”

The names of the distinguished men who, on the 18th of February, 1784, enrolled themselves members of this society, each of them engaging to furnish occasionally original papers, of which a selection should afterwards be printed, will, even at this distance of time, be perused by academical readers with interest. The individuals hereafter mentioned, most of whom are still well remembered at Cambridge, composed this learned body: Dr. Milner, Archdeacon Coxe, Dr. Jowett (Professor of Civil Law), Mr. Carlyle (Professor of Arabic), Mr. Atkinson, Dr. Coulthurst, and Professor Farish.

These gentlemen soon added to their number, Mr. Pearce, Professor Vince, Sir Busick Harwood, Mr. Relhan, Mr. Jones, Professor Porson, Mr. Emperius, Professor Martyn, Mr. Popple, Mr. Brundish, Professor Tennant, Professor Wollaston, and Mr. Ainslie.

To this Society, which, for want of adequate support, was dissolved within two years after its formation, Mr. Milner contributed several papers, some of which are printed in the *Philosophical Transactions**.

It may be worth while to observe, that this list of members

* A paper on “The Tides,” and one on “The Moon’s Apesides,” apparently written for the Cambridge Philosophical Society, are mentioned by Dr. Milner, in his private memoranda of a much later date, as having been printed. They have not, however, been discovered.

of the Cambridge Philosophical Society, comprises the names of most of the academical friends with whom Dr. Milner, in after life, maintained an intimate connexion. Among these friends the late Dr. Jowett must be particularly mentioned. In his company Dr. Milner, from the time of his undergratuateship, regularly spent two evenings in every week—Sunday and Thursday. These meetings, which, at first, were held alternately at their respective rooms, took place in later years, always at Queen's Lodge, and were continued till Dr. Jowett's death.

It seemed proper to make some mention, in this place, of this long and Christian friendship. Further notices of it will appear hereafter.

During this part of Mr. Milner's academical career, his vacations were, almost invariably, spent with his brother, at Hull. To the frequent intercourse which he was thus enabled to enjoy with that excellent relative, may, doubtless, under Providence, be attributed the gradual establishment of those religious opinions, which, even at this time, he had begun to entertain.

In the summer of the year 1784, Mr. Wilberforce, then in the hey-day of youth and spirits, and recently elected member of parliament for Yorkshire, visited York, for the purpose of participating in the gaieties of the races. While there, he invited a gentleman, with whom he was intimately acquainted, to become his companion in a continental tour. That gentleman declined the invitation, which was, by letter, subsequently transferred by Mr. Wilberforce to his friend, Isaac Milner, whom, on leaving York, he had met at Scarborough, and in whose company he had there spent much time. The solid sense and great literary attainments of Mr. Milner, would naturally recommend him to his friend as an eligible companion in a tour on the Continent; but the idea of that companionship does not appear to have presented itself, for the first time, to the mind of Mr. Wilberforce, on occasion of the meeting at Scarborough. His grandfather, at least, had previously made a declaration in reference to this subject, in terms which infer a strong suspicion, that reports, even at that time, had gone forth, respecting the bias of Isaac Milner's mind towards, what are called, evangelical sentiments. "Billy," said he, "shall travel with Milner, as soon

as he is of age; but if Billy turns *Methodist*, he shall not have a sixpence of mine*.”

Mr. Milner was very desirous to accept the invitation thus given; but to this step his academical engagements presented many obstacles. Several letters passed between the friends previous to their departure for the Continent; an extract from one of which is here submitted to the reader :

“*Hull, September 19, 1784,*

“MY DEAR SIR,

“*Friday Morn.*

“Upon receiving your first letter, I wrote to Carlisle, to my friend, Mr. Carlyle†, to get him to read College Lectures for me, in the ensuing winter, as I understood, that he intended to reside in College. I have not yet received his answer, but I have little doubt of succeeding. I wrote to the Master of Queen’s‡, to obtain his approbation of my absence, and, till I hear from him, I am not without some suspicion of objection on his part, arising from his very severe notions of regularity and form, which notions are both natural to him, and have been rivetted by age. He is, however, a very worthy man.

“In my letter to you, I mentioned that I was unluckily engaged to be Moderator the next year—in doing which, I assure you, I was far from meaning to refer to any relinquishment of profit arising from that office, (which is but about 50*l.* for the year,) but solely and entirely to the inconvenience to which I might put Mr. Johnson of King’s Coll. He is a gentleman I am not at all acquainted with. Johnson is to be Proctor next year. The Proctor always procures the Moderator, and, I apprehend, there may be considerable difficulty to find and settle with another person, when there is so little time before the 10th of October, and when everybody is dispersed throughout the country.

“However, as the probability is now very much against the foreign tour, I will thank you to give me a single line the mo-

* *Life of Mr. Wilberforce*, by his Sons. Vol. I. | in the University of Cambridge.
 † Afterwards Professor of Arabic | ‡ Dr. Plumtre.

ment you have positively determined, in order that I may write to Johnson immediately; for though the relinquishment of even considerable matters, would, I trust, never be of any weight when I can oblige you, and of course, myself, essentially, yet, as I reside in the University, I may as well have the office in question next year, if possible; especially as I don't think its profits will be found an inconvenience to me, when the bills come in for electrical apparatus, air-pumps, furnaces, crucibles, &c.

“Seymour will gravely tell you, that the alchymists, notwithstanding their pretences, were always poor.”

* * * * *

Here follows a passage referring solely to the family affairs of Mr. Wilberforce.

The letter concludes thus :

“I endeavour to flatter myself with a hope that something or other will some time happen, that may afford us more frequent and tranquil opportunities of conversation.—At least, as Tully says, on another occasion, ‘Nunc quidem certè cogitatione quâdam speque delector.’

“I am, dear Sir, very much yours,

“ISAAC MILNER.

“*To William Wilberforce, Esq.*”

The foregoing letter is valuable, not only as throwing light upon Mr. Milner's plans and prospects at the time, but as affording a contrast to his later letters to the same friend. It is perfectly friendly in its tone, but it does not exhibit either the warmth of affection, or the sympathy in religious opinion and feeling, which, as the intimacy between these correspondents becomes closer, is gradually more and more apparent in the subsequent letters.

The obstacles which stood in the way of the continental excursion were, subsequently, removed or overcome. Mr. Milner accepted his friend's invitation, and the party, consisting of Mr. Wilberforce, his mother and sister, two or three other ladies, and Mr. Milner, set forth on their journey towards France, on the 20th day of October, 1784, one carriage being occupied by Mr. Wilberforce and his friend, the other by the ladies.

Dr. Milner, like Dr. Johnson, was, perhaps, not gifted with a very vivid perception of the beauties of natural scenery: yet he used occasionally, in after life, to speak of the delicious voyage down the Rhone to Avignon; and still more frequently of the exquisitely lovely situation of the house at Nice, in which the party established themselves,—a house close to the Mediterranean, and embosomed in a grove of orange trees.

The life and bustle of Marseilles,—a city upon whose quays men of all nations and languages meet together,—had, also, forcibly struck him; and a picture which he had there seen, by whom painted I know not, representing a scene during the plague with which the city was visited, in the year 1720, and the exertions of “Marseilles’ good Bishop,” during that dreadful calamity, had left a deep impression upon his imagination.

At Nice, the party entered freely into the English society which the place afforded, and which was composed, for the most part, of persons of high rank. Among other distinguished individuals, the Duke of Gloucester was there, with his children, Prince William*, and the Princess Sophia; who, like all other young persons who knew him, were attracted by Mr. Milner’s child-loving disposition; while he, on his part, in the simplicity of his character, was accustomed to caress them, or to amuse them with his sprightly talk, with as much freedom as he would have used towards any other children.

The account given by Mr. Wilberforce † of this memorable visit to Nice—*memorable* surely, on account of the important change which, under Providence, it was the means of effecting in the religious sentiments of that excellent and celebrated man, throws considerable light upon the character of Isaac Milner. Affectation of every kind, and most especially, religious affectation he abhorred; and it might be, that this hatred, in conjunction with his naturally vivacious and cheerful temperament, occasionally, or even frequently, induced him, at this early period of his life, to participate in diversions, and to accommodate himself to practices, which his judgment might not entirely approve;

* Afterwards Chaneellor of the University of Cambridge.

† *Life of Mr. Wilberforce*, by his Sons. Vol. I.

and he therefore, probably, “appeared” to most persons, “in all respects like an ordinary man of the world.” It is, however, certain, that the religious principles which actuated him to the end of his life, had, even at this time, taken deep root in his mind; and this fact Mr. Wilberforce had discovered before they became fellow-travellers, although happily for himself and the world, not till after the invitation had been given and accepted.

At a public table at Scarborough, the conversation had turned upon the character of a particular clergyman; “and I,” says Mr. Wilberforce, “spoke of him as a good man, but one who carried things too far. ‘Not a bit too far,’ said Milner; and to this opinion he adhered, when we renewed the conversation, in the evening, on the sands. This declaration greatly surprised me; and it was agreed, that, at some future time, we should talk the matter over. Had I known, at first, what his opinions were, it would have decided me against making him the offer. So true is it, that a gracious Hand leads us in ways that we know not, and blesses us, not only without, but even against, our plans and inclinations.”

Another circumstance, mentioned by Mr. Wilberforce, as having occurred just before the journey to Nice, distinctly shows the nature of the religious views which Mr. Milner at this time entertained. Mr. Wilberforce accidentally met with a volume of the works of Doddridge—his *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*—and, casting over it a cursory glance, asked his friend Milner, what sort of a book it was. “It is one of the best books ever written,” was the answer which he received; “let us take it with us, and read it on our journey.” They did so; and the discussions which arose respecting it, were productive, so far as Mr. Wilberforce was concerned, of the happiest consequences.

This was not the only journey in which Mr. Milner was the sole companion of Mr. Wilberforce. The latter gentleman being recalled to England by the duties of his station as a Member of Parliament, and the former holding, for the third time, the office of Moderator in the University, they returned home together; the ladies of the party remaining at Nice. This return to England took place late in January, 1785, over roads

buried in snow. Of the sudden transition from the comparative summer which they had left at Nice, to very severe cold, Dr. Milner frequently spoke in after life; explaining the causes which render the climate of Nice much milder than could be expected from the mere consideration of its latitude; and consequently, highly favourable, at certain periods of the year, to persons affected with, or threatened by, diseases of the lungs.

During this journey, the travellers were once, in danger of instant destruction; the weight of their carriage having overpowered the horses, when on the very brink of a precipice. The danger was, however, averted by the timely exertions of Mr. Milner, who being possessed of great personal strength, arrested the descent of the carriage in the moment of peril.

On this occasion, Mr. Milner was, probably, not accountable for the great weight of his friend's carriage: but it was one of the little peculiarities by which *Doctor* Milner was afterwards distinguished, that, travel where he might, his carriage was always of an extraordinary weight. This was in a great measure occasioned by his invariably carrying about with him an assortment which, to most persons, appeared uselessly large, of implements of a heavy kind—such as scissars of various sizes, pincers, files, penknives, razors, and even hammers. The boxes adapted to different parts of his carriage—and they were very numerous—were laden with such things; and many a good-humoured jest did he bestow upon the masters of the different inns at which, during his frequent journeys, he was accustomed to rest, by way of reconciling them to the extra weight thus occasioned.

On the 7th of July in the same year, Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Milner set out together on their return to the Continent, and proceeded to Genoa, whither, in the mean time, the ladies of their party had removed. They travelled alone, as before; and their conversation again turned, with increased seriousness, upon religious topics. They read together the Greek Testament—Mr. Milner sedulously explaining to his friend, *his* views of the doctrines therein laid down; “until,” says Mr. Wilberforce, “by degrees I imbibed his sentiments.” * * * * *

* * * “Milner, though full of levity on all other subjects,

never spoke on this, but with the utmost seriousness; and all he said tended to increase my attention to religion*.”

During a tour in Switzerland, the friends met, at Zurich, the celebrated Lavater—a man who made a very favourable impression upon Mr. Milner’s mind. Superstitious and mystical he was, no doubt—as a story, told to the travellers by himself, and related at length in the *Life of Mr. Wilberforce*, abundantly proves.

Of this story, the following slight outline was frequently given by Dr. Milner :

Being urgently pressed by a friend in distress to lend him a certain sum of money, Lavater at length, very reluctantly, consented to advance it from the funds of some charity of which he was treasurer. This done, he felt, as was natural, extremely dissatisfied with the course he had adopted; and, on finding that his friend, contrary to his (Lavater’s) confident expectations, could not repay him, he prayed earnestly, that some mode might present itself, by which he might be saved from casting disgrace upon his religious profession, by apparent dishonesty. Having arisen from his knees, he began, with nervous anxiety, to search every closet and drawer which his dwelling contained, and while thus occupied, found, to his great amazement, a small paper parcel containing the precise sum of which he stood in need! This occurrence he regarded as a special answer to his prayer.

Mr. Milner subsequently endeavoured, by letter, to reclaim Lavater, whose simplicity and warmth of heart had greatly won upon his affections, from his mystical opinions; but,—if we may judge from the following reply of the Swiss physiognomist, which, however, discovers much real and simple piety,—without much success.

LETTER FROM LAVATER TO MR. MILNER.

“J’ai reçu, cher Millner†, votre lettre—et je répond immédiatement, selon ma façon, mon temps, et les circonstances,—très court.

* *Life of Mr. Wilberforce.*

† This letter is transcribed without any change of orthography, accent, punctuation, &c.

“1. Toute la Bible, d’un bout à l’autre, recommande la prière positive, et promet—exauditiones. On ne pas croit la Bible, si on ne croit pas cela.

“2. Tous les hommes sont enfans de Dieu—ont les mêmes devoirs, et les mêmes *droits*. Unus Dominus omnium, satis dives, et sufficiens omnibus.

“3. Les Apôtres ne reconnoissent pas aucun autre Saint Esprit que celui qu’ils avoient eux-mêmes. Ils promettent CELUI à tous les enfans d’Abraham, dans les tems les plus éloignés.

“4. Tout ce que Dieu opère, est surnaturel pour *nous*, naturel pour *lui*.

“5. L’image de Dieu, règne comme lui, sur toutes choses. Tout est à vous, dit St. Paul. Nous sommes de sa race. Il peut tout, par l’homme qui croit.

“6. Cherchez, trouvez, s’il est possible, un seul passage, où il est dit, ‘Les promesses faites aux Apôtres et premiers Chrétiens, ne regardent qu’eux. Nous, ne sommes nous pas baptisés sur le même Nom? Nous, ne célébrons nous pas la même Sainte Cène? Unus Dominus, Una Fides.

“7. Lisez simplement—comme si vous lisiez la première fois l’Evangile—Vous verrez—et n’oubliez pas ce que je vous ai raconté.

“La Grace soit avec vous,

“J. GASPARD LAVATER.”

The permanent effect which, under Providence, was produced upon the mind of Mr. Wilberforce during these journeys, renders them so important, that it may be allowable here to quote the account given of them by the late Rev. Thomas Scott:

“In the latter part of the year 1784, and again in 1785,” says Mr. Scott, “Mr. Wilberforce travelled on the Continent with a party of friends. The late Dean of Carlisle, Dr. Isaac Milner, was his companion in the same carriage; and on these occasions these highly-gifted friends discussed together various interesting topics. Religion was of the number; and Mr. Wilberforce having, on one occasion, expressed respect for a pious

clergyman, but having added that ‘he carried things too far,’ his friend pressed him on this point. ‘What did he mean,’ asked Milner, ‘by carrying things too far, or being too strict? On what ground did he pronounce this to be the case? When we talked of *too far*, some *standard* must necessarily be referred to. Was the standard of Scripture exceeded? or could any other standard be satisfactorily adopted and maintained? Perhaps it would not easily be shown that, where things were carried, as it was alleged, *too far*, they were carried beyond the rules of Scripture, although they might be carried beyond what was usually practised and approved among men.’

“Mr. Wilberforce, when thus pressed by his friend, endeavoured to explain and defend his position, as well as he could; but he was dissatisfied with what he had to offer: in short, he felt that his own notions upon the subject, were vague and untenable. A lodgment was thus made in his conscience: matter for serious thinking was suggested, and his thoughts could find no rest till they found it from the Word of God, and the adoption of a Scriptural standard, by which to form all his judgments, and regulate all his conduct.”

From this period Mr. Milner maintained a frequent correspondence with this excellent friend upon religious topics; and was thus, under Providence, instrumental in confirming him in those views of the great doctrines of Christianity, to which Mr. Wilberforce adhered to the end of his life, and of which he became so useful and so distinguished an advocate.

Soon after his return from abroad, Mr. Milner was attacked by a disease of the lungs, which threatened to disable him from delivering his usual course of lectures, as Jacksonian Professor. With reference to this subject, he thus, with much warmth of affection, writes to Mr. Wilberforce:

“I am particularly unhappy, that your desire of a letter from me should have arrived to-day. * * * * I am very sorry that I said so much about myself, because I know it will dwell on your mind, and, if you are like me, the more so, because we are absent from each other. Things are magnified by distance. I almost wish I had never opened on the subject of my

feelings.—In our first journey, I had many a head-ache, and what is worse, heart-ache, in silence; but we closed so by degrees, that there appeared a sort of unfriendliness in concealment. * * * If I had written to you yesterday, I should have given a better account.—I am very sorry.—I know this will hurt you.

“The misfortune is, this business of mine must either go on, or stop entirely. There is no sort of provision.—My professorship is absolutely void if I do not go through the course. Don’t let this account bring you here.—I should be more hurt; and I have not a moment to spare.

“God bless you, my dear friend.”

The remainder of this very affectionate letter has reference to the continued illness of a lady who had been one of the continental party; and is chiefly interesting as affording an instance of the extreme clearness and perspicuity which constantly characterized the conceptions and statements of Mr. Milner, whatever might be the subject which happened to engage his attention. After suggesting a list of questions respecting the case in question, as apposite and as distinctly put as they could have been if proposed by a physician, Mr. Milner thus proceeds :

“I have a great regard for ————, and am concerned at the inclosed account. Certainly there can be no harm in writing to Tissot. I dare say he will remember the case—probably he keeps a register of cases. I have a very good opinion of him; but I have no idea, that as good advice is not to be had in England. Probably her case will prove obstinate, which is a stronger reason for beginning with English advice.

“Ever your I. M.”

Mr. Milner, during his residence abroad, had himself consulted Tissot; who, from the elaborate opinion which he wrote, seems to have paid very great attention to his case. He attributes much of Mr. Milner’s ill-health to “*un travail soutenu de la tête;*” and expresses his hope, that by means of “*l’exercice*

en plein air, les eaux de Spa, ensuite les eaux de Pyrmont, et les bains froids,” his patient “peut venir à jouir de la plus parfaite santé.”

He concludes thus: “Je ne conseille aucun remède pharmatique.

“7 Oct*, 1785.

TISSOT.”

Thus spelled in the manuscript opinion.

CHAPTER III.

Mr. Milner takes his degree of B.D.—Professor Smyth's Recollections of his Divinity Act.—Bishop Watson's account of the same Act.—Recollections of Mr. Milner as a Lecturer.—Dr. Maskelyne.—Correspondence.—Mr. Milner, as Jacksonian Professor, endeavours to obtain from the Crown, an annual stipend in support of the Science of Chymistry.—Bishop of Llandaff.—Mr. Milner's mode of life as a Lecturer.—Accident and illness.—Visits his brother at Hull.—Board of Longitude.—Attempt to alter its Constitution.—Energy of Mr. Milner.—Visit to London.—Chymical Pursuits.—Letter from Dr. Priestley.—Visit to Rayrigg, in Westmoreland.—Mode of life there.—Conversational powers.—Visit to Hull.

A.D. 1786. ÆTAT 36.

MR. MILNER took his degree of Bachelor of Divinity in the summer of the year 1786; which year was distinguished in his academical career, by the splendid Divinity Act which he kept against the late Dr. Coulthurst*. Of this Act, which was rendered memorable by the superior powers of both the disputants, I have been favoured by an eye and ear witness†, with the following recollections:

“Dr. Milner was always considered as one of the first men of talents in the place, during all the time I have known the University, and his Act, I remember when I was an Undergraduate, excited the greatest interest.

“Dr. Coulthurst, on account of *his* talents also, was selected to be his opponent.

“The subject was ‘Paulus Apostolus, de fide et operibus disserens nec sibi, nec aliis apostolis, nec rectæ rationi contradicit.’

“So that the disputation turned on the nature of Faith and Works; and I remember very well the Bishop of Landaff‡ saying, ‘Non necesse est descendere in arenam, Arcades enim ambo estis,’—which we all thought a well-turned and well-merited compliment paid to such distinguished men.”

* Dr. Coulthurst was second Wrangler in the year 1775.

† William Smyth, Esq., Professor of Modern History in the University

of Cambridge.

‡ Dr. Watson, then Professor of Divinity at Cambridge.

Bishop Watson gives a strong incidental testimony to the surpassing excellence of this Act, in his *Anecdotes of his own Life*. After speaking of the usefulness and importance of scholastic disputations, he proceeds thus: "An evil custom has, within these last few years, been introduced into the University: * * * it is the custom of dining late. When I was admitted, and for many years after, every college dined at twelve o'clock, and the students after dinner flocked to the philosophical disputations, which began at two. If the schools, either of philosophy or divinity, shall ever be generally destitute of an audience, there will be an end of all scholastic exertion. I remember having seen the Divinity Schools (when the best Act, by Coulthurst and Milner—*Arcades ambo*—was keeping, that I ever presided at, and which might justly be called a real academic entertainment) filled with auditors from the top to the bottom; but as soon as the clock struck three, a number of masters of arts, belonging to colleges which dined at three, slunk away from this intellectual feast; and they were followed, as might have been expected, by many under-graduates,—I say as might have been expected; for in all seminaries of education, relaxation of discipline begins with the seniors of the society."

Whatever may be thought of the correctness of Dr. Watson's opinions concerning the utility of disputations in the schools, his testimony thus incidentally given to the excellence of the Act of Coulthurst and Milner, is unquestionably valuable.

During this year, and the six following years, Mr. Milner continued to read alternate courses of philosophical and chemical lectures. With reference to these lectures, Professor Smyth thus speaks:—

"Dr. Milner was always considered as a very capital lecturer. The chemical lectures were always well attended; and what with *him*, and what with his German assistant, Hoffman, the audience was always in a high state of interest and entertainment."

The greater part of the long vacation of this year was passed by Mr. Milner, as usual, at the house of his brother, at Hull.

Among the friends with whom, at this period of his life, he maintained a frequent epistolary intercourse, was the late

Dr. Maskelyne, the Astronomer Royal. Letters treating almost exclusively of astronomical topics contain, of course, but little of general interest; yet a brief postscript to one from Dr. Maskelyne to Mr. Milner, dated "Greenwich, Nov. 1, 1786," may be admitted. "I have given," writes Dr. Maskelyne, "a paper, now printed, to the Royal Society, about the return in the autumn of the year 1788, with great southern declination, of the Comet of 1532 and 1661." * * * * "I take this opportunity to mention, that as I read your valuable paper on the 'Precession of the Equinoxes' with much pleasure, so I am satisfied of the truth of your theory, having proved it from my own separate investigation. What then are we to think of D'Alembert's laborious book and methods which lead to a contrary conclusion?"

In the beginning of the year 1787, Mr. Milner, as Jacksonian Professor, was anxious, in consideration of "the very considerable onus imposed by the founder, and the expensive nature of the lecture," to obtain from the Crown an annual stipend, in addition to that already enjoyed under Dr. Jackson's will, in support of the science of Chymistry. Dr. Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, and Mr. Milner's own chymical tutor, appeared a likely person to further his views; and, in company with Mr. Wilberforce, he waited upon the bishop, by appointment, at his house in London, to discuss the subject. This visit was paid at about ten o'clock in the evening; and, on their way, the friends had jestingly speculated upon the probable nature of the occupation in which they might find his Lordship engaged. They were admitted, and found the prelate reading St. Augustine. Those who believe that Bishop Watson was a *thorough actor*, will, perhaps, suspect that the ponderous folio was a part of the preparation made for the expected visitors; and his Lordship's remark at their entrance, "There are not many of the Bench whom you would find thus engaged at this hour of the night," might seem to favour such a suspicion. Be this as it may, the bishop appeared friendly to the plan submitted to his consideration, and Mr. Milner, subsequently, made his application to the King.

A peculiar consistency, certainly, pervaded the character of the subject of this Memoir. In youth and in age he was the

same man. Of this consistency of character the memorial which, on this occasion, he addressed to the Crown, affords an instance. The same mixture of caution, prudence, firmness, and independence, which characterizes this document, is apparent in the whole course of Mr. Milner's conduct; and this both before and after his mind was brought under the steady influence of religious principle. The records of his later life will confirm the truth of this observation.

Without entering into a more particular account of the memorial in question, it may suffice to say, that it answered, at least to a considerable extent, the purpose of its author.

The following letter contains an account of Mr. Milner's mode of life as a lecturer; its object being to induce the friend to whom it was addressed to postpone an intended visit to Cambridge.

Queen's, Thursday,

March 11th, 1787.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Your kindness touches me most sensibly; but the more I am convinced of that kindness which induces you to take this journey on my account, the more it becomes my duty to open myself fully to you.

“Then at once—in these circumstances, I think you had better not come.

“In college I lecture from eight to ten in the morning—from that time till four in the afternoon, I am absolutely so engaged that I can scarcely steal half an hour from preparing my lectures, to dine. At half-past five, I get my coffee, go to chapel, and then lie down for an hour.—I then rise, take my milk—look out various articles, and make notes of natural history, &c., for the succeeding day. This coming every day, keeps me on such a continued stretch, that I am often very much done up with fatigue; and if Mr. Metcalfe, of Christ's Coll., did not assist me, I should not be able to get through.

“Now were you to come, I know I should be induced to steal some hours, the want of which would be felt, and I should be ten times more hurried and fretted. As this is strictly and literally the case, you will think I draw the proper conclusion in advising you to desist, at present, from your most kind views,

the execution of which would certainly distress me.—But I will say no more on that at present.

“About next Tuesday or Wednesday se’night, I shall have finished the laborious and pressing part of these lectures; and then I shall only have about ten or eleven lectures more to make up the number, and those ten or eleven require no preparation or time, beyond the single hour. I hope I shall be able to get through, as I have now just turned the middle page of the difficulties. * * * * * A bad accident happened to me last Saturday. I was standing on a very high table in the lecture room, and stepping from the table to a chair, the bottom of the chair flew up, and I fell with my whole weight, on my right side, breast, and ribs, on the edge of the chair—a mercy I was not killed. The pain I suffer is incredible, upon breathing, &c., and at nights. I wish I had acquiesced in bleeding at first, as I was advised; but, if possible, I wish not to protract my lectures a day. The very first leisure I have, I shall say many things to you.

“Your affectionate friend, &c.,

“*To Wm. Wilberforce, Esq.*”

“ISAAC MILNER.”

The long vacation of this year, like that of the last, was passed by Mr. Milner with his mother and brother at Hull. His health was, at this time very precarious: a spitting of blood, apparently produced by the accident mentioned in the foregoing letter, still threatened consequences of the most serious nature; and an intermitting pulse,—a symptom which never afterwards forsook him, and which occasioned great apprehension in the minds of his physicians, Drs. Baillic and Pitcairne, one of whom, on a subsequent occasion, declared, that “with such a pulse a man’s life was not worth one minute’s purchase,”—seems now first to have alarmed Mr. Milner and his friends. Under these circumstances, he had recourse, as was his wont, to Mr. Hey, of Leeds; to whose judicious advice, at this critical juncture, the prolongation of his life may, perhaps, under Providence, be mainly attributed.

Mr. Isaac Milner was at this time, and continued till his death, a Member of the Board of Longitude; a body composed

of the most scientific men of the period. This Board, as its name in some measure imports, met for the purpose of taking into consideration, and reporting to the Government, any discoveries calculated to facilitate navigation under dangerous circumstances; and, in particular, any inventions, which, by tending to the perfect and constant accuracy of chronometers, might, in the absence of other means, assist navigators to determine their exact position at sea.

Since it is unnecessary to dilate upon the affairs of a Board, which is now dissolved, it may be sufficient to say, that at this time, as well as at a later period of Mr. Milner's life, an attempt was made to induce the Government to alter the constitution of the Board of Longitude in a manner which to him, and to other learned members of that body, especially to the Astronomical Professors of the University of Cambridge, appeared calculated to cast a stigma upon their reputation. Under these circumstances, Mr. Milner exhibited the energy with which he invariably engaged in whatever he undertook; and his efforts were proportionately successful.

As illustrative of the vigour, which was a distinguished trait in his character, it may be mentioned, that the influence which, on more than one subsequent occasion, he brought to bear upon the House of Commons, when measures, which he judged to be inimical to the interests of science, or to the rights of the University, or of the College which he governed, were in preparation, astonished even some of those intimate friends who thought that they knew him thoroughly.

In the winter of this year Mr. Milner was again alarmed by symptoms threatening serious pulmonary disease. His friend Mr. Wilberforce, who was at Bath, urged him, with much earnestness to join him at that place. To this arrangement, however, his duties as Tutor of a College offered insuperable difficulties; and had it been otherwise, his "mother and brother," as he wrote to the same friend, made "their comfort depend so much upon" his "being with them" whenever an opportunity presented itself, that he had little leisure to bestow upon other friends, however valued. A dangerous illness of Mr. Wilberforce in the ensuing spring did, however, induce Mr. Milner,

ever under the influence of the warmest and most affectionate feelings, to pay him an unexpected visit, of which visit Mr. Wilberforce thus writes in his Diary: "March 1st. Milner came by breakfast time, having put off his Lectures, &c. out of solicitude to see how I was going on*."

In the intervals during which he had enjoyed moderate health, Mr. Milner had, for several years past, sedulously applied himself to the study of chymistry. His attention had been turned in particular, to the production of nitrous acid and nitrous air; and upon this subject he had, at various times, made several novel and highly interesting experiments.

It is known to most persons conversant with similar inquiries, that the attention of the celebrated Dr. Priestley was, about this period, fixed upon the same subject.

To Dr. Priestley, Milner communicated an account of some of his experiments with their results; and from him received in consequence the following letter:—

"TO THE REVEREND ISAAC MILNER.

"DEAR SIR,

"*Birmingham, June 24th, 1788.*

"I have not yet repeated your very interesting experiments; but I cannot have any doubt of their succeeding, and wish you would prosecute them yourself, as I am not fond of putting my sickle into another man's harvest. I shall, however, as I have your leave, mention the facts to my friends; as they cannot but do you great honour. I shall be happy to hear of your progress, and am,

"Dear Sir,

"Your very humble servant,

"J. PRIESTLEY.

"P.S.—I direct to Mr. Kirwan, only in Dublin."

"Mr. Kirwan" was an Irish chymist of note. He was the second president of the Royal Irish Academy,—being successor to the Earl of Charlemont, of Volunteer celebrity, the founder of that institution. Mr. Kirwan published several papers in the

* See *Life of Wilberforce*.

Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy. A letter from him to Mr. Milner, upon the formation of nitrous acid, will be found under its proper date*.

In the course of this month of June, Mr. Wilberforce, having settled himself in the house which he had, for some summers past, rented at Rayrigg, in Westmorland, was visited by Mr. Milner, whom the long vacation released, at that season, from his academical duties.

The house at Rayrigg was filled throughout the summer, with a continual, but ever-changing succession of guests; and it will be easily believed, that, in such circumstances, the social temperament, comprehensive knowledge, and extraordinary conversational powers of Isaac Milner, were fully appreciated: had he, like Johnson, been provided with a Boswell, a specimen of "Table-talk," perhaps almost unequalled, might have been presented to the public.

Mr. Pitt, who had intended to visit Rayrigg, in an excursion to Scotland planned during the preceding summer, was prevented by the pressure of public business from executing his purpose; but there was no lack of brilliant company. "The Duchess of Gordon and Lady Charlotte," says Mr. Wilberforce in his Diary, July 3rd, "by tapping at our low window, announced that they had discovered our retreat, and would take no denial." * * * * * "Milner and I went and supped with them at Low Wood." "Saturday the 5th. Lord Camden comes to dinner." "7th. Balgonies came." "10. Muncaster came." "11th. Milner off." In the midst, however, of this gaiety, "a perpetual round of dissipation," as Mr. Wilberforce calls it, *some* serious conversation took place between him and his friend. "Milner and I," says he, "had much talk about this being a most improper place for me, and resolved upon not continuing in the house." "Improper," it must have been for one who had "this summer looked for much solitude and quiet; the banks of the Thames being scarcely more public, than those of Windermere;" and, in compliance with his friend's advice, Mr. Wilberforce gave up this favourite residence.

* See chap. viii.

On finally quitting Rayrigg, in the month of October following, Mr. Wilberforce paid a short visit to Hull; and there again met Mr. Milner, who had exchanged the gaieties of the Westmoreland villa, for the sober duties or occupations of solacing his aged mother or occasionally assisting his brother in the business of his school.

With reference to this meeting, Mr. W. thus writes in his Diary. * * * * “Milner’s excellent advice at Hull, in addition to his lecture at Rayrigg, de levitate—‘Nihil enim per se amplum est, nisi in quo judicii ratio extat,’—of being a man of business, &c. May God enable me to profit from his hint, and make me properly grateful to him for this true proof of friendship.”

By receiving in this spirit these honest animadversions, Mr. Wilberforce surely gave proof that the constant affection of his friend was worthily bestowed.

CHAPTER IV.

Mr. Milner is elected President of Queen's College.—Improvements in the internal management of the College.—Letters.—Feelings on being elected President.—Popular Philosophical Writers.—Ferguson.—Martin.—Mac-laurin.—View of Public Affairs on the Illness of the King.—Letter from Joseph Milner to the Rev. James Stillingfleet.—Illness.—Letter from Joseph Milner on his Brother's Illness.—Correspondence.—Communication to the Royal Society.—Formally excused, on account of ill health, from delivery of Jacksonian Lectures.—Letters from Drs. Hunter and Fothergill.—Lectures continued with assistance.—Fondness for Practical Mechanics.—Extracts from Correspondence with the Rev. T. Ludlam.—Sentiments concerning Card-playing.—Private Religious Diary.

A.D. 1788. ÆTAT. 38.

By the death of the Rev. Dr. Plumptre, in the year 1788, the office of President of Queen's College became vacant, and to this honourable situation Mr. Milner was elected.

After the lapse of more than half a century, there can be no impropriety or indelicacy in stating, that, previous to the election of Mr. Milner to the mastership, Queen's College had greatly decreased in reputation. From that time, however, the college, once distinguished by the residence of Erasmus, steadily and rapidly advanced in character and importance. The number of students increased; and, as it was the paramount desire of the president, that the college which he governed should yield to none in the means of instruction which it afforded, he introduced—from other colleges, when necessary—men fitted by their abilities and acquirements for the important and responsible station of tutor; and such men invariably found in him a constant friend and patron. In the internal management of the college many abuses, sanctioned by long prescription, were reformed; and if some part of the obloquy which is too often the lot of those who originate important improvements fell upon Mr. Milner, he had sufficient fortitude to brave opposition, and to persevere in the course which he believed to be the path of duty.

“As president of a college,” says the author of a slight

biographical sketch of the life and character of Dr. Milner, "his constant aim was to encourage learned men that belonged to his own Foundation, as well as to introduce improvements which might tend to the happiness of the students, and to the advancement of the University at large."

This statement, the truth of which is undeniable, comprises all that needs, in this place, to be said of Mr. Milner as head of a college. Further notices of his conduct in that capacity will appear in the course of this Memoir.

At this period, that portion of Mr. Milner's career which may, perhaps, be more especially called his PUBLIC LIFE, may be considered to begin; and although harassed by continual attacks of ill-health, and, consequently, often almost incapacitated for duties which he, nevertheless, deemed himself called upon to perform, the remainder of his life was spent in a course of persevering exertion for the advancement of religion and learning, not often surpassed even by persons enjoying uninterrupted health and strength.

It is, however, unnecessary here to anticipate that, of which the sequel of this work will afford satisfactory proof. In the mean time his own letters may best carry forward his history.

"I would not," he writes to Mr. Wilberforce, on the 16th of November, 1788, "lead the life I have passed these last ten days, for all below the moon. Ceremony without end. I have been very much *ad cap* every day—and must continue so. I foresee plenty of new expenses, I promise you, which did not occur before; but old Jackson* will stand in the gap, and, I think, about make ends meet, and that's all.

"Your stay at Bath, I take to be entirely uncertain at present, on account of the king's health; and if it were not so, I have little hopes of being able to join you. I meant to have gone a week or two to Hull, for the reasons mentioned in my letter to you at York; but even that plan I am not sure of being able to compass. This is the time of year when the college rents are settled, and are falling in by degrees; and I not only aim to do my duty in my new situation, but wish to avoid doing any

* His Jacksonian Professorship.

thing that may *look* like neglect of business. Such conduct would vex my friends, and prove a triumph to my opponents.

“I dare say I deceive myself, but I have it strongly on my mind to lead *something of a new life*. I am sure, that a new situation, *as such*, is favourable to a change. All is folly, my dear friend, but *the great change*, and will, most assuredly, be found so at last; but we don't look an inch before us.

“I think of Miss —— often, and of the conversation I have had with her. Your bodily complaints do not resemble mine more exactly than many of my mental weaknesses resemble her's; and I may add, that I have often as little solid satisfaction as she can have, when loose hands all around suppose our hearts run over with gaiety and spirits.

“I am, most affectionately and truly, yours,

“I. M.

“Write that you have received this.”

The following answer to an inquiry made by Mr. Wilberforce, concerning the then existing proper books to be put into the hands of a person desirous of obtaining some popular knowledge of philosophy, may be read with some interest:

“TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

“*Queen's, Wednesday Night,*

November, 1788.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“The philosophical writers for popular hands are such as Ferguson. He is excellently adapted to the purpose; I can speak positively to his merits in this point of view, but I have not been able to make out to-day the exact title of his books; for we don't use them much. Ferguson's *Astronomy* there is; and I think in particular, there is a book called, Ferguson's *Dialogues on Astronomy for Ladies*. He wrote also on *Mechanics*. In general whatever he has written on such subjects is to the purpose.

“Martin, the late mathematical instrument maker, is another such hand; but I cannot make out whether he calls his book, *Martin's Philosophy*, or *Martin's Philosophical Grammar*, or what. He lived in Fleet Street.

“A very reasonable and intelligible account of the History of Philosophy is to be found in Maclaurin’s View of Newton’s Discoveries.

“Yours affectionately,

I. M.”

In the course of the next month, Mr. Milner, always sincerely interested in public affairs, and always disposed to think and decide for himself, on questions of politics, as well as of literature or theology, wrote, to the same friend, in the following terms, concerning the political arrangements probably consequent upon the illness of the king.

“TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Hull, Dec. 8th, 1788.

“I am determined to write instantly, merely to inform you, how much satisfaction your letter brought me this morning, in affirming that there will be NO COALITION.

“No honourable coalition, with such men, can be formed; nor can I conceive any necessity which could justify the step. And yet I do not absolutely say, that no such necessity can exist, though I find it impossible to conceive the case.

“When the case happens, I shall judge as fairly as I can. At present I am perfectly persuaded that all Pitt’s disinterested well-wishers among what may be called moderate life (which forms a very large part of the community), think as I do on this subject, and will embrace the ex-minister more cordially than they ever did the minister. I cannot say, that I was without fears of some sort of coalition or other. I had no good ground for the apprehension, except the general one, viz., that persons in these high situations are more subject to delusions and are seldom *completely* directed by the ordinary principles of good sense and integrity. But the more fears I had on this head, the more I shall honour the man who proves, by his conduct, that there was no ground for these fears; and I am sorry for the injustice of the conception.

“Independent of the rectitude of the thing, mere political considerations suggest the same line of conduct. I make no scruple to say (*fremant omnes*) that Fox has not *sense* to govern

this nation; because *sense* includes *discretion*. But if they join, from that moment there is an end of that *great distinction* which I wish ever to see between them. All will then be a scramble; the cry will be, '*They are all alike.*' Pitt is deprived of his best ornament, they must fight with the same weapons, and he will be beaten; for they know how to use such weapons better than he does.

"So much I could not help pouring forth from the fulness of the heart. * * * *

"N.B. Young Willis has written to me, to say a word about introducing his father. I hope he will succeed; he is a man of strong sense and much experience.

"Yours truly,
"I. M."

A letter written about this time to the Rev. James Stillingfleet, Rector of Hotham, Yorkshire, by Joseph Milner alluding both to the advancement of Isaac to the mastership of his college, and to the illness of the king, will be interesting to many readers.

"DEAR STILO,

"Hull, Dec. 3rd, 1788.

"I am in arrears with you, and have to thank you for two letters. But I do as little as possible in the epistolary way, even with my best friends, that I may have some time for necessary things.

"I thank you for your congratulations about my brother. I wish it may answer a good end to him, and to the Church of Christ; God only can effect it.

"Probably by this time they find the king's disorder to be some species of insanity. Awful Providence! It may last long. Regencies are generally turbulent things. I am glad that those in authority had the heart to direct prayer to be made to Him who is a refuge in trouble. It has a good look to see so public an acknowledgement of dependence upon the Almighty; rather an unusual idea with great people. Many pray fervently for it, I doubt not; I hope we may find a gracious answer.

"If all be well, I shall probably visit you during a little of

the time that my *Anti-Ludlam* being a-printing, I must be called more than common from home.

“But I beg you would not make a fuss (as Ludlam says) about expecting me. I am an old battered hackney; I shall come to refresh my body and mind among you, and indeed I am not able to do what once I did, through frequent infirmities. Pray that I may be strengthened, after having preached to others, to walk in the way of holiness for my own soul, and not myself be a cast-away.

“I beg my kind regards to Mrs. Stillingfleet and Miss H——, not forgetting Edward.

“Always yours affectionately,

“JOSEPH MILNER.

“P.S.—I thank you for the hare.

“*To the Rev. J. Stillingfleet.*”

The expression *Anti-Ludlam*, in the foregoing letter, may require some explanation.

The work spoken of as in the press, was an edition of Joseph Milner's *Essays on the Influence of the Holy Spirit**, a publication partly occasioned by the Rev. William Ludlam's attack upon Mr. Milner's observations upon Gibbon's *Account of Christianity*. With reference to these *Essays*, the author himself thus writes: “Personal resentment can scarce be supposed to exist against an author who has certainly avoided all personal abuse; and my concern for the reputation of a former work†, attacked by him in some of its most important views, is, I hope, a small thing with me, compared with the magnitude of the truths I undertake to defend, the real glory of God, the best interests of men, and the preciousness of vital Christianity, which in no age was ever more speciously undermined than in the present.”

Dr. Milner, in an account subsequently given by him of his brother's writings, says, “His *Essays on the Influence of the Holy Spirit* were exceedingly well received, and have been of

* Now printed in MILNER'S *Works*, | † GIBBON'S *Account of Christianity*
vol. viii. | *Considered.*

great service in the church. This work, though small, is a durable monument of the author's sound principles, good sense, and power of discrimination in argument; and will, doubtless, prove a valuable protection against heretical and fanciful interpretations of Scripture, through succeeding generations."

The prayer of the pious writer of the foregoing letter, that his brother's advancement might "answer a good end to the church of Christ," has been abundantly granted. Queen's College, under the government of Isaac Milner, became remarkable for the number of religious young men who studied there, and of whom many are still, in various places, serving God and their generation, as able and faithful clergymen of the establishment, or in other influential stations.

On the 24th of December, Mr. Milner again writing to Mr. Wilberforce, chiefly with reference to the subject discussed in his former letter, says, "The papers yesterday gave me great satisfaction indeed—as I had conceived that the majority might have been the other way. Politics run very high here. * * Always yours, with the most affectionate feelings,

"I. M."

The meetings of the Board of Longitude requiring his attendance in London three times a year, Mr. Milner, on these occasions, staid at the house of this same friend; and the frequent personal intercourse thus secured, doubtless tended to quicken the tender solicitude with which these excellent men regarded each other. Among the many intimations of their mutual affection with which the published Diary of Mr. Wilberforce abounds, the following passage may be fitly inserted here.

"April 3rd, 1789. Heard from Milner, that ill of a fever; but, after a short debate, found that I must give up the slave business if I went to him, so resolved against it." * * * *

"Milner much on my mind—B—— with me—had expected poor Milner—very comfortable here but for thoughts of poor Milner."

Mr. Milner being dangerously ill, and greatly debilitated by fever, was much disappointed at the non-appearance of his friend. This appears from the following very affecting letter:—

“TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Queen’s, Monday.

“You will be glad to see my own hand, and, therefore, I struggle to effect a few lines.

“When I last wrote to you, the fever ran extremely high, and appeared likely to be very soon critical. Judge of my situation—with many things on my mind, and among strangers. My heart was almost broken when you did not appear. I did not wish you to have staid—but I wished to see you. * * *

“I wrote to my brother by the same post. * * * God has been merciful. The fever is abated, but my state of enfeeblement is infinitely beyond what I ever before experienced. It must be a work of time, and long time, to recruit.

“I cannot yet bear to see people; all are excluded except one or two.

“My heart is full—but you must forgive me—writing this proves too much.

“Yours, in the sincerest affection,

“I. M.”

Mr. Wilberforce was, at this period, putting forth all his strength in the great cause of the abolition of the slave trade, and his exertions were frequently encouraged by the sympathy of his suffering friend.

In May, 1789, Mr. Milner thus writes to him:—

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“I am *sensibly warmed* by your letter of this morning, in finding that you got through the great trial* so much to your satisfaction.”

Energetically, however, as Mr. Milner here expresses himself, he was still suffering from severe indisposition; and his friend, as may be supposed, was not proof against the appeal made to him in the foregoing letter.

* A speech with which Mr. Wilberforce opened the debate on the slave trade.

Accordingly, the following entry appears in Mr. Wilberforce's Diary, on "Friday, May 29th. Set off for Cambridge to see poor Milner—found him much weakened—in a very pious state of mind. His brother and Tillotson*, arrived about eleven."

Joseph Milner, whose arrival at Cambridge is here notified, had announced to his friend, Mr. Stillingfleet, his intention of immediately visiting his afflicted brother, in the following very characteristic letter:—

"DEAR STILL.,

"Hull, 28th May, 1789.

"I had better suffer any crossing of my will, than be left to myself altogether, as a self-important, and self-consequential fool! You and I saw enough of that in poor — lately. Though your kindness is real, I should be in danger from you and my other good friends at Hotham. To be made much of, suits one's pride but too well. God has deprived me of this. I fear I was but too fond of coming to Hotham.

"I had a stroke this morning like a thunderbolt. Alas, my brother! I must go to him directly; I much fear the consequence of his fever's relapsing.

"Pray, that he may be renewed in truth, before he depart hence. I have good hope of this; not much of the recovery of his health.

"With love to Mrs. Stillingfleet,

"I am, yours affectionately,

"The Rev. J. Stillingfleet."

"JOSEPH MILNER.

Within a short period, Mr. Milner being somewhat recovered, though still obviously in a state of great weakness, wrote to Mr. Wilberforce as follows:—

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Sunday night, 1789.

"My brother went away last Tuesday. * * * * I have had hard struggles ever since. The fever has been making continual efforts, but by the blessing of God, has been kept under. Friday and Saturday most insupportable headaches,

* An old friend who subsequently lived with Dr. Milner.

which threatened a complete relapse, as this complaint began with great pain and stupor in the head. I am better to-day. How much have I to be thankful for!

“It is great pain to me to write, and, therefore, I can only just assure you, that I think many times a day of your present state of fatigue and anxiety.

“I was sorry to be told by Dr. Jowett, that you did not look healthy—I know that in this hurry, you will neglect yourself.

“Yours,

“I. M.

“My chymical helper is fallen ill of the same complaint.
“*To Wm. Wilberforce, Esq.*”

Having some time afterwards ventured upon a visit to London, Mr. Milner on his return wrote to the same friend, a letter containing the following striking passage:—

“I thought the journey to London and back useful—and so it may still have been; but on Wednesday last, I grew very ill.

“* * * I must be short; I write with difficulty—and I leave it to you to infer and supply.

“I laid three days and nights in bed, without at all moving—a thing I never did in my life for two days.

“Nevertheless, God was with me more than ever before; I don't pretend to prove this to another, but it is so. Blessed be God! I wish I could say so thoroughly; I do *in part*.

“God bless you, my dear Sir.

“I. M.”

About this time Mr. Milner communicated to the Royal Society a paper, upon a subject which has already been mentioned as occupying a considerable portion of his thoughts—“The Production of Nitrous Acid and Nitrous Air*.” This paper was read at the meeting of the society, July 2nd, 1789. Of Mr. Milner's discoveries on this subject, as applied to the making of gunpowder, the French are known to have availed themselves, much to their national advantage.

* See *Transactions of the Royal Society* for the year, 1789.

Some letters relating to these discoveries, from persons eminent for chymical knowledge, will be found under their proper dates.

During the years 1790 and 1791, Mr. Milner's health was such as to render it necessary that he should be formally excused from the delivery of his accustomed lectures as Jacksonian professor. Accordingly a certificate to this effect, from Sir Isaac Pennington, M.D., and a permission, signed by William Cooke, Provost of King's College, T. Postlethwaite, Master of Trinity College, and William Craven, Master of St. John's College, gave licence to the Jacksonian professor, "in consideration of his great diligence and punctuality in former years, in the discharge of his duty, and on account of his ill-health," to omit his lectures in 1790, and to procure a proper assistant or deputy, in 1791.

At this period, Mr. Milner corresponded upon the subject of his health, both with Dr. Fothergill, a physician of considerable repute, and with the celebrated John Hunter.

The letters which still exist from both these eminent medical advisers are as remarkable for their friendly sympathy, as for their professional ability.

Dr. Fothergill, who was a member of the Society of Friends, thus writes:—

"Respected Friend,

"I have perused and considered thy case with much attention. It is the description of a most unhappy being, and the wretchedness is increased by reflecting on the miseries of the past, and the hopeless prospects of the future—a situation of mind which is perpetually increasing the disorder and rendering it more difficult to cure; yet how to prevent it is as difficult to conceive. * * * * * It will be worth while, not only to think like a philosopher, but to act like one,—I mean that thou shouldest look as little as possible upon the past disappointments in respect of health, and cherish hope of better days."

"Dear Sir," writes John Hunter, a few months later, "I received the favour of your letter on the 17th of last month,

and, at first, was almost frightened to read it, and laid it down to be taken up again when I could give time to read and consider the contents. The case is a singular one, and is such as (I think) no man can say at once, what should be done."

Still, however, although not compelled by any authority, Mr. Milner, unless absolutely incapacitated by ill-health, continued, with the assistance of Hoffinan, the German, to give chymical lectures, until his promotion to the deanery of Carlisle, on which event, he, from principle, resigned the office of Jacksonian professor.

It is very generally known, that Dr. Milner took great delight in practical mechanics. So fond, indeed, was he of ingenious manual labour, that there was at Queen's Lodge, a large room, known in the family by the name of the Workshop, fitted up with lathes, furnaces, work-benches, grind-stones, bellows, blow-pipes, electrical apparatus, &c. &c., in which apartment, either alone, or with some intimate friend of corresponding tastes, he used frequently to employ himself in various mechanical operations, as well as in chemical experiments.

The following brief extracts from an extensive correspondence which he maintained with the Rev. Thomas Ludlam, of Leicester—a man of considerable eminence as a mathematician, and a great lover of mechanics—are highly characteristic; and exhibit, in a very strong light, the enthusiastic eagerness with which, throughout his life, Isaac Milner devoted himself to whatever pursuit chanced, for the time being, to engage his attention.

This peculiar constitution of mind has been thought, by some persons, to have led him to a misapplication of his time and talents. To say, that such an effect was never, *in any degree*, produced by it, would, perhaps, be to make too unguarded an assertion; since it is undoubtedly true, that he would sometimes expend much close and energetic research, and, of course, a considerable portion of time, upon the elucidation of topics, which, to most persons, appeared unworthy of such sacrifices,—it may however, be safely affirmed, that, *upon the whole*, this turn

of mind was not only highly advantageous to its possessor, but, that it was, in fact, the principal cause both of his achievements in science and of his worldly advancement.

“TO THE REVEREND T. LUDLAM*.

“DEAR SIR,

“*Queen’s College, June 13, 1790.*

“Our election of members of parliament comes on next Thursday†; and till that bustle be over, I expect neither to hear nor see anything reasonable or decent, and to have no time for any thing but nonsensical talk with fresh faces. I then mean to set off immediately for Hull; both on my own account and that of my mother, who is in her eightieth year. It is very desirable for me to get into the country, near the air of the sea or Humber, as soon as may be: if I were in London, I could not go much about this hot weather, in search of the precious metals (as William Ludlam used to call steel and brass); and any thing that can be transacted by letter, can be done as well at the distance of two hundred miles, as of fifty. * * *

“We knew beforehand, that steel *often* flies and casts in the hardening: therefore, why are we surprised? The laws of nature are not to be suspended because I want a mandril. I only wish I knew with accuracy, what those laws were! The present ingot, I think, ought not to be thrown aside so long as there is any of it left.

“By all means try again. * * * * *

“N.B.—I shall wait patiently for your next account; but upon seeing the outside of the letter, shall be in such a pucker as to lose all philosophy.

“I am very sincerely,

“Your obliged servant,

“I. M.

“P.S.—A celebrated French mathematician, M. D’Alembert,

* It may be proper to observe, that certain theological writings of the Rev. T. Ludlam, animadverted upon by Dr. Milner, in his account of his brother’s works, were not published till some

years after the date of these letters.

† Mr. Pitt and Lord Euston were re-elected Members for the University of Cambridge in 1790.

has written, in his *Opuscules*, a tract on probabilities, to shew that nature *delights in variety*; so that if a halfpenny has fallen heads, ten times together, it is *more* than an equal chance, that it will fall tails the eleventh time.

“Though I can conceive hardly anything more absurd, or irrational, yet I confess, that *my* weakness in such cases, is rather on *that side*; and I feel myself inclined to imitate the above-mentioned great man, in this instance of human infirmity, particularly as it *makes for us*.

“The mandril has failed once -- Courage! *Success grows more probable from FAILURE*. True gamblers act on the opposite principle. They always *buck* theman who is in luck. Most sensible men like to have the winning seats at whist; and I have been told, that money is frequently given for them, by those who should understand such things. I am suffering to-day from bodily indisposition, but my head is clear as a bell.”

The game of whist being, in the foregoing letter, incidentally alluded to, it may be as well here to say a few words concerning Dr. Milner’s sentiments with regard to *card-playing*.

So far as his own practice was concerned, I have frequently heard him say, that he gave up the habit of playing at cards long before he entertained any thoughts respecting its innocence or guilt—propriety or impropriety, simply because “it ran away with time which would otherwise have been better employed;” “besides,” he used to add, “my fingers were often so stained by operations in the laboratory, that I really was *ashamed to exhibit them*.” Afterwards, indeed, when his religious principles became fixed, it was impossible that a subject, so often agitated, could escape his notice; and were it my especial object to recommend him to the approbation of the many excellent persons who regard card-playing as, in itself, a sin, I might dismiss the matter with the remark, that subsequent to that period, he never joined a card-party. Those, however, who have taken the trouble to possess themselves of the little knowledge of Dr. Milner’s character which may be gleaned by the

perusal of the foregoing pages, will be prepared to believe, that he *never* laid much *stress* upon merely external matters. Card-playing as a means of gambling, he reprobated; and, as offending the feelings and opinions of many sincere Christians, he would certainly, on St. Paul's principle, have abstained from it, even if he had considered it altogether irreprehensible, or had been inclined, as a mere amusement, occasionally to practise it. But farther than this he did not go. Cant and affectation of every kind he abhorred; and to say the truth, he was rather partial to what are called *tricks* with cards, especially such as depended upon reasoning or calculation. When I was a child, he used often to amuse me by shewing me such *tricks*, and explaining the principles upon which they depended. Nor did he take any pains to conceal the nature, or the implements, of our entertainment. I well remember his answer to an old and intimate friend, who, on entering his study, observed a pack of cards on the table, and addressed to him a remonstrance on the occasion: "While you live," said Dr. Milner, "never be afraid of *bug-bears*."

Among the numerous letters to Mr. T. Ludlam, written about this period, there are many in which the sympathizing friendship of Mr. Milner is as apparent as his mechanical enthusiasm; and all exhibit the eager earnestness with which the writer was accustomed to pursue his object, however comparatively trifling. His ardent temperament would not suffer him to rest satisfied with anything short of the utmost perfection which it was possible for him to attain in any art or science to which his attention was once turned; and to the possession of such a temperament, joined to mental powers of the first order, may doubtless be attributed the extraordinary extent and variety of his knowledge.

Mr. Milner's thirst of knowledge was a trait in his character which could not escape the observation of any who had opportunities of associating with him; but the growing influence which religious principle was, at this period, obtaining over his mind, was probably unknown even to some of his intimate friends. If what is here stated be thought inconsistent with the simplicity of his character, it should be considered, that, in addition to his

genuine abhorrence of anything like ostentation in religious matters, he felt and retained to the end of his life, a salutary fear of saying more on such subjects than his feelings strictly warranted—a pernicious practice from which he thought some truly religious persons not altogether free. Be this as it may, he was, at this time, in the habit of keeping a private diary with a view to his spiritual improvement; and while, to most persons, he appeared a mere man of the world, eager in the pursuit of learning or preferment, he was, in truth, a humble Christian, “hungering and thirsting after righteousness.”

CHAPTER V.

Extracts from Private Diary.—Prayers and Religious Meditations.

A.D. 1790. ÆTAT. 40.

MUCH diversity of opinion exists concerning the propriety of giving to the public, any extracts from private diaries of a religious nature. “*Is such a step fair to the deceased?*” is a question which Isaac Milner very seriously debated with himself, before he resolved upon the publication of some of the private religious reflections of his departed brother.

From any anxious consideration of this question, the present biographer is, however, relieved by the fact—perhaps much to be regretted by the religious world—that Dean Milner, some time previous to his death, gave express directions for the destruction of the greater part of the papers containing his private religious meditations.

It is, however, considered allowable to publish the following very interesting extracts from the diary alluded to in the last chapter, and not included among the papers directed to be destroyed:—

“May 2d, 1790. How much reason have I to be thankful, that it hath pleased God to lay this affliction of bodily sickness upon me! Assuredly I was going in the broad way to destruction. For though there was nothing openly gross or scandalous in my conduct, yet a very little reflection convinces me, that my life had nothing to do with that of a Christian.—God was not in my thoughts. I consulted *self* only.—I transacted my ordinary business with diligence and credit to myself; but the reasons of my conduct were pride, ambition, love of reputation, hopes of advancement, and such like: to which, however, I may add the *pleasure* I took in the study and improvement of natural philosophy and mathematics; but all this began and ended in self-gratification, and, as I had no better motives myself, it was

impossible that I should teach others to regulate their conduct by superior or more holy principles than the above mentioned—love of fame, of consequence, and of advancement, and the prospect of much mental pleasure in study. But how self-condemned do I appear, when I recollect that, all the while, *I* knew better things! There is some excuse for numbers that live around me and with me—*they* have never been in the way of true instruction; whereas I have been acquainted with evangelical truth for many years, and yet, in defiance of conviction, I have gone on for years breaking God's commandments, and encouraging others to do so by my example. Oh! Lord, forgive me! and have mercy on thine afflicted servant! Oh! let my mouth be stopped, and let me never say, that Thou dealest hardly with me, in continuing the pains of my body."

The next extract from these interesting papers consists of reflections, evidently intended as helps to self-examination at the close of a week; and of hints concerning the proper end and employment of the Sabbath."

"Saturday Evening.

"1. The end of another week.

"2. Make us serious in reviewing the week; day by day—
are we better—&c.—

"3. Have we grown in grace?

"4. If we cannot give satisfactory answers, let us dedicate
ourselves to God afresh; and take confusion of face.

"5. As means—prepare for the Sabbath—use God's means,
and don't dispute about it.

"6. The End of the Sabbath—service of God—prayer—
thanksgiving—meditation.

"7. May holy men throughout the world be employed well
—pray for the king, parliament and magistrates; for
religion and piety.

"8. For protection during the day—for God's forbearance."

Dr. Milner has himself observed in his Life of his brother, that "when we are presented with a regular diary of private meditations, the internal evidence of piety and good sense is not

usually found sufficient to convince us of the perfect integrity of the writer." Few persons, however, will suspect the writer of the above unfinished reflections, of having had the smallest intention of courting the applause of posterity, through their medium.—

Of these reflections, that marked 4, is precisely in accordance with the advice which Dr. Milner invariably gave to persons who consulted him, under convictions of spiritual declension. "Never attempt," he would say, "to *bolster up* the past—go to Christ *afresh*, as a believing and repentant sinner."

The following observations, apparently of the same date, seem to have been suggested by the perusal of the 15th chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans:—

“ ROMANS XV. 13th verse.

“The pleasure a minister takes in perceiving fruit of his labours. It is reasonable to value it.—*He* knows the value of an immortal soul. A similar pleasure all feel, who have turned the wicked from their way.

“Verse 25. Some of St. Paul's prayers were answered—others not directly—he was delivered into the hands of the Jews—but that brought him to Rome—where he preached.

“God answers prayers differently—He likes to be waited on.”

Of the following prayers and meditations, apparently written during this year, some appear to have been partly intended for family worship, and some suggested by Mr. Milner's private reading of particular portions of Scripture.

“ EVENING PRAYER.

“O Lord! we fall down before Thee, and desire to acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, which, from time to time, we have committed against Thee. We have lived a great part of our lives as though there had been, in the world, no God who considers men's actions, and will assuredly recompense them according to their deserts. If we have been restrained from the commission of gross crimes, we must ascribe the restraint to thy merciful superintending kindness, which

daily protects us, in numerous instances, though we continue careless and unthankful. Sometimes a sense of decency, sometimes self-interest, or a regard to character, has preserved us from open transgressions, or private indulgences; but, on reviewing and well considering our past conduct, in how few instances can we truly say, that we have been influenced by a love to God, by a desire of promoting his glory in the world, and by a grateful remembrance of the sufferings and death of our Saviour! O Lord! we have neither been faithful to the light which we have had, nor have we been useful to others, in setting them examples of diligence and piety. We have lived in the world under the name of Christians, but we have been utter strangers to the power of Christ's doctrine, and have brought forth no fruits unto holiness. O Lord! when we think on these things, we are covered with shame and confusion, and can only cry out, God be merciful to us sinners!

“How abundantly thankful, then, ought we to be for that great kindness, long-suffering, and forbearance, by which we are at this moment numbered among the living, and permitted to approach the throne of thy grace, there honestly to confess our sins, and to entreat for their remission, through the all-prevailing name and intercession of Jesus Christ! Thou mightest, very justly, have dealt severely with us, and we might now have been receiving the proper wages of our sins, of our long neglect of thy holy laws, and of our rejection of proffered grace through the gospel. But Thou hast not dealt with us according to our works; in thy wrath Thou hast thought on mercy, and we are monuments of thy patience and forgiveness.

“Grant, O Lord, that thy goodness may lead us to repentance, and that we may become thy faithful and willing servants.

“Dreadful will it be, if thy long forbearance with us should, in the end, only serve to manifest our greater perverseness and hardness of heart, and to increase our condemnation!

“At the same time that we hope better things, and desire to return Thee most hearty thanks, that by thy Holy Spirit, Thou hast put into our minds any wishes to serve Thee better

in future, teach us, O Lord, in no respect to rely on ourselves for change of heart and amendment of conduct.

“Teach us to know experimentally, that without Christ assisting us by his Holy Spirit, we can do nothing effectually: and, that all our resolutions, endeavours, and prospects of success, will be fruitless and vain. In *His* strength therefore—through *His* assistance, we offer up to Thee our souls and bodies, as a lively and reasonable sacrifice: we commit ourselves to the protection of our Lord, as our king: we rely on Him as our priest to make atonement for us, and we apply to Him as our prophet, for wisdom, and instruction in spiritual things. O Lord! it is easy, on our bended knees, to use these words, and to make these resolutions; but the natural corruption of our hearts, and our habits of sin and negligence, will soon prevail, and bring us into an indolent and formal state of contentment, and of fatal security, unless Thou be continually near, warning us from sloth, and protecting us from temptation, or chastening us with misfortunes and adversity. While, therefore, we pretend to commit ourselves to thy care and guidance, teach us to submit with patience, to thy dispensations.

“Thou hast proved our merciful protector during the past day; we have gone out and come in, and no harm has happened unto us; and Thou hast provided us abundantly with daily bread, and with every thing needful and convenient, while many are in want, and in distress. Guard and keep us safe during the darkness of the night: let no mischief come near our bodies, nor any temptations assault our minds; and if it please Thee to refresh us with sleep, and to raise us up to see another day, grant that we may spend it in thy service, and to thy glory, and to the furtherance of our immortal interests.”

“SATURDAY EVENING.

“O, Almighty God, who, by thy holy apostles, hast taught us, that in the religion of Jesus Christ, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth any thing, but a new creature; who didst vouchsafe, both to the Jews and to the Gentiles, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and who didst shew to the first Christians, that

there was no difference between Jew and Gentile except that which consisted in the purifying of their hearts by faith ; give unto us, we beseech Thee, that most excellent gift of FAITH, by which, as the Scriptures teach us, the heart believeth unto righteousness. We know, O God, that without faith, it is impossible to please Thee, for the Scripture expressly declares it, and adds, that whoever cometh unto Thee, must believe, that Thou art, and that Thou art a rewarder of them that diligently seek Thee. We have no reason to expect thy blessing, so long as we continue in a careless, indifferent, or sensual state—so long as we are given up to worldly enjoyments, or, so long as our minds are improperly and unreasonably concerned in worldly cares, and worldly pursuits. As little are we to expect thy blessing, if, after having discharged certain duties of the day, in a tolerably decent manner, we say to our soul, ‘Well done, thou hast deserved praise and reward at thy Maker’s hands.’ Keep us, good Lord, by thy mighty protection, from these dangerous extremes : keep us mindful of duties, and at the same time, disposed to reckon our best services as ‘filthy rags.’ Give us to know, that, in our own strength, we cannot so much as do one good action, or think one good thought : and that it is only through the merits of thy beloved Son, and through faith in his blood, that our best and most active services are accepted by Thee. Give us to see, that, without thy constantly superintending grace, we are for ever prone to deviate from the path of Christian holiness, and, that it is only by this grace, with persevering watchfulness, that we can hope to preserve ourselves ‘unspotted from the world,’ and to retain a ‘conscience void of offence.’

“Grant, Lord, that we may not grieve and quench thy Holy Spirit, whereby alone we can be ‘sealed unto the day of redemption ;’ but that by continuance in well-doing, we may render our ‘calling and election sure.’

“After unfeignedly thanking Thee for the mercies of the day past, and begging of Thee to give us a grateful insight into the true value of daily protection, daily sustenance, and daily comforts and conveniences, we entreat Thee to defend us against the perils and dangers of the night. As we knew not, in the morning, what this day might bring forth, so do we not know what

may be required of us in the succeeding night. O give us a watchful spirit, and a spirit of prayer! Thou art a prayer-hearing God, and givest liberally to them that ask it of Thee, and upbraidest not. Enable us, through thy beloved Son, to ask and to obtain that state of spiritual preparation, that we may not be taken unawares, or with our lamps untrimmed, and without oil, at whatever hour Thou mayest choose to call upon us. Grant us, O Lord, this great blessing, for thy Son, Jesus Christ's sake. Once more we pray Thee to take us into thy protection this night; and, if Thou dost preserve us to another day, grant, that we may rise in the morning to praise Thee with joyful lips. So do Thou lead us on from day to day, till, at last, we come to that bright and eternal day, when the sun shall set NO MORE."

"O Holy, and ever blessed God, it is very meet, and our bounden duty, to return Thee hearty thanks for the discovery of thy rich mercies, contained in the Holy Scriptures. Among the many distinguished mercies and blessings which we, in this happy and highly-favoured country, enjoy, teach us, with true gratitude and thankfulness, to acknowledge thy fatherly goodness, in permitting us to read those sacred books which open to us the way of Everlasting Life. While many persons in distant countries and climates which the Gospel has yet never reached, are in extreme ignorance, doubt, or apprehension, about their future state, it is our own fault, if we do not both know what belongs to our salvation, and also take care to secure it.

"It is not owing to the severe and rigid character of God, if we are not justified by faith, and if we have not peace with Him, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

"As then, O Lord, Thou hast given us access by faith unto this grace, enable us, by thy Spirit to rejoice with thy holy apostles, and with all good men, in the hope of the glory of God. And should it please Thee in thy wisdom to lessen, or to deprive us of several of our worldly comforts, grant that we may also 'glory in tribulation;' and know, by a spiritual and happy experience, that 'tribulation worketh patience, and patience, experience, and experience, HOPE. Let us never

forget, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly. In this wonderful way, He commended his love to us, and saved us from eternal wrath. ‘How,’ then, ‘shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?’ There remaineth no further sacrifice for sin: no further hope of a fresh dispensation for fallen and ungrateful man. There is only left a ‘certain fearful looking for’ of a day of judgment.

“Defend, O Lord, and protect us from a careless and negligent spirit, while we exist in this world, which is our state of probation: and grant, that we may honestly receive our Lord and Master, in all his offices, and so become acquainted with that ‘hope’ which ‘maketh not ashamed.’ May we earnestly press for an interest in his merits, and become his faithful soldiers and servants unto our lives’ end. Guard us, on all occasions, from offending Thee, and from quenching thy Spirit by idle and sensual indulgences; and keep us humble in our spirits, and active, diligent, and conscientious in the discharge of our duties.

“Whatever we pray for ourselves, we pray also, for our friends and relatives, and for all who are near and dear unto us. Do Thou make them near and dear unto Thee: enlighten their minds with true understanding of thy word; and make them zealous and fervent Christians, devoted to thy service, all the days of their lives. So shall we, at last, meet them, in a happy and glorious eternity, and for ever sing praise together, to ‘God and to the Lamb.’

“We bless Thee, that no harm has happened to us this day. May we lie down in peace, and safely rest under the protecting shadow of Thy Almighty wings. If Thou art with us, no evil shall happen unto us; if Thou forsake us, we become a prey to wicked men, to wicked spirits, and to our own wicked imaginations. If it please Thee, that we should survive another day, may we live that day in Thy service. Prepare us, good Lord, for every event, and every event for us.”

The above compositions are not presented to the reader, as they certainly were not intended by the writer, as models of supplicatory addresses to the Almighty. They are peculiar in their character, and seem to partake of the nature both of

prayers, and of religious meditations. In fact, the readers of them are, perhaps, admitted into as close an intimacy with the feelings of him who wrote them, as is possible in this state of existence. They are, as it were, present in his closet, and witness the actual current of his thoughts while prostrate before his Maker. Such effusions coming from the pen of such a man, are, doubtless, intrinsically valuable; and it is needless to add, that they must be especially interesting to the surviving friends of Dr. Milner.

The remaining prayers and meditations, seem to have been suggested by passages occurring in Mr. Milner's private perusal of the Scriptures.

“ ROMANS, ii.

“O ever blessed God! It is our bounden duty to fall down before Thee, and with the deepest humility to confess our manifold sins and wickedness, and to thank Thee for thy great mercy towards us, miserable sinners. O grant that we may approach Thee, not with a form of words only, but with the heart! We are encompassed with dangers on every side; and not the least of those dangers is, lest our prayers, instead of being acceptable to Thee, should, on account of negligence, levity, or formality, become an abomination in thy sight. O that we may be effectually secured against a careless spirit! Let the remembrance of our past lives be ever present with us. Like sheep we have gone astray; from our earliest infancy we have repeatedly broken thy express laws; we have followed the devices and desires of our own hearts; we have walked according to the course of this world, according to the ‘prince of the power of the air;’ ‘the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience;’ we have stifled the dictates of conscience; and it is of thy great mercy, that we are not now receiving the wages of our iniquity, in a state of punishment. Sometimes, O God, we are ashamed and confounded, when we think on these things, and are less disposed to trifle with Thee, our Maker, our bountiful Protector, and our compassionate Redeemer. But how soon are these impressions effaced; how cold and slothful do we speedily

grow; and how readily do our thoughts wander from communication with Thee! In our distresses, indeed, we remember our disobedience and our backslidings, and we call upon the name of the Lord; but no sooner is the storm blown over, than we sink again into the miry paths of worldly vanities, pride, ambition, or sensuality.

“What an awful lesson have I read to-night, in the writings of thy holy apostle, Saint Paul, respecting the ancient Jews. They digged down thine altars, they killed thy prophets, and proceeded to such a pitch of obdurate and practical wickedness, that, in thy righteous determination, Thou didst punish them with a judicial blindness. Thou gavest them the spirit of slumber—eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, even in the day when the blessed gospel of salvation was preached unto them. We, O Lord, are in nowise better than they. We have rebelled against clearer light and greater knowledge; but Thou hast not dealt with us according to our iniquities. Oh! let the remembrance of thy great mercies, and long forbearance, at last lead us to repentance.

“We desire to be thankful to Thee, O God, if Thou hast on any occasion alarmed our consciences, and made us sensible of our perilous situation. If Thou hast made us to flee to Thee, in any degree, with a penitent heart, and with desires of at length becoming thy true and faithful servants, O grant that these awakenings may be the sure dawn of a more perfect day, in due time to be revealed; and, that at length, before we die, the day-star of hope, of consolation, of joy in believing, may arise upon our hearts. Pardon the many sins of vanity, folly, and carelessness, which thy pure eyes have seen in us to-day. We said, that we would ‘take heed unto our ways,’ but how prone are we to forget thy commandments, and our own promises: how apt are we to be drawn astray by the trifling temptations of this wicked world, and the more numerous delusive suggestions of our own hearts. The cure of all this is a more lively faith in the Redeemer, a deeper insight into the holiness of the law of God, a greater hatred of sin, and a more ardent love and panting after communion with Thee. O enable us, with holy David, to say with sincerity, that our soul panteth after Thee, as the hart panteth

after the water-brooks. Blessed be God and our merciful Redeemer, that, amidst all this weakness, and all this wickedness, we have the blood of Jesus to flee to—the blood which cleanseth from all sin. Let this be our hope and sure anchor, both in life and in death. May we this night lie down in peace, firmly relying on this hope; and if Thou shouldst please to grant unto us a safe and peaceful night of rest, may we awake in the morning with our bodies refreshed and our minds still relying on the hope and prospect of a blessed immortality, through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

“May this Christian faith and hope, and this glorious prospect, carry us through to-morrow and every day which Thou mayest please to vouchsafe unto us. And may we, with hearty desires of serving Thee better than we have hitherto done, become improving Christians, and thy faithful soldiers and servants, unto our lives’ end.”

“O come, let us sing unto the Lord.’

“O come let us worship and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our maker; for he is a great God, and a great king above all gods.’

“Enable us, O Lord, to call Thee *our* God, for we are ‘the people of thy pasture, and the sheep of thy hand.’

“If we reflect at all from whence come the numerous good things which we enjoy, we must be sensible, that they are all derived from thy bounty. When we are hungry, who shall satisfy us, if Thou shouldst withhold thy plentiful hand! Who else can supply us when we are thirsty! And if we be naked and exposed to the inclemencies of the weather, to whom must we look for covering, but to the same bountiful Giver, who foresees all our wants, and who not only provides for our necessities, but also gratifies our feelings with a superfluous abundance of comforts and pleasures. But these blessings are so common, that we are apt to receive them as things of course; or if we do think about them, we are prone to suppose, that we have a sort of right to them, and thus to fly in the face of Thee, the powerful and bountiful Author and Giver of them all.

“Notwithstanding this our ingratitude, Thou continuest to

do us good, and to bless us with health, with plenty, and with prosperity. If our health fail, or if adversity overtake us, if Thou see good to plague us with public famine, or to lessen our domestic comforts, we then, for a time, acknowledge our unworthiness, and show some signs of repentance; but no sooner does the darkness disperse, no sooner do the winds and storms abate, than we return to our usual practice of slothfulness, indulgence, and sensuality. Oh! put us continually in mind, that ‘we are the people of thy pasture;’ and, if it be necessary, O Lord, chasten us; but ‘not in thine anger, lest thou bring us to nothing.’ Above all, feed us with the bread and with the water of life, that we may neither hunger nor thirst again. Give us *spiritual* blessings, and make our souls to prosper in vigorous and active health.

“It is said, ‘*to-day*, if ye will hear his voice.’ O grant that we may not harden our hearts, as the hearts of the children of Israel were hardened in the wilderness, when, during so many years, they tempted and provoked Almighty God. Let the consideration of the danger of putting off, from day to day, the things that concern our immortal interests, effectually alarm us, and bring about a thoughtful, diligent, and watchful state of mind. ‘*Now* is the accepted time’—‘*to-day*, if ye will hear his voice.’ *To-morrow*, it may be, in many ways, *too late*. We may be numbered with the dead, and our lot may be reckoned among the transgressors; or we may be alive, and may have sinned till our hearts are hardened and thoroughly impenitent; we may have rejected the proffered offers of mercy, we may have quenched thy Holy Spirit so often, that thou wilt no longer ‘strive’ with us—God ‘will not always *strive* with man.’ Although there be mercy for every returning sinner, although all that are weary and heavy laden with the burden of sin are sure to find rest, upon a sincere application to our Redeemer; yet we may neglect to make this application, till we are no longer disposed to make it, and till the God of mercy and forgiveness, may swear in his wrath, that we shall not enter into his rest. If, then, on any occasion, Thou, O most merciful Father, puttest into our minds good desires, grant, we beseech Thee, that we may be faithful to these convictions, and not abuse thy long forbearance

and patience. And whenever it has pleased Thee to enable us to pray, with any degree of warmth and sincerity, grant that we may possess a waiting spirit—a spirit which expects its prayers to be answered, and which is uneasy if they be not answered.

“Thy pure eyes have seen in us much amiss in the course of the day past: glory be to Thee, that we have a Redeemer to apply to, as a foundation for the expecting of forgiveness at thy hands. Teach us to be, in future, more careful, more simple-minded, and more spiritual. Teach us to examine our conduct, with a jealous attention; and where we find ourselves to be unusually weak and liable to sin, may we be, in those points, more on our guard, and more solicitous and importunate in imploring assistance at the throne of grace. So shall we approach nearer and nearer to the perfect man.

“Bless our king, and all who are in authority under him. Bless our near friends and relatives, and all mankind, and do unto them every good which we can ask, or imagine for ourselves; but, above all, let their immortal souls be precious in thy sight. May they, and we, together walk like true Christians, whose eyes are steadily fixed on futurity. So shall we together enjoy a blessed eternity, purchased for us by our dear Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.”



“I. CORINTHIANS, X.

“Grant, O Lord, if it please Thee, that we may read thy Holy Scriptures with advantage. Grant, that our ideas may be spiritualized, and, that, through thy grace, we may be enabled to drink freely of the water which floweth from Christ, the spiritual Rock, and never thirst again. We have been baptized in his name, and have a much clearer revelation of the nature of his salvation than was vouchsafed to the Israelites, who were only initiated into the true religion by types and emblems; and it is our own fault, and will be our condemnation, if we do not turn to good account this superior knowledge and information. O may we, in the great day of account, be found to have been faithful stewards of thy mysteries! as, most assuredly, since more is given, more will be required at our hands.

“How alarming is the history of the favourite people of God! And their history is assuredly written for our example. They tempted God, and provoked Him by multiplied transgressions, till He ‘sware in his wrath, that they should not enter into his rest.’ O make us watchful and humble; and ‘Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall!’”

“I. CORINTHIANS, xiii.

“Give us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that love to God and man, which will abide when faith is superseded by sight, and hope is swallowed up in enjoyment. Give us to know thy true character, and make us to live, as always in thy presence. Grant that we may not be eye-servants, but, that it may be our pleasure to serve Thee from love and gratitude. We shall then neither ‘behave’ ourselves ‘unseemly,’ nor ‘seek’ our ‘own,’ nor be ‘easily provoked;’ we shall ‘think’ ‘no evil;’ we shall ‘bear all things,’ ‘believe all things,’ ‘endure all things;’ we shall exemplify Christian principles, and improve in Christian practice.”

CHAPTER VI.

Mechanical pursuits.—Nominated to the Deanery of Carlisle.—Correspondence.—Illness of Joseph Milner.—Dr. Paley.—Distinguishing traits in the character of Dean Milner.—Slave-trade abolition.—Revolutionary spirit in England.—Correspondence.—Mr. Milner takes the Degree of D.D.—Visits his Brother at Hull.—Letter from Joseph Milner to the Rev. James Stillingfleet.—Explanation of some peculiarities in Dr. Milner's Conduct.—Extracts from Correspondence with William Hey, Esq.—Certificates of Ill-health.—Dr. Milner elected Vice-Chancellor.—Correspondence.—State of the Country.—Observations on the Character of Fox.—Mr. Pitt re-elected M.P. for the University of Cambridge.

A.D. 1791. ÆTAT. 41.

THE intervals of leisure which, in the spring of the year 1791, Mr. Milner's various duties as president of a college and a public lecturer allowed him, seem to have been principally employed in mechanical and philosophical pursuits. This appears from several passages in his letters. Thus, on the 29th of April, he writes from Queen's Lodge, "I have been here now for some weeks working exceedingly hard—for working agrees very well with me, when the weather is not too hot—it amuses, and it tends to lessen nervousities, and to dull pain, &c., &c., and I see plainly that I must reckon upon being an invalid;" and again, to another friend, "In good truth there is scarce a day passes, but I think of you many times; and this without any manner of compliment; for there is constantly rising either some new difficulty, or I want some new tool, or some instruction how to use the tools I have; insomuch, that were an intelligent adviser at hand, I should feel the comfort of him to a very great degree." Again, to Mr. Ludlam, "I have been a great dabbler in air-pumps, and have spent a great deal of money on them. I have now one by me, which cost 60*l.* and upwards, exclusive of the apparatus—and yet they are all defective, at least when compared and measured by my fancies." * * "On reading over this letter, I am quite ashamed of the trouble I give you: but they are hobby-horses, and there is no saying what lengths a man will not go, to gratify himself in such cases."

In accordance with his usual custom, Mr. Milner passed the summer of this year with his aged mother, his brother, and his other relatives, at Hull. The commencement of the Cambridge term called him to college at the usual time ; and, in the month of December, he was nominated to the dignified station of Dean of Carlisle, vacant by the recent death of Dr. Ekins.

For this preferment he was chiefly indebted to the active indness of his friend, Dr. Pretyman*, Bishop of Lincoln; who before his elevation to the episcopal bench, had been tutor to Mr. Pitt. “The bishop,” writes Mr. Milner to Mr. Wilberforce, in a letter dated “Hull, December 3d, 1791,” “espoused my cause with such a glow of friendship as is never to be forgotten. In short he said ‘he should never rest till he saw me settled in a comfortable income.’” Mr. Milner proceeds to say, that, in consequence of the Bishop of Lincoln’s representations to Mr. Pitt, he had himself received, from the prime minister, “a most handsome and substantial letter,” informing him, that he had been recommended to his Majesty for the vacant deanery of Carlisle.

In the midst of the brilliant prospects which now appeared to open upon Mr. Milner, promoted as he was to the high situations of President of Queen’s College and Dean of Carlisle, he was at this time suffering, besides bodily indisposition, very great distress of mind, on account of the dangerous illness of his revered and dearly-beloved brother. The following extract from a letter addressed by him to his friend, Mr. Hey, on the 28th November, 1791, exhibits, in so true and strong a light, the exquisite tenderness of his heart—a quality often quite unobserved by persons who saw and knew him only in the ordinary intercourse of society—that, although certainly written in the most unrestrained confidence, it may be here, properly, inserted.

Speaking of his brother’s illness, Mr. Milner thus expresses himself :

“My heart is almost broken : I neither eat nor sleep ; and unless it please God to enable me to submit more calmly, I shall, assuredly, be overset. My dear friend, you are *a father*, and

* Afterwards Dr. Tomline.

know how to feel tenderly—Oh! my dear and only brother! who hast comforted me so often in my sufferings! * * * *
The last time I saw him, I told him, I saw plainly, that I had not learned to submit to God's dispensations; he said, 'The thing is, Isaac, you don't make God your *summum bonum*.'

This extract surely displays, in a most affecting manner, the tender love of Mr. Milner towards his brother Joseph, and the anxiety of that brother, in the midst of his own affliction, to confirm in Isaac, a practical acquaintance with those Christian principles which alone can produce true resignation to the will of God, and consequent calmness under the most painful dispensations of his providence.

The following entry appears in Mr. Wilberforce's Diary, December 13th, 1791: "Received a most affecting letter from Milner about his brother."

Of this "most affecting letter," dated "Hull, December 3d, 1791," we have seen, that the first part related to Mr. Milner's presentation to the deanery of Carlisle.

After expressing, in that letter, his fears that some "journeys and ceremonies," would be "necessary by and by;" and that "a doctor's degree" would be "needful, or at least proper," Mr. Milner quits the subject of his new appointment, and turns to one much nearer to his heart. He proceeds thus:

"My health has suffered very severely by the bitterest affliction I ever experienced in my life. My brother was seized, a fortnight ago, with a fever, pleurisy, and spitting of blood. All this, added to his naturally asthmatical state, put his life, for some days, in the most imminent danger. I consider his situation as still critical, though the disease ceases to be called acute. I hope God will be gracious, and permit his continuance a little longer with us; but I verily believe, his lungs are so much impaired, that he will never be able to do business again. The fact is, he is worn out with labouring in the best of causes: he never could be induced to spend a moment idle. I never saw his equal in that respect; and I have long wished to see him relieved from a load of business, particularly the school-teaching; (you may remember I mentioned this to you, as well as my fears concerning him, many years ago,) and I have wished for it with much greater earnest-

ness than ever I did any thing for myself. My fear now is, that preaching at High Church* will be too much for him ; but this must be considered, if he should recover. At present he is confined to his chamber, and likely to continue there.

“ You know the terms my brother and I have lived on, from infancy. You must also be aware of the great comfort he has been to me, as an affectionate friend and faithful adviser, during my long illness. Judge, my dear friend, what I must have felt on the prospect of seeing him snatched away. My aged mother is so afflicted, that, * * * * in short, without the positive interference of God’s all-supporting hand, I must inevitably have sunk, if the prospect had still darkened.

“ I never felt thus on my own account. I applied at the throne of grace, with all the steadiness and fervour I could muster ; but I told my brother, that I saw plainly, I had not learned to submit to the Divine will. ‘ The thing is, Isaac,’ said he, when at worst, ‘ you don’t make God your *summum bonum*.’ Oh ! my dear friend, the views of religion concerning which you and I have so often conversed, are the only ones that can help in time of need. May God, of his infinite mercy, grant that you and I may truly and practically become acquainted with them. How necessary is the rod of correction ! it leads to self-examination. I remember you always affectionately. I. M.”

The admonition of Joseph Milner to his brother, “ Isaac, you don’t make God your *summum bonum*,” which seems to have made a deep impression upon that brother’s mind, is here mentioned to Mr. Wilberforce, in almost the same terms which Mr. Milner had employed in his letter to Mr. Hey, of the preceding November.

With regard to Mr. Milner’s promotion to the deanery of Carlisle, it has been insinuated by one of the numerous biographers of the late Dr. Paley†, that that eminent man felt some degree of jealousy and dissatisfaction upon the appointment.

* The church of the Holy Trinity, at Hull, where Mr. Joseph Milner was, at this time, afternoon lecturer, was commonly called High Church.

† MEADLEY.

Nothing, apparently, can be further from the truth. "So far was he," says his son, the Rev. Edmund Paley, "from *suspecting*, much less from being conscious, that Dr. Milner was preferred before himself, that he came into his house one day much delighted with the news being announced of their new dean, as it opened a prospect of their having so eminent a man amongst them. He said, he could not have been better pleased, *except* it had been himself."

The following very friendly letters from Dr. Paley to the dean, are in perfect accordance with this statement.

"TO THE VERY REVEREND THE DEAN OF CARLISLE.

"SIR, "Carlisle, December 18th, 1791.

"Mr. Carlyle I hope will have expressed to you my congratulations, and, what is of much more value, the general satisfaction with which your appointment is received here. You may depend upon it that I shall in every thing have pleasure in endeavouring to render your situation as easy and agreeable to you as it is in my power to do.

"I am, Sir,

"With great regard, your faithful and obedient servant,

"W. PALEY."

Mr. Milner was formally appointed to the Deanery of Carlisle on the 30th day of January, 1792; but being prevented by illness from being installed in his new dignity in person, the ceremony of installation was, with the consent of the bishop*, who had himself been consecrated to the See of Carlisle during the same year, performed by proxy.

On this occasion, Dr. Paley wrote to the dean as follows:

"DEAR SIR, "Carlisle, Feb. 3rd, 1792.

"The installation of your proxy was performed yesterday with due gravity. This ceremony completes your possession of the Deanery of Carlisle, in which I sincerely wish you every possible satisfaction.

* The present Lord Archbishop of York.

“ I should have been happy to have received a more favourable account of your health. Preferment is reckoned a wholesome thing; and I hope you will find it so.

“ I remain, dear Sir,

“ Your faithful and obedient servant,

“ W. PALEY.”

In a letter of nearly the same date, Dr. Paley thus writes to a friend: “ We have got a new dean, a great friend of Mr. Sheepshanks and Mr. Carlyle, and a man of great reputation, so that the appointment gives us great satisfaction.” Dr. Paley left Carlisle about three years after the appointment of Mr. Milner to the deanery. So that, as Mr. Edmund Paley, in his life of his father, observes, these eminent men had not much opportunity of forming a very intimate acquaintance. They met, however, frequently, both in public and in private; and, in particular, the dean is said to have occasionally attended a meeting consisting of a few literary men, who assembled alternately, on the Sunday evenings, at each other’s residences, for the purpose of discussing, in an easy way, such religious subjects as circumstances might suggest.

It is impossible to read the congratulatory letters, at this period addressed to Dean Milner, without at the same time commiserating his afflicted condition both of body and mind.

Two distinguishing characteristics were, however, observable, throughout the whole of Dr. Milner’s life. Bodily suffering did not diminish the energy of his mind; and he was ever ready, whatever might be his own position, or circumstances, to sympathize with, and to assist his friends.

Mr. Wilberforce was, at this time, actively engaged in the great cause of the slave-trade abolition; and his efforts were constantly encouraged by the solid and well-directed advice of Dean Milner.

The revolutionary spirit which was, at this period, raging in France, had, in some measure, infected our own country; and, as it could not be denied, that among the friends of abolition, there were some who held revolutionary opinions, many supporters of the slave trade took an unfair advantage of this circumstance, by

branding with the name of Jacobin every friend of the abolition cause.

Upon this subject Dean Milner thus wrote to Mr. Wilberforce:

“ * * * * would tell you, that he had had a long conversation with me. I wish him better health and better notions in politics: no government can stand on such principles as he appeals to and maintains. I am very sorry for it, because I see plainly that advantage is taken of such cases as his, in order to represent the friends of abolition as levellers. This is not the only case where the converse of a proposition* does not hold. Levellers certainly are friends of abolition.”

Early in the month of April, the dean, who had constantly stirred up his friend to continued exertions in the slave-trade cause, again wrote to him in the following terms, on the occasion of his having carried his motion for the gradual abolition of that detestable traffic.

“I thought of you most unremittingly the whole day of April 2nd, and a good deal of the night; which, to me, was a very restless one. I bless God, and surely you have great reason to be thankful, that it pleases Him to endow you with so much bodily energy, that you are able to exert your talents so steadily, and for so long a time, on such great occasions. Greater occasions can hardly ever occur, and I think there can be no doubt but you have gained some ground; though I find many people think otherwise. On the first view I thought so too, but on reading the debates I am satisfied that much ground is gained, as far as respects public opinion; the opposers are plainly overawed and ashamed. The worst circumstance is this * * * *. Nobody thinks well of him. Duplicity and artifice are esteemed parts of his character; he is judged to do what he does, unwillingly, and with design, in the worst sense. Ne graveris upon my making these observations on him. I know he says, you have as pure a heart as ever inhabited a human breast. *Such things* you can withstand, but there is a stream

* It is, perhaps, needless to observe, that, the expression *converse of a proposition*, if intended strictly as a *logical* term, is, in this passage, incorrectly used.

of more delicate applause, which is likely to have more effect, and against which it is more difficult to guard."

On the 23rd of this month, Mr. Dundas brought forward *his* resolutions for a gradual abolition. "After a hard struggle," as Mr. Wilberforce writes, he and his friends succeeded in fixing the period of the abolition for January 1st, 1796, Mr. Dundas having proposed 1800. On this occasion, Dean Milner wrote to Mr. Wilberforce in the following terms of encouragement and congratulation.

"Not long ago I had no expectation of success respecting the slave trade; then again, you seemed to be carrying everything; and now, we are down in the mouth again, both because four years are allowed, and because there seems the greatest danger from the House of Lords. However, you have great reason to be thankful, for God seems to bless your labours; and, as I remember I told you long ago, if you carry this point in your whole life, that life will be far better spent than in being prime minister many years."

In the summer of this year, Dean Milner proceeded to the degree of Doctor in Divinity, and spent, as was his custom, some part of the long vacation with his relatives at Hull. During all such visits he frequently took occasion to look in upon the school where he had formerly been usher; and, as a still surviving pupil of Joseph Milner* bears witness, "he was always a great favourite with the boys, teaching and conversing with them in a pleasant affable manner."

Of this particular visit of Dr. Milner to Hull, a hint is given by his brother Joseph, in a letter which is so characteristic, that its insertion here may be pardoned.

"TO THE REV. JAMES STILLINGFLEET.

"DEAR STILL.,

"Hull, Aug. 26th, 1792.

"I begin to fear you will suspect something of me as wanting in kindness, by my not sooner answering your letter. I hope I scarce need to say, the delay was by no means owing to any diminution of regard. I am sure I have no reason. May our

* The Rev. Mr. Bromby, the present Vicar of Hull.

friendship only be cemented and sweetened with more of the mind that is in Christ Jesus, and partake more of his Spirit! * * *

“I would adore the providence of God which tenderly preserved you, in your danger by the little Welsh horse. Pray ride the ill-natured beast no more. We are not sufficiently thankful for such interpositions. I had one myself, of another kind. While I was at Carlisle, some wanton fellows, with more boldness than wit, brake into my school one night; and though a desk with my history, sermons, &c., happened to be there, unlocked, they did no harm to them. They only threw some books about, &c., and though they tore some leaves out of the school Ainsworth, they only tore out the part which contains bad Latin. So fond was Bacchus, it seems, of good Latinity. One would have thought that Horace himself, in some of his ‘Io Bacche’ moods, had done it, and in the midst of his revelling still preserved his tenderness for classical purity.

“Mother is much the same; so is Isaac. As to myself, I have reason to be thankful for the improvement of my health by the Carlisle journey. I sent my sentiments to Beverley, with equal strength and sincerity, about the address, though I like to avoid dinners in public. Alas! worldly company neither suits my body nor my soul. I feel it needful to watch and pray, that I may have a little spiritual strength before I go hence, and be no more seen.

“My kind love to Mrs. Still., &c.,

“Always yours,

“JOSEPH MILNER.”

Towards the close of this year, Dr. Milner was elected to the office of Vice-Chancellor of the University. Before, however, proceeding to the account of his Vice-Chancellorship, which was distinguished by some very remarkable occurrences, it will be proper to introduce, from a letter to William Hey, Esq., of Leeds, a few extracts, which may tend to place in its true light a part of Dr. Milner’s conduct, which has been sometimes animadverted upon with much illiberality.

“DEAR SIR,

“*Hull, September 22nd, 1792.*

“There is nothing which for a long time has been more upon my mind, and which I have more ardently wished for, than to be able to attend divine service. Not only the general reasons make this an object to me, but also some additional reasons peculiar to my circumstances.

“For example, it is exceedingly desirable, that, as Master of Queen’s College, I should be able, along with the College, to be present at daily prayers, in our private chapel. I always used to be a regular attendant.

“2ndly. It is equally desirable that I should attend the Cathedral at Carlisle during my residence there in the summer.

“3rdly. It is not improbable, but that, next November, I may be elected Vice-Chancellor; and then, I ought to attend St. Mary’s twice every Sunday, and also the congregations in the Senate-House.

“Yet I have never been able to attend divine service at any one of these places, since my illness in March, 1789, without very great injury; nor do I wonder much at it, considering the nature of the paroxysms to which I am subject.”

Here follows an account of the writer’s indisposition, which appears to have been of an aguish nature; of his sometimes “falling to work, and working for hours with a file, harder than any smith in the town,” for the purpose of “acquiring heat,” and, at other times, of his being unable “to walk a few times across the room,” without being “bathed in immoderate perspiration.”

He proceeds thus:

“From such accounts as these, added to my former accounts, judge you, whether, under these circumstances, I ought to attempt, in case I should be elected Vice-Chancellor to sit motionless twice in a day, in a cold church, in the month of November.

“Dr. Jowett* has kindly undertaken to attempt either

* Dr. Jowett, already mentioned as one of Dr. Milner’s earliest and most valued friends, was at this time staying with him at Hull.

to get me totally excused, or to effect some arrangement that will make the matter easier to me.

“One or more certificates of my situation from medical gentlemen, will be useful. If you think you can properly give me one, I shall be obliged to you to do so. Dr. Jowett will explain to you what sort of a certificate is necessary.

“I request no account to be given of me but what is *most strictly* true. But the points that are to be particularly cleared up are these :

“1st. That this complaint is not of that class which is properly called nervous or hypochondriacal, and in which business, and plenty of exercise in the open air, is recommended. Yet I do not wonder that such an idea has gone forth respecting me ; because I now look well, and am always in good spirits when I *do* appear in public. This idea cannot be done away with, by anything *I* can say ; and is only to be opposed by professional opinions.

“2dly. The other fact to be insisted upon, and clearly set forth, is, my incapacity for bearing the open air, or the air of rooms not constantly warmed by fires. * * * * * My present state is certainly a complication ; viz., the relics of a severe ague, combined with a constitutional affection of twenty years’ standing. This affection you have seen a great deal of in my case ; and you know, nobody was more active than I was, or used more exercise in the open air, of various kinds. I rode on horseback as long as I could, and every morning before breakfast, and in all weathers. Afterwards, I got into a phaeton, &c.

“The other part of my complaint, viz., the aguish affection, you have not seen so much of ; yet you have heard of me from others, and, I think from Dr. B——, who once told me, that he had conversed with you particularly, concerning this peculiar incapacity of bearing the open air.

“You are to put these things together, and to judge for yourself whether you can certify what you believe to be my case ; and in such a way as to enforce the truth, and thereby undo any conception of this sort ; viz., that I only want resolu-

tion to go out, and, that any office that obliged me to go out, would do me good.

“ I am affectionately yours,
 “ *To William Hey, Esq.*” “ ISAAC MILNER.”

Every candid person must feel the force of this letter; to which Mr. Hey returned the following answer:—

“ *Leeds, October 5th, 1792,*
Friday.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I have inclosed a letter to you, which is to serve the purpose of a certificate for you, to warrant your refusal to accept the office of V. C., an office which I think you ought by no means to accept, in your present indisposition.

“ I have written what I think to be true; and I think it not impossible that you may, at some future time, be able to fulfil the duties of that important and honourable office.

“ I am your affectionate friend,
 “ WILLIAM HEY.”

By a physician resident in the town of Hull, Dr. Milner was furnished with another certificate, setting forth, that from the writer’s “own knowledge,” he (Dr. M.), “was unable to bear the open air, though by no means deficient in resolute endeavours to get out as often as possible.”

In a work purporting to be a Life of Dean Milner, it would be improper to omit all notice of this subject, and although what has been already said can scarcely be otherwise than satisfactory to every unprejudiced mind, it may be advisable to quote from a work published by Dr. Milner*, a passage directly bearing upon the point in question.

After stating, that when elected vice-chancellor, for the first time, more than twenty years previous to the time then present, three physicians and one or two surgeons had subscribed a report on the nature of his bodily complaints, for the inspection of the heads of colleges, in consequence of which report they undertook to divide among themselves almost all that part of the Vice-

* *Strictures on some of the Publications of the Rev. Herbert Marsh.*

Chancellor's duties which required him to leave his room, Dr. Milner proceeds thus:—

“At present I am absolutely supported by large doses of the most powerful medicines, repeated several times every day; and although I am thereby enabled to make considerable exertions at home, I can rarely stir out, for any length of time, with safety, and seldom do stir out, without suffering very considerable inconvenience.

“I am not sorry, that, among the many disagreeable circumstances unavoidable in a controversy of this sort, a fair occasion has been afforded me of explaining certain peculiarities in my own conduct, the reasons of which, though well understood by my friends and familiars, for many years past, have, nevertheless, sometimes furnished a handle to the uncandid for misrepresentations of various kinds. I rest assured that no considerate person will expect me to be more explicit in this matter.”

Of Dr. Milner's rational and enlightened piety, many evidences appear in the course of his correspondence, during this year. Thus, in the month of October, Mr. Wilberforce having expressed to him his earnest desires after a more rapid growth in holiness, the dean thus replied: “If you have truly learned to feel the insufficiency of your own powers, you have made more progress than you think of; and if you can support that feeling, and act upon it, for any time together, your advance is very considerable*.”

Numerous other passages might be quoted from various letters, with a similar view.

In the month of November, 1792, Dr. Milner was elected Vice-Chancellor, and, in consideration to the assistance proffered to him by the other heads of colleges, accepted that important office.

The peculiar circumstances which, on this occasion, rendered the vice-chancellorship at Cambridge unusually onerous, will be related in the next chapter.

The political prospects with which this year closed were rapidly darkening. The democratical excitement which raged

in a neighbouring country had, in an alarming degree, tainted the English population; and the northern counties had by no means escaped the virulent infection.

Early in December, Dr. Milner thus wrote to Mr. Wilberforce:—

“At Carlisle we had many reports concerning tumults and sedition, and the affair seemed to be of considerable magnitude. Some few gentlemen, I understand, are disposed to favour French principles; Mr. — has considerable influence in promoting this sort of work by his conversation, which has a strong tendency to destroy all subordination, and to bring rulers, of every description, into contempt. He is naturally very good-tempered, and my stay there was short. These two circumstances alone prevented our coming to a rupture. I have given myself little or no concern about politics, for years; but of late, the aspect has been so black, that I could not help attending to our future prospects, with some anxiety.

“Supposing Fox *to oppose*, I think it well, at this critical moment, that he has gone so far. There is scarce one of his old friends here at Cambridge, who is not disposed to give him up; and most say, that he is mad. I think of him much as I always did: I still doubt whether he has *bad* principles, but I think it pretty plain, that he has *none*; and I suppose he is ready for whatever turns up. The tide at present seems setting strongly in support of government, among all ranks. I believe this arises, in great measure, from the alarm of the moment; and when that is over, or abates, I fear the democratic principles will be found to have firmer roots.”

The University annals for the year 1792 close with the re-election of Mr. Pitt, as its representative in parliament. The critical position, however, of public affairs, at this period, prevented Mr. Pitt, as he wrote to Dr. Milner, from being present on the day of election.

CHAPTER VII.

Soeinian principles in the University.—Mr. Frend.—His Seditious Pamphlet.—Meeting of the Masters and Fellows of Jesus College.—Care of the Vice-Chancellor to procure the best Legal advice.—Meeting of the “Twenty-Seven,” at Queen’s Lodge.—Determination to institute, against Mr. Frend proceedings in the Vice-Chancellor’s Court.—Citation of Mr. Frend.—His Trial.—Sentence of Banishment from the University pronounced upon him by the Vice-Chancellor.—Mr. Frend appeals to the Senate.—Confirmation of the Sentence of the Vice-Chancellor, pronounced by the Court of Delegates.—Firmness of Dr. Milner.—His unflinching attachment to the Doctrines of the Established Church.—Notice of Mr. Frend’s trial by Professor Smyth.—Dr. Milner’s Speech at the conclusion of the Trial.—Address to the Undergraduates.—Impressive style of his eloquence.—Visit of Joseph Milner to his Brother at Cambridge.—Mr. Simeon.—State of Religion.—Dr. Milner takes formal possession of the Deanery of Carlisle.—Remarkable Dream.

A.D. 1793. ÆTAT. 43.

THE occurrences which distinguished and rendered peculiarly responsible the vice-chancellorship of Dr. Milner, were the trial and expulsion from the University of Cambridge, of William Frend, A.M. and Fellow of Jesus College.

During some years past, a party of men in the University, entertaining Socinian principles, had been endeavouring to propagate their pernicious doctrines. Although professing themselves members, and being, in some cases, clergymen of the church of England, and as such, having subscribed to her Articles, these persons, a leader among whom was Mr. Frend, did not hesitate to attempt to subvert the faith to which they were thus solemnly pledged. Mr. Frend went so far as to publish and circulate within the precincts of the University, a pamphlet, of so obnoxious a character, that the Vice-Chancellor was called upon to exert the authority entrusted to him, for the suppression of conduct so flagrant.

Of the judicial proceedings in this remarkable trial—a trial protracted, by the artifices of the defendant, to the utmost possible length—and of the circumstances which led to those proceedings, a very brief account may here be sufficient.

Mr. Frend having published and circulated within the

University an irreligious and seditious pamphlet, entitled *Peace and Union recommended to the associated bodies of Republicans and Anti-Republicans*, a meeting, consisting of the master of the college and the major part of the resident fellows, was held at Jesus Lodge on the 22nd of February, 1793, and the following resolution drawn up:—

“Resolved, That a pamphlet, entitled *Peace and Union*, &c. lately published by W. Frend, A.M., Fellow of this college, appears to us to have been written with the evil intent of prejudicing the clergy in the eyes of the laity, of degrading in the public esteem the doctrines and rites of the Established Church, and of disturbing the harmony of society. And, that, as we feel it to be our particular duty to disavow principles calculated to mislead the minds of young men entrusted to our care, a copy of the said pamphlet be sent both to the Vice-Chancellor of the University, and to the Visitor of the College, inclosed in a letter to each, expressing our disapprobation of the opinions therein delivered, and humbly requesting them to take such measures as, in their judgment, may appear most proper for the effectual suppression of their dangerous tendency.” * * * * *

Here follow the signatures.

Of the exertions used by Dr. Milner to procure, with respect to every part of this important transaction, the very best advice, the numerous letters which still exist, from the most eminent legal authorities of the day, afford sufficient evidence. In this affair, as in every other the conduct of which was committed to him, Dr. Milner spared no labour which might qualify him to perform, in the best possible manner, the duty required of him.

On the 4th of March, 1793, a meeting, composed of the persons who had signed the Resolution already recorded, and of other members of the Senate, amounting in all to the number of twenty-seven, took place at the Vice-Chancellor's Lodge at Queen's; and by this meeting—the members composing which were known in the University by the name of “the Twenty-seven”—it was determined, that proceedings against Mr. Frend should be instituted in the Vice-Chancellor's Court. On the

23rd of April a citation was accordingly served upon William Frend summoning him to appear before the Vice-Chancellor at his next court, to be held on the 3rd day of the May next following, then and there to answer to the accusation preferred against him of having violated the statutes of the University, by the publication and dispersion, within its precincts, of the pamphlet entitled *Peace and Union*.

Mr. Frend appeared, as summoned; and after a full, deliberate, and impartial trial was convicted of the charge brought against him. He refused to retract or confess his error, and sentence was consequently pronounced upon him by the Vice-Chancellor, on the 13th day of May, in the following terms:—

“I, ISAAC MILNER, D.D., Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, do decree and pronounce, that William Frend, Master of Arts, and Fellow of Jesus College, having offended against the statute ‘*de Concionibus, &c.*,’ by writing a pamphlet, entitled *Peace and Union, &c.*, and by publishing the same within the University of Cambridge, and having refused to retract and confess his error and temerity, in the manner prescribed to him by me the Vice-Chancellor, with the assent of the major part of the Heads of Colleges, has incurred the penalty of the statute, and that he is therefore banished from this University.

(Signed)

“ISAAC MILNER, V. C., &c. &c.”

From this decision, Mr. Frend appealed to the Senate; but Dr. Milner, acting with his accustomed prudence and foresight, had not pronounced judgment, without first, as has been already intimated, availing himself of the best advice which could be obtained. The highest legal authorities had concurred in his view of the meaning of the particular statutes against which Mr. Frend had offended; the sentence pronounced by the Vice-Chancellor was confirmed by the Court of Delegates, and the offender was compelled to quit the University.

It is almost needless to say, that both at the time and afterwards, Dr. Milner was, in some quarters, much censured for the decided and conscientious part which he had acted; but his conduct upon this occasion commanded the universal approbation of all the friends of religion and social order.

A full and impartial account of the trial of William Frend has, so far as I know, never been given to the public; the only published narrative of that affair being written by the defendant, and disfigured by much misrepresentation. It is, however, evident, even from Mr. Frend's imperfect, and, in many respects, unfair, representation of his own cause, that the University had abundant reason to rejoice, that the office of Vice-Chancellor was, at this juncture, filled by a man equal to the arduous and important occasion. The French Revolution was at its height—Jacobinical principles had infected England to a fearful degree—and, even in the University of Cambridge, a party of Socinians, holding republican opinions, were resolutely prepared to go all lengths with Mr. Frend.

Dr. Milner had deeply studied the subject at issue; and he was, moreover, a man of immoveable firmness of mind. It has been already intimated that, while yet an undergraduate, and at a time when unflinching attachment to the doctrines of the Establishment was supposed to be far from popular among the leading members of his college, he had, at the imminent hazard of all his prospects of worldly advancement, refused to join in a petition against subscription to the Articles of the National Church. His conviction of the truth and importance of the principles by which he had been then actuated, had continually increased in strength, and he was therefore, fully prepared to endure any reproach, or any ridicule, which a steady adherence to those principles might now bring upon him. And when, in after life, he was led to refer to his conduct upon the occasion of Mr. Frend's trial, he seldom quitted the subject without expressing his grateful satisfaction, on a review of the part which he had, at that time, been enabled to sustain*.

Of Mr. Frend's trial, Professor Smyth, whose recollections have already enriched this memoir, thus speaks: "I remember Mr. Borlase, the Registrar at the time, observing to me, that 'it was very well for the University that Dr. Milner was Vice-Chancellor at that time; that he shewed great ability, and often addressed the audience, and the undergraduates, in a most impressive manner.'"

* See a Letter written by Dr. Milner in the year 1798. Chap. ix.

The following speech was delivered by Dr. Milner, in the Senate House, at Cambridge, at the conclusion of this memorable trial:—

“When the University, in the month of November last, elected me Vice-Chancellor, I acquiesced in their determination with much diffidence and anxiety. The discharge of the ordinary duties of this important office seemed incompatible with my indifferent state of health; and if any unforeseen trouble or difficulty should arise in the course of the year, I considered myself as utterly unfit for the management and direction of it; and I foresaw, that while the remains of my health might probably be wasted in a diligent and conscientious attempt to do the best in my power, my mind would also be agitated with this painful reflection, viz.: that the dignity of the office of Vice-Chancellor might suffer, and the discipline and general interests of the University might be essentially injured, through my incapacity.

“But though apprehensions of this sort were naturally suggested by the circumstances, I still cherished a secret hope, that our academical pursuits of learning and science might, for the present year, go on smoothly and without interruption, and our tranquillity be disturbed by no odious or troublesome investigation of the causes of irregularity or riot.

“Little did I then imagine, that in the very short space of four months, so refreshing a hope was entirely to vanish, and that I should be loudly called upon, publicly to animadvert, not upon the rash and intemperate sallies of an inexperienced youth, but upon the premeditated and offensive conduct of a gentleman, with whom I had myself long been acquainted, whose standing in the University was very considerable, and for whose talents and attainments I entertain the most sincere respect.

“Improbable, however, as such an event might be, it actually took place, and nothing remained for the Vice-Chancellor but the painful task of investigating the nature of the offence committed, and the punishment assigned by the laws of the University; and of publicly explaining both, in the most open and perspicuous manner in his power.

“On such an occasion, the situation of the judge of this

court is not to be envied. Our times, whatever be the offence, are singularly unfavourable to the enforcement of rigid discipline; and in regard to the degrading and vilifying of establishments, either of church or state, it is scarcely supposed possible, by many persons, that an offence can be committed. Produce existing laws against such practices, and you are told, such laws ought never to have been made — they are a disgrace to the country — they are obsolete — and, perhaps, that you dare not enforce them. Others, with more temper and plausibility, admit that offences, like the present, are highly blamable in themselves, and that if you could confine your punishments to such gross and indecent examples, there would be no room for complaint; but, say they, when you have once begun to inflict penalties for the propagation of opinions, there will be no bounds to the operation of such laws; unfair advantages will be taken by men of captious and arbitrary principles; the most inoffensive and laudable endeavours after improvement will be stifled; not a syllable must be uttered against what has once been established; the slightest objections, or hints at amendments, either of our religious or political establishments, will be construed into a conspiracy against government; there is an end of the exercise of our faculties, in the dispassionate inquiry after, and investigation of truth. Then the parties cry out, ‘Persecution! tyranny over the conscience! no freedom of discussion!’ and thus, under the fair disguise of moderation and liberality of sentiment, the clamours of the ignorant or the disaffected are to be now an answer to every sober argument that can be advanced in favour of the most sacred and venerable institutions that are to be found in the history of mankind!

“It is true, indeed, that such popular and delusive clamours can produce no conviction of the judgment of thinking persons; but it is no less true, that they too frequently influence our practice. The soundest mental constitution is never wholly secure against the contagion of opinion; and, therefore, the safest rule in all these difficult cases is, to turn a deaf ear to every argument or suggestion that has a tendency to draw the mind from the direct contemplation of the point in question, and to pay not the least regard either to those who cry out

‘tyranny’ and ‘persecution,’ or to those who cry out ‘sedition’ and ‘heresy.’

“With such views and impressions, I entered upon the investigation of this unpleasant affair. It is a cause of the greatest importance. A bold and indecent attack has been made upon the religious institutions of the country: the statutes of this University have been openly violated; and if an offence of this magnitude be suffered to pass unnoticed, I think the very existence of the University may soon be endangered.

“I do not deny that cases of libellous publications frequently occur, in which it is much better to treat an impudent offender with neglect and contempt, than to gratify the obscure and deluded author, by bringing him forth into public notice, and inflicting upon him that precise sort of martyrdom which he has justly deserved, and is absurdly anxious to suffer; but I maintain on the present occasion, that the case of Mr. Frend is separated and distinguished, by peculiar circumstances, from that class of offences, which, from motives of discretion, it might be proper to pass over in silence and contempt.

“The author of this pamphlet is a person of considerable standing in the University, and we are all of us ready to bear testimony to his talents and attainments. He has been in the important situation of a public tutor of a college: he resides a good deal among us; and by his industry, his zeal, and his perseverance, he is well qualified to make impressions upon the unsuspecting minds of youth. He is well known to have objections to the established doctrines of the Church of England, and if he be permitted thus to defame with impunity, the solemn institutions of our religion, and the public functions of the clergy, I am sure, that great advantage will be taken of such forbearance and lenity: our undergraduates will soon be taught to insult the doctrines and ceremonies of the Church to which they belong: they will believe them to be mere political contrivances; they will conclude, that as we ourselves dare not support and defend them, even when we have the law on our side, we also, as well as others, are convinced, that they are indefensible by reason; and they will believe, that we are only induced to adhere to them from pusillanimity, or self-interest. Such, I think, is

the natural inference which a sensible young man would draw from the silence and indifference of the governing part of the University, upon the appearance of such a pamphlet as this.

“I may, perhaps, be told, that these are mere speculations of *my* fancy. I instantly repel the insinuation by affirming a well-known fact, viz.: that a numerous and respectable body of this University appear to have been influenced, in a great measure, by sentiments of the same sort: for while I myself was hesitating, whether, as Vice-Chancellor, I were not, *ex officio*, called upon, by a flagrant breach of public decorum, to animadvert, in a summary way, upon the author of this pamphlet, I was released from doubt on this head, by the application of thirty-four members of the Senate, most of them of distinguished reputation, who requested the Vice-Chancellor to take cognizance of an offence, which appeared to them dangerous in its tendency, and degrading to the clergy of the Establishment. And here, I must say, in justice to the laudable and zealous efforts of the respectable characters who stood forward on this occasion, that I think it impossible to conceive a business of this sort to have been conducted with less appearance of private animosity or resentment; and I feel myself bound to declare, that in the application of no one of these gentlemen could I discover the slightest trace of a wish to injure or distress Mr. Friend. On the contrary, every one explained the grounds of his application in the most distinct and guarded manner, professing himself to be solely influenced by a desire of maintaining the honour and credit of the University.

“After having advanced so much respecting my own views and the motives of others, I suppose the minds of several who hear me may be disposed to object to the inaptitude and irrelevancy of these reflections, and to suggest the propriety of proceeding directly to the consideration of the evidence, and to the administration of the justice of the case.

“I openly and freely acknowledge the force of this objection: and if I have introduced reflections which seem, in a degree, foreign to the subject, it is only because great stress is frequently laid upon such topics; and particularly by persons who affect more than ordinary candour and liberality of sentiment; and in order that arguments derived from such sources may have no

more than their just weight and influence, I have been tempted to oppose this sort of reasoning, by counter-arguments of a similar nature.

“Having freely acknowledged so much, let us now seriously and solemnly approach the cause itself. Let us hear no more of ‘tyranny’ and ‘persecution’ on the one hand, nor of ‘heresy’ and ‘sedition’ on the other.

“A grievous charge is brought against Mr. Frend; and, as Judge of this Court, I find myself bound by the most solemn obligations, to enforce the statutes of the University. I do not, in the slightest degree, mean to insinuate that the 45th statute is an unwholesome or impolitic law; but this I say, that, in my present situation, I have nothing to do with explaining or justifying the policy of that law—I find it in existence, and I am bound to execute it. Dr. Kipling, the promoter of this cause, has produced no arguments to show that the offence comes under any general sweeping clauses of the statutes, such as that it is *contra bonos mores, modestiam*, or the like: on which account I feel myself much relieved from that embarrassment which naturally attends a conscientious discharge of duty in a case where much is left to the decision of the judge; but he has pointed out certain and particular statutes, which he affirms to have been violated; and, therefore, in case of conviction, the Court has no option. Now the conviction or acquittal of Mr. Frend depends entirely upon the solution of two questions. 1st. Is Mr. Frend the author and publisher of this pamphlet?

“On this question we have not the slightest embarrassment—we think, that Dr. Kipling has produced a great deal of superfluous evidence. The 2nd question is, Does the pamphlet contain matter by which the 45th statute is violated?

“We are all satisfied that it does: nor has the eloquence of Mr. Frend convinced us, that the most offensive passages in the pamphlet do not apply and were not intended to apply to the Church of England, as well as to the Church of Rome.

“Then I say, the Court has no option. Yet I am willing to pause for a moment, and to consider what might be the consequences of a supposed discretionary power in this Court.

“Enumerate, then, the circumstances that should induce the

Vice-Chancellor and his assessors to mitigate the penalties of this statute; Did this pamphlet make its appearance at a time when every well-wisher of his country entertained the most serious apprehensions for its safety and tranquillity? Does the oldest of us ever remember so general—I had almost said so universal—a concurrence, and union of sentiment, in the best characters of all parties, uniting to oppose the influence of seditious meetings and seditious publications? At such a critical time as this, did the author of this pamphlet inculcate the necessity of peace and good-order? Or did he exhort the lower ranks of the people to be patient and submissive in bearing the additional burthens which might be necessary, in order to enable us to repel, by force, the unjust attacks of an outrageous and insolent enemy? Or again, when the National Convention of France had filled up the measure of their crimes by murdering their king and destroying all lawful government, when their deliberations breathed nothing but atheism and anarchy, and when they were threatening every country in Europe with the introduction of similar principles, did the author of this pamphlet inculcate a respect for the king and parliament of this country, and for the reformed religion, and the functions of the clergy as established by law? I ask not whether he entered into nice disquisitions concerning improvements, or reformation in smaller matters, but I ask, in one word, whether the plain object of the author, at least in some parts of this pamphlet, were not to teach ‘the degraded laity,’ as he calls them, ‘that, like brute beasts, they were sitting tamely under an usurped authority’? Is there any satisfactory answer to be given to these questions?

“In the title page, it is true, there stands in great letters, ‘PEACE AND UNION.’ Is it satisfactory to be told, that all the offensive passages apply to the members of the Church of Rome, and not to the members of the Church of England? I answer, as I have often heard my Lord Mansfield instruct a jury: ‘Take the writing, and read it, as any plain man would do, and tell us the obvious meaning of the passages;’ and upon this principle, I firmly believe that my assessors, the heads of colleges, who have unanimously concurred with me in opinion, have conscientiously acted.

“ But perhaps the author is sorry for his offence : this would plead strongly in mitigation of censure ; and I wish I could have perceived in the whole conduct of this affair, the slightest vestige of contrition.

“ Mr. Frennd had certainly an undoubted right to use his own judgment in conducting his defence ; yet still I cannot but think that he has mistaken the proper mode in several ways.

“ 1st. He has not treated this cause with a sufficient degree of seriousness. Did he expect to make an impression on the minds of the judge and his assessors, by legal quibbles and strokes of wit, by allusions to novels, or by endeavours to excite smiles in the galleries ?

“ 2dly. He might have avowed the authorship ; and, if conscious of having gone too far in the propagation of his principles, he might ingenuously have said, *This* I maintain to be true—*that* may be defended—but *here* I wish I had stopped.

“ 3dly. If not conscious of having gone too far, he might have boldly confessed and defended his principles, and in a manly way have submitted to the infliction of penalties, which, according to his judgment, were arbitrary and unreasonable.

“ Whichever of these modes of defence he had chosen to pursue, I do not perceive that he would have endangered his reputation as a man of honour and veracity.

“ It was certainly laudable in Mr. Frennd to use every fair and honest exertion of his talents to exculpate himself from these charges ; but the Court has been at a loss to comprehend in what way the continued application of satirical remark and virulent invective on the character of Dr. Kipling, and on the characters of the rest of the gentlemen who disapproved of this publication, could be considered useful to this purpose.

“ Can Mr. Frennd now say, as the great Roman did of old, ‘ Si nullâ aliâ in re, modestiâ certe et temperando linguæ adolescens senem vicero ?’

“ Such satire and invective might indeed have a tendency to debauch the sentiments of the galleries, but could not well be supposed to make any impression upon the minds of the Vice-Chancellor or his assessors, or of any gentleman who had carefully read and considered the pamphlet.

“ In the course of this defence, it was more than insinuated that the promoter of this cause could neither write nor speak a sentence of pure Latin. Suppose, for a moment, that this were true; suppose, for a moment, that the Bishop of Llandaff, whose authority was, on Friday last, so confidently appealed to, could permit the most important professorship in the University to be so scandalously degraded and neglected, as this imputation on Dr. Kipling implies; how would all this exculpate Mr. Frend from the charges which have been brought against him?

“ Again: suppose it possible, for a moment, that calumny could, by possibility, fix itself upon the respectable characters of Dr. Glynn, or Professor Mainwaring, of twelve tutors and lecturers of this University, and of thirty-four members of the Senate, who all applied to the Vice-Chancellor to induce him to take cognizance of this offence, I still ask, how would all this exculpate Mr. Frend from the charges which have been brought against him?

“ But Mr. Frend has not contented himself with applying the most disrespectful appellations to this considerable body of academical gentlemen; he has, in effect, maintained, that their evidence on oath ought to be rejected in this cause. To this part of his argument, I confess, I listened with the utmost astonishment. Let us try the truth of these principles, by a very possible supposition.

“ Suppose an offence to have been of so gross a nature, that not only thirty-four, but twice that number—suppose, even, that the particular friends and intimates of the offender should have joined *the cabal*, as it has been termed—suppose, that the whole University in a body, or by delegates, had applied to the Vice-Chancellor, saying, ‘ Sir, you must take cognizance of this offence; our character and credit in the world demand it:’ will any man say, that the evidence of all these gentlemen, speaking on oath, not to the intrinsic merits of the pamphlet, but to a plain fact, as the buying of a book, or the hand-writing of a person, is to be rejected in such a cause? This would indeed be an alarming proposition, and enough to startle any considerate person. It amounts to no less an absurdity than this—that the very greatness of a crime might properly become its shelter and defence.

“Before I put an end to this unpleasant affair, by finally dissolving the court, I feel myself called upon, by the extraordinary circumstances of this cause, to say a few words to the junior part of this University.

“You have shewn yourselves to be much interested in the investigation, and in the event of this trial; and now that it is brought to a conclusion, I wish to engage your most serious attention for a few moments, while I propose to your consideration the following advice.

“I have no intention to animadvert upon the noisy and tumultuous irregularities of conduct, by which our proceedings, on some of the former court days, have been interrupted. Let these be consigned to oblivion; but let the principles from which these irregularities arose be well considered; and let me seriously exhort you to be on your guard, in future, against the consequences of their dangerous and delusive operation. I cannot suppose, that you have even *heard* distinctly, much less, that you can have *digested* every thing that has been advanced in the course of this trial. Your passions and affections, therefore, are not, *in this case*, founded on a knowledge and understanding of the subject. Examine yourselves, and you will perceive that they are founded on certain vague ideas, that the accused person has been persecuted.

“Such an unreasonable persuasion, if not effectually opposed by sober argument and reflection, will soon produce the most destructive consequences on your practice; and I think it the more necessary, at this time, to advertise you of your danger, when this country has just escaped and survived a most alarming crisis; and when several turbulent and democratic spirits still endeavour to persuade the public, that every attempt to punish libellous attacks upon the constitution and government of the kingdom, by enforcing wholesome and established laws, is a species of persecution, and contrary to the imprescriptible rights of man.

“Now, I affirm that, in this country, wherever there is fair ground for an accusation, and where the accused person has had a fair hearing, there can be no such thing as persecution.

“On those two essential points I rest the merits of the question.

“When, therefore, I look on the junior part of this University, and see in it the future supports and ornaments both of the civil and ecclesiastical establishments of England; and when I consider that they have been sent and entrusted to our care and nurture, by relations and connections who venerate these establishments, I feel myself authorized to interrogate them closely; and I demand whether, being educated from earliest infancy in the practice of frequenting the Church, and of reverencing her institutions, you are now prepared to say, on reading this pamphlet, that the accusation of having impugned the Established Church was either frivolous or oppressive?

“I know very well how you must answer this question; and I am well persuaded, that the ingenuous dispositions of youth only needed to have this matter clearly stated.

“In regard to the second question, viz., whether the accused person has had a fair hearing, I have no anxiety. Whatever notions you may have inconsiderately entertained before the trial, I have no doubt but that now, after the trial, you will tell your fathers, your guardians, and your friends, that you never heard or read of a trial where the accused person had a more full, deliberate, or impartial hearing: you will also tell them that the only doubt which you could entertain of the propriety of these proceedings might be, whether the Judge of this Court, through an extreme unwillingness to interrupt the accused person in his defence, did not carry his patience and forbearance to an almost unwarrantable length, while he permitted the defendant to proceed in an unbounded strain of irrelevant invective. Then you will add, and I trust with some effect, that the University of Cambridge will not suffer the sacred and venerable institutions of the Established Church to be derided and insulted; and that, at a time when a profane and licentious spirit of infidelity and irreligion makes rapid advances, and threatens the destruction of our ecclesiastical fabric, there were to be found in these seminaries respectable characters, who could accuse with liberality and decorum, and judges, who could condemn with firmness and moderation.

“The remaining part of my advice to you will not fatigue

your memories. It is brief, but it is important, and well worth your most serious consideration. Beware of entering into religious controversies at this period of your lives. Whatever may be the profession for which you are intended, improve your understandings by the diligent pursuit of academical studies; obey your tutors; frequent the service of God according to the established forms, both in your private Colleges and in the University Church. At present, take it for granted, that our forefathers had some good reason for steadily adhering to, and supporting, these venerable institutions. I repeat it, *at present*, take this for granted; and those persons whom I perceive to be objecting to these words, will themselves tell you, that it has not been my way to take things for granted. All I contend for is, that this is not your time for becoming parties in controversial matters of religion. It is your business to cultivate your understandings, and to take care that the good seed sown in these retirements should ‘take root downwards, and bear fruit upwards,’ and increase to a mighty harvest in your lives and practice.

“Against those who would openly attack the religious principles in which you have been educated it is easy to guard. I have more apprehensions from those who are perpetually talking of candour and liberality, of thinking for themselves, of examining things thoroughly, of the newly-discovered modes of interpreting the Scriptures, and of the opinions of fallible men.

“These, and such like topics, are exceedingly captivating to the unsuspecting minds of youth. Impressions of the most durable consequence are made in a few conversations; and, in this way, I have more than once seen the finest talents and the most amiable dispositions perverted, or rendered useless,—talents and dispositions which, doubtless, in happier circumstances, and with better cultivation, might have rendered their possessors eminently serviceable to their country, either in Church or State.

“Remember, then, the warm and zealous advice of a person who thus addresses you from the purest motives of good will, and who wishes for your best interests—of a person whose imagination and temper have never been heated with religious

disputes—whose pride and ambition it has ever been to obtain, in the various branches of useful science, solid information for himself, and to communicate it to others—and whose health has been almost exhausted by academical labours. Remember, then, I say, the advice of a person who now addresses you, not with the authority of a vice-chancellor, but with the friendship and affection of an experienced academic—of a person who has never been suspected of being desirous of possessing offices or dignities—who has bitterly lamented that the necessity for this inquiry should have taken place in the present year; but who, when the inquiry was once instituted, thought it his duty to go through with it with all the energy in his power, and who found it impossible to acquit Mr. Frennd without sacrificing every principle of truth, of justice, and of honour.”

Of those who listened to this speech, and to the warm and manly address to the undergraduates with which it concludes, few now survive. It will still, however, afford sufficient evidence of Dr. Milner’s ability as a speaker, and of the dignified and impressive style of his eloquence. The effect, indeed, of his public speaking was so much enhanced by his sonorous, yet melodious voice, by his distinct enunciation, and even by his commanding person and manner, that, perhaps, no one who has not heard Dr. Milner address an audience, can, however justly he may estimate the intrinsic merit of his speeches, fully conceive the impression which those speeches produced.

It may here be mentioned, that a memorandum book for the year 1794, in Dr. Milner’s hand-writing, contains the following entry: “To write a general account of Frennd’s business.” The purpose thus intimated was, I believe, never executed. The speech above given was found among his papers, in his own hand-writing.

During the long vacation of this year, Joseph Milner visited his brother at Cambridge. A letter which he wrote from thence to his friend Mr. Stillingfleet, contains a slight notice of Mr. Frennd’s trial; and, like all Joseph Milner’s letters, is valuable and interesting. It treats, at some length, of the state of religion at Cambridge at that period, and of Mr. Simeon’s ministry, but an extract only can be given.

“ I preached yesterday to a serious congregation at Simeon’s church, in the morning, and heard him preach a faithful discourse in the evening. I regret that I shall lose his company so soon: he is going to Portsmouth. My brother joins with me in best respects to you. He is as well as one can expect after so much fatigue. You have heard, I suppose, that Frenck is foiled repeatedly; first, by the Vice-Chancellor’s Court, and then by the unanimous voice of the Court of Delegates. It will do some good here; even his arrogant and unchristian conduct will not be without its fruits. This place has obtained more evangelical means since I was here last. There is now Simeon; and it is to be regretted that his congregation is not so large as were to be wished. Of those, however, who do attend, there are a number of solid Christians; and whether God may please again to make this place a nursery for the Gospel, as doubtless it was in a very high degree at the time of the Reformation, we know not. But times are different. Then, persons of rank and eminence, some of them at least, attended to the Gospel; now, in general, the lower orders only regard such things, and the great and the high have, all over Europe, forgotten that they have souls. It the more becomes us, my dear friend, to watch and pray; it is an hour of temptation. Set a watch over my mouth that I offend not with my tongue; let me not eat of their dainties. I feel need to pray continually, lest I be carried away even by the civilities of the world. We began as despised preachers of Jesus; in meekness and simplicity may we continue so to the end, and nourish our own souls with the doctrine which we preach to others.

“ How is your health, and that of Mrs. Still? I beg my love to her.” * * * * * “ My own health, I thank God, is pretty good; and I seem to have a prospect of more preaching while here; I hope you also find opportunities to speak for ‘ Him who loved us.’ To Him, I recommend you and yours; not forgetting Edward; may he pray, and be laborious.

“ I am, dear Still,

“ Always yours, affectionately,

“ *To the Rev. James Stillingfleet.*”

“ J. MILNER.

The notice of Mr. Simeon contained in this letter, coming, as it does, from such a source, cannot fail to be interesting to the vast numbers of Cambridge students, still living, who, in later years enjoyed the privilege of attending upon the ministry of that most laborious and useful servant of God.

It was not till the month of December, in this year, that Dr. Milner was enabled to take formal possession of his deanery of Carlisle, by reading prayers in the Cathedral. This appears from a memorandum attested by the signatures of William Paley, and two other persons.

Thus commenced Dr. Milner's personal connection with the city of Carlisle—a connection, which was doubtless, by the blessing of God, rendered instrumental to the salvation of many souls.

And now, since it must surely be the duty of the biographer of a man whose personal history deserves to be recorded at all, to give a full and true idea of his character, and mental constitution, as well as an account of the events of his life, it may, perhaps, be worth while to relate a circumstance which certainly left a considerable impression upon Dean Milner's imagination. It should be premised, that, like Dr. Johnson, he possessed a temperament easily affected by whatever appeared to him to approach to the supernatural; and often, in conversation, defended and justified the interest which he avowedly took in the investigation of mysterious stories, whether of dreams or of apparitions, by the remark, that supernatural events, supposing them occasionally to occur, are not,—according to the common objection of those who are sceptical concerning all such matters,—useless; but, that, on the contrary, they have the great and important use, of keeping up, in the minds of men, a vivid idea of the reality of the unseen world.

Some time before his appointment to the deanery of Carlisle, Dr. Milner dreamed, that he was led, by a friend, through the different apartments of a large rambling old house, which, he was given to understand, would, shortly, belong to himself. After shewing him several rooms, his conductor opened a door which proved to be the entrance to a steep stone staircase, and desired him to ascend. He did so; and on turning the corner at the top of this flight of steps, was suddenly arrested by the sight of a tomb-stone, bearing the inscription,

HERE LIETH
THE BODY OF
ISAAC MILNER,
WHO DIED
A. D.

* * * * *

When, happily for himself, he could not discover; for in the extremity of his eager effort to read the date of the year, which he perceived was given—he awoke.

This dream, striking as it was, gradually faded from Dean Milner's mind; and would, probably, in time, have been entirely forgotten, but for a circumstance which, strangely and forcibly, recalled it to his recollection. On going over his deanery for the first time, in company, I think, with Dr. Paley, a door was thrown open which discovered a steep flight of stone steps, leading to the tower; and so exactly resembling those which he had seen in his dream, that, as he always declared, when induced to mention the circumstance, he absolutely feared to ascend and turn the corner at the top—so strong was the impression, that the tombstone would appear. Nor did he ever ascend that staircase with perfect indifference.

By those persons who boast of their scepticism respecting whatever seems to favour the idea of the possibility of intercourse between the visible and invisible world, the circumstances above related will, perhaps, be deemed mere matter of ridicule: but even such persons, in common with those who profess no such unlimited incredulity, may reasonably feel some degree of interest in an anecdote which tends to reveal, with reference to a mysterious subject, the intellectual conformation of such a man as Dean Milner.

Without intending to assert, that Dr. Milner considered the remarkable similarity between the actual staircase at the deanery and the imaginary flight of steps which he had seen in his dream as anything more than a curious coincidence, it is proper to say, that he certainly made a practical use of the dream with its sequel, by regarding the deep and lasting impression made upon his mind, as an intimation of the transitory and unsatisfactory nature of worldly prosperity, and as an admonition to set his "affections upon things above."

CHAPTER VIII.

Conduct of Dr. Milner as Head of a College.—Letter to a Friend on the Death of his Daughter.—Publication of the first volume of the *History of the Church*.—Public Affairs.—Political Conduct of Mr. Wilberforce.—Extracts from Dr. Milner's Letters to him at this Juncture.—Publication of second volume of the *Church History*.—Dr. Milner's Chymical Pursuits.—Correspondence with Mr. Kirwan and the Bishop of Llandaff.—Their Letters.—Dr. Buchanan.—Visit to Hull.—Willingness of Dr. Milner to preach for his Friends.—Extracts from Correspondence.—Visit to Buxton.—Letter from Joseph Milner to the Rev. James Stillingfleet.—His testimony to his Brother's plainness of speech in the Pulpit.—Declaration of Dr. Paley.—Extract from one of the Dean's early Sermons.—Society at Buxton.—Miss Seward.—Lord Erskine.—Correspondence.—Illness.—Gradual and constant improvement in Religious Character.—Publication of the third volume of the *Church History*.—Correspondence.—Wilberforce's *Practical View*.—Visit to Bath.—Public Affairs.—Letter on Reform.—Mr. Tillotson.

A.D. 1794. ÆTAT. 44.

THE year 1794, with the exception of those months during which, as dean, he was required to reside at Carlisle, was spent by Dr. Milner in the vigorous discharge of his duties as President of Queen's College. "A head of a college," to use his own words, in a letter to the late Rev. William Richardson, of York, "is supposed to have little or nothing to do; so," continues Dr. Milner, "I once thought: but he has all the property of the college to manage; and, what is far worse, he has the tempers of parents and guardians to humour about their children and wards. He has abundance of letters to write, and he is exposed to many temptations." The truth of this representation will, probably, be acknowledged by all whose experience qualifies them to form a judgment upon the subject in question; but, with regard to some branches of the duty of a head of a college, Dr. Milner's warm and benevolent heart perhaps induced him to bestow upon them even more care than his situation might be supposed to render absolutely incumbent upon him.

The beneficial regulations which he introduced respecting the class of students called Sizar have been already adverted

to; but besides these general improvements, some of which were, doubtless, suggested to him by the recollection of the degrading services which he had himself, in the early part of his academical career, been called upon to perform, Dr. Milner constantly exercised a conscientious superintendency over the conduct of all the young men belonging to his college, and actively interested himself in the welfare of such as gave any promise of future eminence.

It would be indelicate to mention, in support of this statement, the names of living persons; but there can be no impropriety in adducing, in proof of it, the name of one eminent and excellent man, who, if he were yet alive, would be among the most anxious to do justice to the memory of Dr. Milner in this particular. The late Dr. Buchanan, who was sent to the University of Cambridge by the Christian liberality of Henry Thornton, Esq., was entered at Queen's College, "chiefly because Mr. Thornton was acquainted with the President, and thought *that* circumstance might be advantageous to him*." The correctness of this opinion of the late Mr. Henry Thornton was demonstrated on various occasions in the course of Dr. Buchanan's life: and it would be easy to cite the names of many other eminent and excellent persons to whose success in life Dr. Milner, by the faithful performance of his duties as head of a college, and by his subsequent advice and influence, mainly contributed.

During the spring of this year, an old and dear friend of Dr. Milner was thrown into deep affliction by the death of a grown-up daughter. On this calamitous occasion, Dr. Milner endeavoured to administer consolation to the sorrowing father, in a letter from which here follows an extract.

“DEAR SIR,

“*Queen's College, March 7, 1794.*

“I suppose there can hardly be a greater trial for human nature than the loss of grown-up, and promising children. Both the cases, however, in which it has pleased God, at so

See *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Claudius Buchanan*, by the Rev. HUGH PEARSON, vol. i.

short an interval, to try your faith, patience, and resignation, have been attended with those circumstances which alone can render such distressful scenes less distressful, and take away their sting. God had been preparing her for this change for some time past.

“I remember that my brother, some time last summer, spoke of her Christian state of mind, in the warmest terms; and observing upon her *anxiety*, he said, ‘They are always the most distressed who have the least reason to be so; it is the best sign in the world.’”

In the long vacation of this year Dr. Milner enjoyed, as usual, the company of his brother; being his guest at Hull, and his host at Carlisle. Joseph Milner, who had already distinguished himself as an author, by his able defence of revealed truth against the insinuations and misrepresentations of Gibbon and of Hume, was now about to publish the first volume of his *History of the Church of Christ*; a work of which the author’s own account gives the best idea. “It is certain,” says he, “that from our Saviour’s time to the present, there have ever been persons whose dispositions and lives have been formed by the rules of the New Testament: men who have been *real*, not merely *nominal* Christians: who believed the doctrines of the Gospel, loved them, because of their divine excellency, and suffered gladly ‘the loss of all things, that they might win Christ and be found in Him*.’ It is the history of these men which I propose to write.”

In the preparation of the subsequent volumes of this history for publication, Joseph Milner was assisted by his brother the Dean; who, however, suggested few alterations except such as related merely to style. It cannot be doubted, that, by the reading of the manuscript sheets of this work with their author, he imbibed much of that taste for ecclesiastical history which, joined to his own learning and ability, eminently qualified him to carry forward the design of the deceased historian.

* Philip. iii., 8, 9.

In common with every lover of his country, Dr. Milner, at this period, felt much anxiety concerning the state of public affairs.

On most points his sentiments were in accordance with those of Mr. Wilberforce; but there were subjects respecting which he differed from his friend.

Actuated, unquestionably, by the most conscientious motives, Mr. Wilberforce, about this time, withdrew his support from Mr. Pitt respecting the continuance of the war, and on the occasion of the meeting of Parliament, on the 2nd of January, 1795, appeared in open opposition by moving an amendment to the address. He, afterwards, repeatedly divided with the party in opposition, and “it was not without pain that he heard Mr. Fox, in a friendly visit which he paid him about this time, express a confident expectation of his speedy enrolment in their ranks.” “The same reasons also which led the opposition party to claim him as their own, rendered him suspected by the bulk of sober-minded men.” “‘Your friend Mr. Wilberforce,’ said Mr. Wyndham to Lady Spencer, ‘will be very happy any morning to hand your ladyship to the guillotine.’” “And others, less violent than Mr. Wyndham, partook in a great measure of the same suspicions*.” Under these circumstances, Dr. Milner, frequently by letter, addressed his friend in a tone of friendly advice; for instance: “The opposition,” wrote Dr. Milner, “will rejoice either in getting you virtually to their side, or in ruining you in the public opinion; and further, say or think what you will, I am sure it will not be long before there will be a coldness between you and the government. Both opposition and your disgusted friends of administration, are inclined to admit a notion, that you are endeavouring to raise a consequential party of your own; and, on that score, both sides will concur in having a fling at you.”

A short time before the meeting of Parliament Dr. Milner wrote to Mr. Wilberforce a letter, containing the following acute and pertinent suggestions: “I do not perceive the nature

* *Life of Wilberforce*, vol. ii.

of the opposition to Pitt which you are likely to make. Weigh it well, my dear friend. I hope you will not prove a dupe to the dishonest opposition, who will be glad to make use of you in hunting down Pitt, and for no other purpose. All will not be so sincere as you will be; nor will they be proof against the artifices of Fox, Sheridan, &c. You may, I see clearly, raise a phalanx, but it may turn out that you will not be able to direct its motions. I speak plainly, because I wish well to the country, and love you personally."

On the 4th of January, after Mr. Wilberforce had taken the decisive step of moving an amendment to the address, Dr. Milner wrote to him in the following truly friendly and Christian manner: "I think that you are in a very critical situation, both as to the general good, or bad effect, which your conduct may produce in national affairs, and also in regard to the judgment which will be formed of you personally. On Friday night I read over the debates; and I can truly say, I never was so much concerned about politics in my life; I was quite low, and so I continue. There was not any one of the speeches that I liked. In the first place, I never conceived that you had intended to take so decided a part in this business as to lead the opposition against Pitt. There is not the slightest doubt but you will be represented as having gone over to the opposition, nor will it be easy to do away the impression; for, 1st, you opposed Government in the great question of peace or war; 2ndly, you made the motion; 3rdly, the opposition approved of it, and hailed the accession of their new forces. I wish I may be mistaken; yet, as I understand your amendment, and the consequent division, it will certainly tend to weaken the Government and to divide the sentiments of the country; to strengthen a factious opposition, and to encourage the French Convention." * * "Let it but be supposed, that you are against the war, that you are for peace, and your name and authority are made use of to a much greater extent than you ever intended. The part you take is of great consequence. I am very low about public affairs, and am looking for something more tremendous: the prospect is constantly before me. We ought, every one for himself, to 'make haste and

keep HIS commandments.” * * * * Again, Dr. Milner wrote this year from Carlisle: “The bulk of people think you are doing a great deal of mischief. A very few, who know your sincerity, and think pretty closely, believe that you may be doing a great deal of good by drawing the Minister to his senses, and hastening peace. But even these are not without doubts: it is an intricate and thorny business. The sentiments of your constituents through the West Riding, respecting the part you have taken in parliament, I have had some opportunity of learning; and I am sorry to say, that, excepting a few notorious democrats, I have not met with a single person who does not disapprove your conduct. The same sentiments pervade the most sensible people in these parts, the democrats still excepted.” From Cambridge, Dr. Milner afterwards wrote as follows: “I pray God to bless you for writing me so affectionate a letter. I wish that you should learn from others, rather than from myself, how vehemently I have defended you from the attacks of Drs. Kipling, Jowett, Turner, &c.; some of whom hold, that you have done the country much more harm than any defeat could do.” * * * * “It is now, more than ever before in your life, that the consequence and force of your independence is felt.”

On a subsequent occasion, Dr. Milner addressed to his friend the following very kind and judicious advice: “Your old friends have everything at stake, and you must bear with them if they are now and then unreasonable. Guard yourself against saying anything satirical at Government; let there be no bitterness, nor the slightest ground for suspecting peevishness, or a disposition to thwart. Your opposition, in one point of view, *must* do great mischief; this you cannot help; but there is the more reason for avoiding exacerbations of every sort, among which is to be reckoned *nibbling altercation*.”

During this year was published the second volume of Joseph Milner’s *Church History*, the manuscript of which Dr. Milner read with his brother.

Dean Milner had never ceased to pursue, so far as his precarious health and diminished leisure permitted, his chymical investigations. He was, at this time, in correspondence

with Mr. Kirwan, the eminent Irish chymist already mentioned; and in the month of October received from him the following letter, relative to the methods used by the French in the manufacture of nitre.

“ TO THE VERY REV. THE DEAN OF CARLISLE.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ *Dublin, October 25, 1795.*

“ Your letter required no apology; or, if any, it is for containing one. It is always a pleasure to me to hear of you, and particularly from yourself. The French kept their method of making nitre a secret, but things led me to think that they formed nitrous acid in the manner you discovered.

“ 1st. The embargo laid on potash, and the quantity of it sent even from Bordeaux to Paris, as I have been assured by persons from that city.

“ 2nd. The quantity of manganese they had stored in Paris, as you may see in the ninth volume of the *Annales de Chimie*, p. 340.

“ And, lastly, as I knew no other method of procuring it.

“ I am exceedingly happy to find you have been restored to a better state of health, both for your own sake, and for that of science; and am,

“ With the most distinguished regard and esteem,

“ Your most affectionate and humble servant,

“ R. KIRWAN.”

Dr. Milner likewise maintained a correspondence on chymical topics with the late Dr. Watson, bishop of Llandaff. The following letter has reference to the subject treated of in the letters of Dr. Priestley* and Mr. Kirwan.

“ TO THE VERY REV. THE DEAN OF CARLISLE.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ *Great George Street, Feb. 18, 1796.*

“ I lose no time in answering your letter. It is a very high honour to you to have discovered the mode of making the nitrous acid; and though our enemies avail themselves of your

* See Chapter III.

ingenuity, yet, it may, in future be of use to your own country. Any unfavourable revolution in India, would leave us as destitute of saltpetre as France would have been without your discovery. I still doubt, as I did when you shewed me the experiment, the practicability of making saltpetre at as cheap a rate as it may be imported; but have no doubt in thinking that the experiment ought to be tried in the large way, by the Board of Ordnance. I think there is a manufactory of sal ammoniac in the Borough, where the volatile alkali is extracted from bones. The bones of the meat daily consumed in this capital, together with such other matters as might, by proper arrangements, be saved, would supply plenty of volatile alkali; and as to manganese, I believe there is great abundance of it in the country; and I have some suspicion that manganese is not the only mineral which might be used. I speak from recollection, when I say, that Mr. Stanley, I think it was, of Ponsonby, in Cumberland, informed me, about thirty years ago, that he had in his estate immense beds of manganese which laid very near the surface, and were at present of no value; I left a large specimen of this mineral in the chymical schools, opposite your college, but whether it is still there I cannot say. I shall return to Westmoreland as soon as my children have had a little benefit from their masters, and will then, or before, if you wish it, make inquiry relative to Mr. Stanley's mineral, and give you any assistance in my power in the prosecution of your design. Your scheme appears to me to be well enough imagined for the purpose, though it may admit a doubt whether pure volatile alkali might not be as useful or, perhaps, as cheap, every thing considered, as filling a large vessel with cheap materials from which only a small portion of alkali can be obtained.

“ I begin to feel the effects of London air and London life; nothing but constant exercise in the country can preserve my frame in any tolerable state.

“ I am, dear Sir, with great esteem and regard,

“ Your faithful friend and servant,

“ R. LLANDAFF.”

In the early part of this year, the friends by whose Chris-

tian kindness and liberality, the late Dr. Buchanan “had been introduced into the Church, conceiving that his talents might be more advantageously employed abroad, recurred to the plan which had, for some time, been more or less in their view, and resolved to endeavour to obtain for him the appointment of a chaplain in the service of the East India Company.” In pursuance of this determination, it was necessary to procure such testimonials as might “amply certify the qualifications of Mr. Buchanan for the office to which he was recommended*.” Copies of these testimonials are inserted in the *Life of Dr. Buchanan* already cited. The first, is from the President and Fellows of Queen’s College, and expresses, in general terms, the high opinion entertained by the governing part of the College, of Mr. Buchanan’s character and talents. This certificate was transmitted by Dr. Milner to Mr. Grant†, with the following letter, in which he bears a more particular and decisive testimony to the merits of Mr. Buchanan.

“TO CHARLES GRANT, ESQ.

“DEAR SIR, “*Queen’s College, Cambridge, March 8, 1796.*

“I inclose you the College’s testimonial of Mr. Buchanan’s good behaviour, expressed in general terms; but if it were needful to be more particular, I could add a great deal.

“In my judgment much may be expected from his ability, industry, and discretion. He has an uncommon zeal for everything that is praise-worthy, and this zeal is tempered and directed by a sound and well-informed understanding. His good sense and attainments must procure him respect every where. He will certainly be on the watch to do good. Mr. Buchanan obtained both classical and mathematical prizes at college.

“I am, dear Sir, yours,

“ISAAC MILNER.”

It seemed proper to insert, in this place, this just and very cordial testimony to the merits of so eminent and excellent a

* See *Life of the Rev. Claudius Buchanan*, by the Rev. HUGH PEARSON.

† The father of the present Lord Glenelg.

man as the late Dr. Buchanan; and it may be added, that the high opinion invariably expressed by Dr. Milner, concerning Dr. Buchanan's character and attainments, had, subsequently, much influence in inducing the Marquis Wellesley to appoint him Vice-Provost of the College of Fort William, in Bengal.

Dr. Milner never ceased to maintain a frequent intercourse with his brother, either by visiting him at Hull, during the university vacations, or by receiving him, as occasion offered, at Carlisle, or at Queen's Lodge.

In the summer of 1796, while on his way to Carlisle for the purpose of keeping his residence there, he visited his brother at Hull, and took him with him to spend his school vacation at the Deanery. Mr. Wilberforce, who, was at the same time at Hull, on a visit to his aged mother, thus writes in his Diary: "June 9, 1796. Milner preached—very practical and good. Joseph Milner dined with us—simple and pleasant."

Nothing can be less extraordinary than that Dr. Milner should have preached for his brother, while sojourning with him at Hull; but it is not generally known how ready and willing he was, upon all suitable occasions, to occupy the pulpit wherever he might happen to be. Many of the present inhabitants of Carlisle well remember his frequent sermons on the Wednesday evenings, at St. Cuthbert's Church; and many persons still living at Hull can bear witness to his frequent and impressive addresses from the pulpit of St. John's, during the visits which he paid to the town of Hull, after the decease of his brother. Nay even if detained during Sunday on a journey—for it is needless to say, that he did not travel on the Sabbath—he was always ready to preach if requested to do so, or if he had reason to think, that his doing so would be acceptable to the clergyman of the place. Thus, on more than one occasion, being compelled, by circumstances, to pass the Sunday at Ferrybridge, during his journey from Cambridge to Carlisle, he preached at the neighbouring church of Brotherton; and other instances, of a similar nature, might easily be adduced.

The numerous letters written by Dr. Milner during the early part of this summer treat, for the most part, either of college business or of philosophical subjects. His letters to his

intimate friends were, at this period, very various in their character—sometimes half jocular—more frequently serious—and occasionally almost melancholy. Thus, on one occasion to Mr. Wilberforce, who was spending the season at Buxton, he writes, “As I am very infirm myself at present, and in weak spirits, so that I have wept in secret several times lately without much apparent reason, it will be a real pleasure to me to hear frequently from you, and to know that you go on well.” Happily, however, the natural elasticity of Dr. Milner’s mental temperament soon produced its effect. He proceeds in the same letter, (July 1st,) to inquire into the particulars of a plan, in which Mr. Wilberforce was much interested, for the relief of the distressed French emigrants, then so numerous in England, adding, “I hope to be able to promote the subscription among the ladies here*.” Send me a few of your printed papers.

“N.B. Pray beware of the *Buxton Doctors*.

“Ever, dear Sir,

“Very affectionately your friend,

“ISAAC MILNER.”

Later in the summer, Mr. Wilberforce being called, by the illness of his mother, to Hull, there met Dean Milner, who, with his brother Joseph, had just returned from his residence at Carlisle, and induced him to accompany him on his return to Buxton. The following letter from Joseph Milner, written just after his return with his brother from Carlisle, and before the Dean’s departure with Mr. Wilberforce for Buxton, contains much interesting matter.

“TO THE REV. JAMES STILLINGFLEET.

“DEAR STILL.,

“*Hull, August 3rd, 1796.*

“I was glad to hear from you on my arrival here with my brother from Carlisle, last Saturday night. You guessed right about the times of the holidays and my travels. Fawcett is well, and his family. He and, I hope, —— and ——, are walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the faith of the Gospel.

* At Carlisle.

I was afraid he would have no opportunity to minister the word in Carlisle; he has only preached once there all this time; the number of clergy there gives him little opportunity. He has had, however, opportunities of preaching oftener in the country. He seems desirous of embracing any service which the Lord may call him to, and he is acceptable in his office there, and in all his conduct.

“The Dean and myself have preached at the Cathedral. He has preached several times with great faithfulness and downright plainness on the first and most fundamental truths. There is *a shaking* among them. There seems to want a following up of the blow, by a constant repetition of such preaching; for many hear with eagerness. Some real good, I trust, is done; and one sermon there is more regarded than thirty in this part of the world.

“I thank you for your good advice about passing through evil report.” * * * “My health is pretty good at present, and I am going on with the History; but as I come nearer the Reformation, major mihi nascitur ordo. Indeed the work is very laborious; I did not think it to be so great as it is before I undertook it. The Lord take it into his own hands, and magnify himself by it; and may I be helped to disburden myself of all anxious care concerning it, while I do what He enables me to do. ‘Be careful for nothing;’ that is the precept I have felt the want of for years. I am always prone to excess of care and thinking; pray, my dear friend, that it may not overcome me in my growing age and infirmities. The simplicity of faith I vastly need; to live by faith is my wisdom and happiness! How very little do I know of it!

“Give my love to the venerable old servant of God* at whose house I hope this may reach you. I have only to wish him a gentle and placid departure to Abraham’s bosom. He has fought a good fight and has finished his course.

“I hope your health continues well, and that Mrs. S. has had no violent returns of her disorder. I shall never, I hope, forget the sweetness of friendship which I have tasted from you

* The late Rev. Mr. Venn.

both; and I pray you may both be brought safe home, and in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ.

“I am glad you find employment in the pulpit, and I trust it will not be in vain. We have need to pray for the Church and nation. Things are very dark; they may be darker still; and yet I trust the Lord will not give us over to the enemy. He will repay them to their face, because they hate Him. There is an evident growth of faithful labourers in the Church. One young man has been at Carlisle, who was awakened under Mr. Porter, at Leeds; he seems serious and humble, and is going to be fixed in an Episcopal Church in Scotland. The Bishop of Carlisle, by the Dean’s recommendation, has promised to ordain him to it. The greatest evil is the plain want of national humiliation, and the continuance of profaneness, luxury, pleasures, &c. No wonder we are scourged and brought low. But let us mind *our* business, the Lord will take care of *his*. After all, we know of more evil within us than we do of all the gross outward sins of the land. Indwelling sin is our burden. Out of the depths we must keep crying to the Lord: and, as circumstances now are, it behoves us specially to take care that we be not drawn into a wrong spirit on the one hand, by the evils of professors, and on the other, by the agreeable qualities of the profane. The Lord uphold us, and cause us to hear a voice behind us, saying, This is the way, walk, &c.

“The foul proceedings in the late election at Hull were a bitter potion to me, and a great reproach to this place. But why always harping on the worst? God is with his Church, and his cause shall prosper.

“With love to Mrs. S.,

“I am alway yours,

“JOSEPH MILNER.”

To Dean Milner’s “faithfulness” and “downright plainness” in the pulpit, mentioned in the foregoing very pious letter, there are, doubtless, still many living witnesses; although the greater part of the generation who, from Sabbath to Sabbath, during his various residences at Carlisle, were admonished by his warning voice in the Cathedral, have passed away. Of recorded

testimony to his powerful mode of preaching there is, however, no lack. Among a cloud of witnesses, Dr. Paley may be mentioned as having, about the year 1796, expressed himself in the following terms to the present Professor of Modern History at Cambridge.

“I remember,” says Professor Smyth*, “that Dr. Paley said to me, when I happened to mention Dr. Milner, and what were supposed to be the great powers of his mind, ‘Why, yes; I told the Bishop of Carlisle†, that about the evangelical doctrines themselves, I must leave him to judge, but that if he chose to hear them urged with great ability, and placed in the most striking point of view, he must go and hear our dean.’”

In perfect agreement with the conversation here recorded, Dr. Paley, about this time, thus wrote to a friend: “When the Dean of Carlisle preaches you may walk upon the heads of the people. All the meetings attend to hear him. He is indeed a powerful preacher.”

This testimony of Dr. Paley, concerning the crowds who attended at the Cathedral whenever the Dean preached, might be confirmed by many living witnesses. Indeed, the very words, or nearly so, employed by Dr. Paley, occur in a letter lately addressed to myself by a professional gentleman, still resident at Carlisle. “When it was known,” says he, “that the Dean was to preach in the Cathedral, I have seen the aisles and every part of it so thronged, that a person might have walked upon the heads of the crowd. It was pleasing to see how religious persons of different denominations flocked around the pulpit. * * *

“I well remember at times, while preaching, his being so absorbed in his subject, that the expression of his countenance had in it something more than earthly. He has told me, that he always felt doubly assured when he was preaching the Truth.”

* * * “In one of his discourses he recommended it to his hearers, ‘not to busy themselves in the inquiry, whether the preacher were right in every particular point, but rather

* In a letter to myself.

† The present Lord Archbishop of York.

to inquire whether they themselves were right in the main point.' * * *

“After one of the powerful sermons that he preached in the Cathedral from the words, ‘Wherefore halt ye between two opinions?’ &c., a young gentleman from Liverpool, who had heard him, called upon him, and with tears in his eyes, thanked him for his discourse. The Dean told me, that the same sermon had been instrumental in bringing one or two other persons to a sense of the importance of religion. He did not say this as if boasting, but was only thankful that he should have been the means of bringing any to a knowledge of the Truth.”

Some brief extracts from one of the first sermons which Dean Milner delivered from the pulpit of the cathedral of Carlisle, and one to which, after the lapse of nearly twenty years, he, from the same pulpit, alluded with satisfaction, as having been rendered, by the blessing of God, singularly useful, may serve as a fair specimen of his style and manner of preaching, and cannot be unacceptable to those who feel an interest in the subject of this biography.

The sermon in question treats of the history of Enoch*, and its scope is, to convey “a just idea of what is meant by ‘walking with God.’” “However excellent a thing it be,” says the Dean, “to walk with God, it is no more than what all men in all ages ought to do. We are led, then, to suspect that the generality of persons in Enoch’s time walked not with God, but after the course of this world, after the ‘spirit which now worketh in the children of disobedience.’ In truth, the fall of man was presently followed by the most dismal effects. Witness the account given of the blood of righteous Abel, and of the earth being filled with violence, and of all flesh having corrupted their way upon the earth. Moreover, the Lord was induced to sweep away the whole generation of mankind, except eight persons, by a flood. But before things proceeded to this extremity, it pleased God, by an act of singular and distinguished favour towards righteous Enoch, to show to mankind that ‘there is a God that judgeth the earth;’ that there is another life, in which

* See Dr. MILNER’S *Sermons*, Vol. i., Sermon II.

his faithful servants shall enjoy their God for ever; and that the present life is too poor and low a scene for immortal spirits to set their affections upon." * * * "For it is not to be supposed but that the circumstances of Enoch's translation were such as to give full evidence that the fact was real; as was the case with Elijah's translation to heaven long after—which event also took place at a period of much wickedness and contempt of God." * * * "Three hundred and sixty-five years was the whole of Enoch's existence on earth; and, according to the length of men's lives at that time, he might be called a young person. But he lived long enough to shame an evil world by the height of his piety. While others walked after the sight of their eyes, and according to the imaginations of their hearts, he lived *by faith* in God. He saw the invisible God with the eyes of his understanding, and walked with Him as a friend. He maintained a connexion with Him in all he did: his whole course of life was directed to please Him. He received the law from his mouth, and it was dearer to him than anything besides. No doubt he conversed with Him by prayer, praise, and meditation, and had a holy and reverend communion with Him, such as it becomes obedient creatures to have with their Creator. The account is very short, but doubtless he was reconciled to Him by faith in the promised seed who was to bruise the serpent's head, for Enoch had sin as well as other men. He was saved by grace, and he was conscious of a Divine principle of grace, which gave him this happy turn of mind, and drew his affections up to God. Were it not for God's revealed promise of grace in Christ, he could have had no comfortable affiance in God from the light of nature, for that teaches no sinner how to obtain reconciliation with God. Revelation alone can do this for any man; and 'how can two walk together except they be agreed?'

"Enoch was reconciled with God, and therefore walked with him as a friend. Pleasant and precious privilege! Oh! what so delightful as to call God, Father,—to enjoy his favour, and peace of conscience,—to be indulged with the tokens of his presence, and the manifestation of his Divine perfections! To such a man, duty is a delight, the will of God is freedom,

and holiness is the health of the soul." * * * * "After Enoch had 'walked with God' three hundred years, he was no more found on earth; for God had removed him to Himself by a happy miraculous translation. In the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, we are told, that 'by faith he was translated, that he should not see death; and was not found, because God took him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.' But how did he please him? It is added, 'without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' Enoch had a lively influential persuasion, that there is a God that judgeth the earth; that He is to be found by them that seek Him, as their portion and happiness; and this, we know, cannot be done, except, in substance, upon real Christian principles. Guilt cannot be taken out of the conscience but by faith in God's promises respecting the Redeemer; nor can the heart of such a creature as man be renewed and made holy, but by a principle of grace from above." * * * * "To walk with God, as Enoch did, is the duty of every reasonable creature: and, in truth, what can be so reasonable, so pleasant, and so altogether excellent? Nay, I might add, that guilty creatures like men, being, through Jesus the Mediator, allowed thus to walk with God, as a forgiving, reconciled Father, is, in some respects, more delightful than if no breach had ever been made: for surely, humility and gratitude are most truly Christian sensations, and the exercise of them will, I doubt not, form one of the most precious enjoyments of heaven and immortality."

It is needless to say, that the above extracts give but a very meagre idea of the admirable and affecting discourse from which they are taken. The same, however, might be said, and said with a considerable measure of truth, if the discourse were given entire: for all who have heard Dean Milner speak from the pulpit, will agree, that to communicate anything like an adequate conception of the impressive dignity of his manner, or of the effect which his sermons produced, would be a vain attempt. His deep conviction of the infinite importance of the

subjects which, as a preacher, he had to handle, gave to his addresses from the pulpit a force and a reality, which, under other circumstances, compositions incomparably more regular and polished, must have failed to possess. In short, the secret of his eloquence, or rather of the impression which he made upon his hearers, lay, if the expression may be permitted, in the intensity of his sincerity.

Having been induced, as has been already intimated, to accompany Mr. Wilberforce on his return from Hull to Buxton, Dean Milner, with his friend, generally dined at the public table, in company with Lord Erskine, Miss Seward, and a crowd of visitors.

Of this joint visit to Buxton, Mr. Wilberforce's Diary affords the following characteristic notices.

“ Heard Miss Seward repeat and read Cornaro. * * * * Erskine much with her—his free conversation with Milner about religion.”

“ Miss Seward went on Friday. Erskine, Milner, and I, too much with her, flattering her, &c.”

“ Our friend the Dean is tolerable, and much amused, and not a little amusing.”

During this visit to Buxton, the Dean preached at least once, and that with an earnestness and solemnity which rendered his discourse exceedingly striking to the gay congregation whom he addressed.

The Christmas of this year was passed by Dr. Milner, at that time in very indifferent health, at Hull. In a letter to Mr. Wilberforce, dated “ Christmas morning,” he enters, after the discussion of much other matter, upon a subject which, even between friends as intimate as were these attached correspondents, must have been felt to be one of some delicacy; but of which the mention may here be properly introduced as affording an illustration of Dean Milner's simple and affectionate character.

Mr. Wilberforce, habituated from his youth to the most unrestrained intimacy with Dr. Milner, had communicated his wish to have a general invitation or licence to take up his abode in Queen's Lodge for any length of time, whenever it might be

agreeable to him to do so, without notice, or previous arrangement; and this, either in the presence or the absence of the President; nor was there, in this proposal, anything which, under different circumstances, would have been otherwise than agreeable to his friend. As it was, however, Dr. Milner hesitated to enter into such an agreement; and with the perfect sincerity which always marked his character, yet with the utmost kindness and consideration, he states to Mr. Wilberforce his feelings upon the occasion.

It will be readily supposed, that the precarious state of Dr. Milner's health formed one chief ground of objection to his friend's proposal; but, besides this, there existed *College reasons* of great cogency, which militated against Mr. Wilberforce's plan. Without, however, entering more minutely into these circumstances, it may be allowable to quote from Dean Milner's letter one characteristic passage. "You and I," he writes, "if in the same house at Cambridge, should reciprocally thwart each other's way of going on. The fact is we have too many common acquaintance." * * * * "I can bear so little; and I should for ever be attempting to bear something; and after all, I should be reckoned queerer and queerer; my health would soon be broken down, and my little arrangements for doing what good I can in college, defeated.

"We are alike in many respects; but your hours and capabilities differ much from mine.

"If it were necessary to add anything more to make you understand my feelings on such an occasion, I would say, that there is no man's house in the world, I like to be in, so much as yours; nor would I voluntarily come up at all to London, but to you. Yet, even in your house, I am often forced to be with fellows for hours more than I like; often meet foul fellows in the breakfast room, whom I wish gone; and then I keep up a deceitful sort of mock character.

"Retire to your bedroom,' you say; that is not pleasant; it is a sort of succedaneum: one's things are not about one there; and one is not well waited on there.

"My good friend, I hope you will not judge harshly of me—my heart is full; and tears run down my cheeks while I am

indeed to state these facts. In some points of view, there is no man on earth who has fewer wants than myself—in others, I own, I am all caprice, &c. You don't half know me yet.

“It has long been my opinion, that with a little management and previous arrangement and foresight, you might spend at Cambridge a good deal of time with comfort and advantage to both of us. But if so, a new leaf must be turned over.

“*A priori*, one would have thought, that with the data we had at Buxton, we might have gone on without encroachment on each other's retirements, comfortably and usefully. I think we did not do so well as we might have done; and God knows, I take upon me my share of the mismanagement.”

Here follows, in the shape of a very lively account of some college disputes, and of the writer's position as president, one of those abrupt transitions from “grave to gay,” which, not unfrequently, occur in Dr. Milner's confidential letters.

There was certainly little danger, that the truly friendly communication from which the foregoing extract is taken, could be misunderstood by him to whom it was addressed. On the contrary, the increasingly tender nature of the regard which subsisted between these excellent friends is, perhaps, even more strikingly manifested in their subsequent correspondence. Early in the succeeding January, the Dean thus wrote, to Mr. Wilberforce, at Bath.

“I pray God, my dear Sir, to bless you, and to make this journey useful to you.

“It is impossible for me not to perceive, and in several of your late letters particularly, a most tender regard to my feelings, and a solicitude and anxiety to administer comfort to my whimsical and unreasonable frame. Sincerity constrains me to say, that your endeavours have not always the effect you intend them to have; for though they make me love you better, and make me grateful, in a degree, they also tend to mortify me; besides, I cannot read these letters without weeping; I wish you would not be so anxious about hurting me—you are afraid of dropping the slightest word—such an extreme anxiety, I say, neither becomes you nor me; for I trust we

shall never misconstrue one another's real meaning—I am sure, I see yours, and, as I have said, that consideration makes me love you better.

“I will briefly mention a material thing, which I am afraid may make it improper for me to be absent from Queen's, (at least farther than London,) for some weeks to come.

“—— —'s brother, (Dr. ——,) who is now talked of for the next bishop, is printing his Lectures on Divinity, at the university press, and with our sanction. In these lectures he advances a most extraordinary and * * * * * opinion, that articles of religion, are to be considered as articles of union not of faith; and in short, that a person may subscribe anything: I really think, that I do not misrepresent. Dr. Jowett, myself, and others, have inadvertently countenanced the publication, not knowing how much he has laboured this point. There are likely to be some very serious meetings of syndics on this subject.

“Yours, very affectionately,

I. M.

“*To William Wilberforce, Esq.*”

Within a short period from the date of the preceding letter, Dr. Milner was invited by his friend to join him at Bath. This invitation was at first declined. “What a sad way,” writes the Dean, “are you going on in, calling on this gang of acquaintance! I'll warrant you, I should have a sweet time among such fellows.” Another letter from Cambridge is much more serious in its tone: “I am very sure that it is good for me to have been afflicted. I say this with some thankfulness, but with tears of regret. It is very true; I am very sure of it; but it is a sad thing that less will not do.

“I shall, probably, be here for some months. I have no particular pressure of business; I am nursing myself quietly, and endeavouring to profit by retirement: if I don't profit then, I never do. For anything I know, I shall be quite alone till the latter end of March, or perhaps longer; in fact, till towards Easter, when Carlyle will come to his residence as Arabic Professor; so if you can come here now, or by and by, I can receive you with comfort.

“That most unpleasant affair about Dr. ———’s book is not yet settled.

“I have had an affecting letter this post from poor T. Willis, who has been, and is, very poorly, but not in his old way.

“There is but one sort of true wisdom!

“Always yours affectionately,

“ISAAC MILNER.

“*To William Wilberforce, Esq.*”

One other passage may be quoted from a letter to the same friend, dated “February 23, 1797,” and written under a severe attack of “those terrible head-aches,” with which Dr. Milner was at this period of his life frequently afflicted.

“God knows,” he writes, “whether I am to have any more intervals of tolerable health; but you will judge of my state, when I tell you, that last Monday I had most seriously, as nearly as possible, determined to leave all here, and go and wait God’s will near my friends at Hull.

“I wish I could but keep my trust in Him without wavering. Oh! a great deal passes my mind! but you will excuse my writing more at present.

“Surely I should be glad to see you; but at present I am too ill to enjoy your company.

“Yours, with the best and most affectionate wishes,

“I. M.”

It is surely impossible to read the story of Dr. Milner’s life, illustrated as it is by his confidential letters, without perceiving a progressive improvement in his religious character. It is true, indeed, that even in early life, his views of revealed truth were theoretically correct; but the man who, notwithstanding the soundness of his religious opinions, had in his youth seemed to desire and value, above all other objects, literary attainments with the honourable distinction which they confer, has, in his maturer age, evidently learned “to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.”

Early in this year appeared the third volume of Joseph

Milner's *History of the Church of Christ*, the last volume which he lived to publish.

This volume, which contains the history of the Christian Church from the end of the fifth, to the beginning of the fourteenth century,—a period which, though occasionally illumined by bright beams of light, has justly obtained the appellation of “the dark ages,”—illustrates and justifies a remark of Dean Milner respecting his brother's *Church History*.

“Mr. Milner,” says the Dean*, “is constantly in quest of the true followers of Jesus Christ; he is, on all occasions, delighted to find them, whether they be in caves or monasteries, in the papal, or in any other communion; in great cities, or in the valleys of Piedmont; in established churches, or in dissenting congregations. With him the character is decided, whenever it appears that the conduct is practically influenced by the essentials of Christianity; and, hence, he is often induced to make candid and large allowances for trying circumstances and seasons of darkness, corruption, and prejudice.”

This volume, as was that which preceded it, was read over in manuscript by Dean Milner, in company with his brother.

On the 15th of April in this year, Dr. Milner, in a letter to Mr. Wilberforce, thus briefly alludes to the *Practical View of Christianity* then recently published by his friend.

“I thank you for your books. I have sent them according to the directions: and I find already that I shall have plenty of *discuss* about the contents. My report, however, must be deferred till I see you, and am able to converse fully on the subject, if it please God ever so much to recruit my strength.”

Although Dr. Milner had at first declined Mr. Wilberforce's invitation to join him at Bath, he was not proof against the solicitations addressed to him, when he became aware that those solicitations had a particular object.

At Bath, during this season, Mr. Wilberforce, to use the words of his sons, “had formed the acquaintance of one whom

* See *Animadversions on Dr. Hæwicis*.

he judged well-fitted to be his companion through life, and towards whom he contracted a strong attachment;" and he was very naturally desirous that Dr. Milner, one of his oldest and most tried friends, should see the lady who had gained his affection.

Advice, asked under similar circumstances, is proverbially useless; and, with regard to the present case, it is more than needless to say, that the opinions of the most anxious friends of Mr. Wilberforce must have concurred with his own. Had it, however, been otherwise, certain symptoms which struck the keen eye of Dr. Milner, on his joining the circle at Bath, and to which he often jocularly alluded, when referring in later life to this visit, convinced him, that counsel, in this particular case, would have come too late.

Mr. Wilberforce's marriage, which took place in May, 1797, is alluded to in a letter written by Dean Milner upon a subject to which the occurrences of late years have given additional interest. The practical good sense which this letter exhibits, as brought to bear upon a difficult question, will be recognised by most persons who knew the writer, as exceedingly characteristic.

"TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Hull, June 7th, 1797.

"I arrived here on Saturday last, which day was as much like a winter's day as could be, both in boisterous wind and cold rain. Remember me always affectionately to your *better half*, and explain to her, at proper times, the *oddities* of your old, but sincere friend; otherwise, I fear, her favourable disposition towards me will weaken, not strengthen. My earnest prayer is that this change in both your situations may be for your mutual good.

"Nothing can be more awful than public affairs. If I were Pitt, or the King, I would come down to the House, and first beseech unanimity; secondly, desire that all hands would unite in *saving* the nation—viz., in getting out of the scrape—before they thought of *reforming* it.

"Thirdly, I would solemnly promise to take the sense of

the nation at large on the subject of reform, as soon as all was safe. For, I say this, if the bulk of persons of property be for reform, then reform cannot be stopped. I don't think they are, or will be; therefore I would number the whole nation, which might be easily done. Thus I would find out whether the bulk of property, of housekeepers, &c., really desired reform, or were content with the present constitution. I am convinced that such a proceeding would either set the question at rest, or would put it upon a different footing from the present; *e. g.*, if it turned out that property were against reform, then it would be nearly reduced to this—Shall we have *Universal Suffrage*? Let the real sense of the nation be found, and the lists printed; and let the different ways of conceiving this matter be stated, and let the people be classed.

“OBJECTION.—There will be a great number of hypocrites who will *pretend* a moderate reform, and *mean* more.

“ANSWER.—I think the question might be so stated as to show what was the number of such sort of people. In short I think it would be a great thing to find out the real sense of the people, if you were a year or two about it. Then, I further think, that if government, in that period, would employ good hands to state, *ad populum*, briefly the dangers of too popular a reform, they would strengthen themselves most amazingly.

“I believe the above is the true way to get out of all difficulties; to disconcert rascals, and to unite honest men. Oh, how I wish they would take such a step! I also wish that a very respectable commission would go down to these sailors.

“Yours, in fear and anxiety,

“ISAAC MILNER.”

A letter dated “Carlisle, July 4th,” and apparently written during this year, contains a notice of Mr. Tillotson, who, as it has been already intimated, lived during his old age with Dr. Milner.

In reference to this gentleman, an intimate and still living friend of Dean Milner thus writes:—“I have always understood that the origin of your uncle's connection with Mr. Tillotson was, that Mr. Tillotson had been assistant to him, or to his

brother Joseph, in the early part of their lives; and that this was returned by your uncle when he had an opportunity to offer the old gentleman a residence and a retreat from business, which were, both of them, very agreeable. You are aware, I dare say, that your uncle and his brother Joseph forced their way through great difficulties in early life.

“I have heard that the first time the Dean arrived at Cambridge he and his brother Joseph walked up from Leeds, with occasional lifts in a waggon; and I believe it came from the Dean himself.

“In these times I surmise it was that Mr. Tillotson was in some way or other assisting; but further I never knew.”

“The friendly offices,” writes the Dean, “which I have received from this good man during my long illness, are innumerable.”

It seemed due to the memory of the “good man,” who passed a quiet and happy old age in the home which Dr. Milner’s gratitude afforded to him, to quote this passage; and it may be added, that never did grateful deed meet with a more abundant return, than did the hospitality of Dr. Milner to Mr. Tillotson. The old man, who had but few relatives, and those estranged from him by untoward circumstances, seemed to concentrate the whole force of his affections upon his benefactor; and it is needless to say that this temper of mind secured his own happiness. The adage that charity is twice blessed, it “blesses him who gives, and him who receives,” was never more fully justified.

CHAPTER IX.

Joseph Milner visits his Brother at Carlisle.—Appointment of Joseph Milner to the Vicarage of Hull.—His Letters.—Religious condition of Carlisle in 1797.—Feelings of Joseph Milner on his promotion to the Vicarage.—Correspondence of Dr. Milner.—Rev. Mr. Thomason.—Declining health of Joseph Milner.—Dr. Milner's opinion concerning Private Tutors.—Important change of Character.—Joseph Milner's last Illness.—His Letters to his Brother and to Mr. Stillingfleet.—His opinion of Dr. Johnson.—Great change which had taken place in his Religious Sentiments.—His Death.—Monumental Inscription.—Extracts from Correspondence of Dr. Milner.—Opium.—Letter to Rev. William Richardson.—Joseph Milner's Style.—Publication of his Sermons.—Letters.—To Mrs. Carlyle.—To Mr. Wilberforce.—Affairs of Trinity College.—Importance of the expulsion of Mr. Frend.—Disturbed State of Ireland.—Duel between Mr. Pitt and Mr. Tierney.—Variety of Dr. Milner's Information.—Mendoza.—Irish Affairs.—The Bishop of Down.

A.D. 1797. ÆTAT. 47.

DURING a part of the summer of this year, Joseph Milner visited his brother the Dean, at Carlisle. The following letter, written in the month of July, just four months previous to the writer's decease, is interesting both as exhibiting the state of his own mind, and as depicting the spiritual condition of the city of Carlisle at that period.

TO THE REV. JAMES STILLINGFLEET.

“DEAR STILL.,

“*Carlisle, July 14, 1797.*

“I was glad and thankful to hear from you at this distance. I live, indeed, in the midst of plenty, and my health is full as good as it has been for some time. But—yes, there is always a ‘but’ in this world—and if it were not so, things would be still worse with us; O wretched man that I am! I feel this most sensibly, when everything external is smooth and agreeable. The soul cannot feed on worldly and sensual objects; and what you say of the leanness of soul, in such scenes, is true in regard to me, as well as you; and difficult it is to keep up the disposition to prayer and spiritual-mindedness among such obstructions as I am now in the midst of. Nor have I any-

thing like the power to preach, &c., here, as you suppose. The dignitaries have their turns in the Cathedral, so that I have not the opportunity of preaching Sunday after Sunday. I have, indeed, been twice in the pulpit; once at the Cathedral, the other time, at St. Cuthbert's. But I don't expect to preach any more here. I hope my brother (who remembers you with affection,) will preach, Sunday after next, himself; the next Sunday, the Bishop preaches. Still it is here, as elsewhere; the few I can converse with, on divine things, are the women. My situation connects me only with the genteel ones of this place, and of them, there are a small number of women, who really seem to have a keen appetite, and would thankfully feed upon the coarsest viands which are trampled under foot by the fastidious ones in Hull. But our sex seem, in this age, I mean *gentlemen*, to have no relish for Jesus. I except old Mr. Fawcett, our Fawcett's uncle and father-in-law, who, I am glad to find, in his old age, seems to be sitting at the feet of Jesus, and hearing his word. Our Fawcett remembers you gratefully, and will write to you shortly." * * * * * "He preaches, occasionally, and has just got a quarter of a year's preaching at a church, which he gladly embraces.

"The people here, the aborigines, are a well-behaved, simple people; the refinement, shall I say, or the lewdness and impudence, of the southern part of our island, they know not. They have the sample, I take it, of the manners of the whole country, in the time of James I. But they are withal, very ignorant in religion; they wander as sheep without a shepherd. They seem, however, open to conviction, they have conscience. There are, here, some Methodist and Dissenting interests, but feeble and of little weight, nor is there a dissenter here of any popularity, or, as it should seem, of any religious zeal. What a fine field for a pastor, steady, fervent, intelligent, and charitable! Pray ye to the Lord of the harvest, &c. I inculcate this duty on those I have access to—for it is a pitiable thing to see the ignorance of this place—ignorance, rather than contempt of Divine truth, is its character. The Lord may, in his time, send them such a supply. At present their state is lamentable beyond expression. I am sorry I could not see you at Hull;

give my kind love to Mrs. S. If I live, I shall live to run into more debt to her kindness at Hotham. I am glad you are both well, and Edward, *spes altera Romæ*. Never mind his thinness, if his health be sound. The Misses Waugh I see little of. Remember me, I trust you do, at the throne of grace. May we remember what we have been taught of Jesus, and never let it go! May He keep us, and we shall be kept.

“ Ever yours,

“ J. MILNER.”

Towards the end of this month the vicarage of the Holy Trinity Church, in Hull, became vacant by the death of Dr. Clarke. To this important vicarage Joseph Milner was appointed, on the 22nd of August, by the mayor and corporation of the town. “ His own feelings, upon this preferment,” says his brother, the Dean, “ were thus expressed to his friends, in conversation, or by letter. ‘ I know not whether, on this change, I ought more to rejoice or to fear. In regard to the people, I have long had every opportunity I could wish of doing them good, through the means of Gospel instruction; and I am not sure that my new situation will be favourable to the better removing of their prejudices, or to my own living more closely with Christ. An increase of income has no charms for me; and indeed, in one point of view, the living of Hull is much too small for the situation. A minister must be liberal: a vicar is supposed rich, of course; and much is expected from him. The people are often very unreasonable in this matter; nevertheless, their prejudices must be consulted, if we wish to do them good.’ * * * ‘ My apprehensions, also, are not slight, lest by being necessarily drawn into company of a higher description than that to which I have long been accustomed, I may be less faithful than I ought to be, both in words and actions. The grand spiritual enemy is on the watch, and is very dexterous in laying snares.’ * * * ‘ The rules of modern good-breeding strictly forbid one ever to say a plain, disagreeable truth to a man’s face; but they are not so rigidly adhered to among the middling or lower classes of people.’ ”

A letter from Joseph Milner to his excellent friend the

Rector of Hotham, written on the occasion of his appointment to the vicarage of Hull, deserves to be given almost entire.

“TO THE REV. JAMES STILLINGFLEET.

“DEAR STILL.,

“*Hull, August 24th, 1797.*

“I scarce can find time, but I must drop you a line to let you know the success, if you have not heard it already. Tuesday last I was nominated vicar in a full bench. Their number is thirteen. Of these, eleven voted for me. One did not choose to vote, the other voted for my scholar, ———. This last-mentioned alderman was ———; and I am not sorry that it appears on this occasion that he is destitute of influence, for he is the most steady opposer of Gospel truth and holiness perhaps of any man in these parts. Old Mr. Sykes was most friendly. Three other candidates there were, but they had no votes; nor did any candidate appear at the day of election but myself. So evident it was to all men how the thing would turn out. There was such a concurrence of circumstances, and such an overbearing and victorious influence from above, overruling and inclining all persons concerned, that I am constrained to say, It is of the Lord.

“My good friend, I would rejoice with trembling. The same care and fear which I mentioned in my last pervades me. Pray for me. I had little expected this. I had rather wished for a removal elsewhere, but so it is; God hath confined me to this place, and I must say, that by far the majority here are well pleased with it. I shall have on my hands now both vicarage, school, and lectureship, and hospital, till Christmas, or nearly. I must get help as well as I can, for I cannot do without help. Perhaps I may hope for your help when opportunity serves. I shall have an opportunity to give a little pecuniary aid to some poor parsons. The long delay which will take place before the school and lectureship will be filled up, is to give time to get one (they are to go together) whom they like; for it is the design of certain persons to eradicate Methodism from the Church, and that was one reason, I believe, why I was voted for by several; they think me a worn-out man who has very little time to live. So, I find, it is commonly thought

among them. In truth I am feeble, but I admire the goodness of God, in that my voice, my ears, my eyes, and my memory, are spared, though in everything belonging to bodily strength I am very feeble. So I seem to have just what may suffice for preaching, writing, reading, &c., and no other powers. Oh! that this heart felt more vigorously and warmly the love of Jesus, who has done so much for me! What am I and what is my my father's house, that thou hast brought me hitherto! Thou hast been with me from my youth, forsake me not when I am old and grey-headed! You, my dear friend, are going down the hill as well as I, but your strength is green. May you bring forth more fruit in age, for you have a liveliness of constitution vastly more than I. The chief thing is, that we may grow in grace and spirituality, and give up our ministry and finish our course with joy. May the Divine Saviour help us in our besetting evils, that they overpower us not in the decline of life. Despair not of Hotham, &c. Have an eye to the rising generation. You have had comfort among them formerly, and may again. My love to Mrs. Still. The grace of Jesus be with both, and also with your Edward.

“Yours always,

“JOSEPH MILNER.”

Such were the feelings with which this good man entered upon the preferment which he lived to hold not quite three months.

The prevailing tone of Dr. Milner's mind at this period is, likewise, best exhibited by his own letters.

To Mr. Wilberforce who, with his bride had just left Hull, the Dean wrote as follows:

“MY DEAR SIR,

“*Hull, August 30th.*

“I will attend to your note. God preserve you both. I fear it is hardly in human nature for you to continue very long so happy as you are at present. ‘Why not?’ says B*. Really I hardly know, and I will not be so ill-natured as to set about inventing and summing up cross-grained probabilities when Providence smiles on you so graciously.”

* Barbara—Mrs. Wilberforce.

Early in the month of October, 1797, Dr. Milner thus again wrote to Mr. Wilberforce, at that time at Bath.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“*Hull, Monday morning.*

“Your letter finds me this morning (as you have seen me not unfrequently,) laid at length on a sofa, in considerable pain of the head.” * * * “I am reviving a little. There is really nothing of which I can speak positively with more certainty than of the utility which is connected with these repeated chastenings. It is a sad thing that they should be so necessary; but I bless God, that they do not harden, as I should have supposed that in time they would, but on the contrary, soften my heart, and make it more submissive to His will, who knows what is best for us.

“Your dear mother is, I doubt not, under the teaching of the Spirit of God, and will improve by her afflictions: and it is very evident to me, that in her case also afflictions are necessary. When she is better for a few days together, I see a strong tendency to relapse and lose ground in spiritual matters; and, so far as that goes, it is a bad sign both in her and myself. It is a bad sign when religious frames depend upon the pulse, yet it is a good sign when the effect of sufferings is to give us a clearer insight into our own character and the character of God; for it is in that way only that we can come to understand our real situation, that is, the relation in which we stand to an offended God. An inch gained in this way is inestimable, because it is certainly in the right road.

“I see your mother every day except Sundays, and, on the whole, with much satisfaction; but I do yet expect *a brightening up*.

“I think I have anticipated much of what you would feel on account of poor Eliot’s death. Alas! poor H. Broadley—the picture of health, and the object of my envy, in that respect, twenty years ago!

“Well, our business is to wait God’s time, and to mind and employ the present moment well. God bless you both.

“Mr. Recorder Osbourne called on me last Saturday, to ask

me seriously about Thomason*, professing himself to go on broad principles of utility. I said everything I could for Thomason, by declaring that I took him for a Fellow and Tutor of Queen's, as the best to be found; but I added, that I had never heard him preach, and knew nothing of his voice. We had hoped that all would have gone smooth, but there has just arisen an opponent that seems to have made great impressions indeed by his testimonials. An Eton scholar he is said to be, and of Oxford, and has been a school-teacher already six or seven years at Lichfield. He is strongly recommended by the Bishop of London's letters. Osbourne said, he would write to Gisborne, at Lichfield, to request his opinion. I need say no more. Neither you nor I wish for the man who is not the best; but I observe, that a man with some learning may possibly be very mischievous in the pulpit, though a tolerable classical scholar, and not the less so for that. Further, Eton school, Oxford, the Bishop of London, and such like, are all equivocal, and I wish I could add, that your friend G—— was decisive in the main points.

“Your most affectionate, I. M.

“*To Wm. Wilberforce, Esq.*”

The health of Joseph Milner was now evidently giving way, yet not to such a degree as to excite in the minds of his friends any apprehension of immediate danger. Towards the end of this month his brother thus wrote to Mr. Wilberforce:

“MY DEAR SIR,

“*Hull, October 23rd, 1797.*

“My brother's asthma is but bad. I thought I should have had a very bad account indeed to give of him. He keeps the house, and is, I hope, something better. I cannot persuade him to take sufficient care of himself.”

The same letter contains some remarks on colleges and tutors well worth preserving.

“In regard to your youth, whom you purpose to send to

* A candidate for the situations of Schoolmaster and Lecturer at High Church, Hull, resigned by Joseph Milner.

the University, I have little new to say: you know my ideas, and have often heard me express them.

“There is not, in my opinion, much difference in the colleges, simply *quoad* college.

“I am not fond of private tutors, as a general system, but, as circumstances are at present, if a good private tutor can be provided, who will live a good deal with the young man, and watch him, I think *that* the likeliest method of insuring success; that is, freedom from the corruption of numbers of youths let loose. But then again, I observe, that if you send a lad to any college, and write to his public tutor, requesting a good private tutor, the object often is, rather to gratify some poor Bachelor of Arts than anything else. In regard to the public tutors of — — I really have no opinion of their care in morals, &c., at all. James W. is a modest, engaging, civil man, but without energy, and without principles, in your and my sense.

“With us, Queen’s, I know but of one man I could trust a youth to, that is, Thomason; and to him I have recommended a fellow-commoner this October as a private pupil. Thomason, to be sure, may succeed here, at Hull, next December; and if so, all is abroad.

“This is all I have to add on the subject, except that, on supposition this matter is open next January, I will, if you desire it, look about, and do the best I can.

“I am now looking about for the very best man I can find, as a public tutor for us, at Queen’s.

“I think of you both with unremitting prayers and affection.

“Yours, I. M.”

A great change had now for years been silently and gradually passing upon the character of Dr. Milner. He was no longer ambitious: he had learned to acquiesce cordially in the actual dispensations of Providence. An evidence of the truth of what is here affirmed may be found in the increasing interest which, in the succeeding years of his life, he manifestly took in the performance of his duties as Dean of Carlisle; and, although the prospects which subsequent occurrences, on more than one

occasion, opened to his view were such as might well have afforded food for ambition, that passion never regained its hold upon his mind. This was a natural consequence of his advancement in the Christian character; but had the fact been otherwise, a calamity was at hand which was calculated effectually to wean his affections from earthly objects.

The time was now approaching when the close union and most tender affection which, from childhood, had subsisted between Dr. Milner and his elder brother, was to be interrupted by death.

Mr. Milner's last illness is ascribed by his friend Mr. Stillingfleet, who compiled a Memoir of his life, to a cold, caught on his journey to York for institution to his vicarage, in the latter end of September, 1797.

During this illness of his brother, Dr. Milner, in a state of very great affliction and agitation of mind, wrote to Mr. Wilberforce a hurried letter, dated, "Hull, Tuesday, 1797."

From this letter the following passages are extracted:—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I know you profess never to be much moved at any event; still, I believe, if you had been with me for the last fortnight, your compassionate heart would have been deeply affected.

"I must be very short; I am not able to write. A considerable fever, with an increase of asthma, has come upon my poor brother, and brought him to the very gates of death. He still remains in a most critical situation; I very much doubt whether he will recover. This is not fear, but reality.

"My constant and persevering prayer has been for resignation and support,—but, alas! alas! I can just say from experience, 'the Lord knows how to be gracious, if we could but trust Him,' and no more. Oh! my dear friend, there is a something on this occasion crowds upon my mind, so thick and so close, that I should have been overwhelmed but for God's especial mercy. A deal of this is bodily; I am weak, nervous, and worn-out. 'Multis vulneribus oppressus, huic uni me imparem sensi.' Then from a very child I have lived with this only brother; he has been kind to me beyond description, and

a faithful adviser in illness on a thousand occasions. Lastly, no man's affections were, perhaps, ever so little divided by a variety of friendships as mine. For years past, I have said ten thousand times, that I would exhort a youth whom I wished to be happy in this world, to know *more* people and to love them *less*. Yet God does not absolutely give me up to grief.

“ Farewell, and remember me most affectionately to Mrs. W. who will drop a tear.

“ N.B. My brother's mind is so happy, that it can hardly be in a more desirable state. ‘The promises are sure.’ Yesterday I was told that he has had your book in his hands for several days, and that he likes it better and better; and says he should have written to you. When I talked to him last, I could get nothing from him but ‘Let not your heart be troubled,’ &c., &c.

“ I am very unfit to write, but duty presses me to say briefly, that the election of a school-master and lecturer will take place on the 5th of December.

“ It will be a sad thing if High Church be deprived of both its pastors, morning and afternoon. I am utterly unable to see any one, or take any further steps; indeed, I believe I have done what I can for Thomason.

“ Yours affectionately, I. M.”

The closing scenes of Joseph Milner's life are thus described by Mr. Stillingfleet:—

“ The fever being removed, there were hopes of his recovery, till within a very few days of his death.” * * “ On the day preceding his death, he went through the duties of his family in a very serious and particular manner, intimating, as some concluded from expressions which he used, that his end was probably not far off. Having ended his family worship, he went to the chamber of his niece*, with whom he lived, and who had lain in only a few days; and after praying with her, and wishing her a good night, retired to his room. At first, he seemed to sleep tolerably easy; but after some time, one of

* The wife of Thomas Wilberforce Crompton, Esq.

the persons who sat up with him perceived that he was seized with a hiccup, and that he breathed with some difficulty. Soon after the attendants, finding all remarkably still, and being rather alarmed, drew near to the bed-side, and found that he had indeed breathed his last.”

In the interval between the fever here spoken of, and Mr. Milner's death, he wrote the following letters:—

“ DEAREST ISAAC*,

* * * “ In truth, it is quite a merciful state that things are in. I breathe vastly well; asthma seems to have no existence. I have been refreshed with sleep, and am quite a different thing from other mornings. Surely the fever is much abated; I am not so languid; in short, I am in a more natural state than since it commenced. I am going to get my common milk diet, and feel the right appetite. Let us be thankful to God, and not be moved because everything is not as we could wish. I recommend you to the Friend of sinners, to study and meditate upon His character, doctrine, example: this is happiness.

“ Yours always,

J. M.”

The letter next following was written by Mr. Milner, in answer to his brother, who, not being able to support an interview with him, had in writing “ besought ” him to teach him, “ as his last kindness, some lessons of resignation,—a Christian grace in which he found himself miserably deficient.”

“ DEAR BROTHER,

“ November, 1797.

“ Resignation to the Divine will is one of the last and highest attainments of the Christian life; it is what is ultimately to be aimed at, as essential to comfort here and happiness hereafter. But it seems not by any means to be the first object of one who is desirous of becoming a Christian, nor even attainable, except some other necessary things are pre-

* The first sentence of this letter has reference to *his brother's* state of health.

viously acquired. For me to have my will in unison with the will of God, I must, in the first place, trust Him thoroughly; and love Him supremely; for it is impossible for me freely to give up my will to another entirely, while we are on bad terms; that is, so long as I cannot trust him, and so long as I hate him; or what, in this case, comes to the same thing, love any person or thing better than him. The conclusion is, all attempts at resignation will be vain, without conversion and reconciliation with God.

“When we are convinced of the sinfulness and misery of our natural state, it is a high point of wisdom to seek, by prayer and diligent searching of the Scriptures, that only right and effectual method of relief which God has provided. ‘Repent and believe the Gospel,’ is the first thing. We should not stir from this direction, till we have some good ground of evidence, that we do repent and believe. Alas! our guilt and wickedness are much deeper and larger than we are apt to suspect; and our pride fights, with inexpressible obstinacy, against all just conviction. But let us not be discouraged: things impossible with men, are possible with God. Let us pray, not now and then only, but constantly. Life is short; we have no other business that ought to interfere with this. It should be the perpetual, as it is the most important employment of the soul. The Scriptures daily meditated on, will supply us with instruction; and if we persevere, our business in religion will doubtless be made, in time, our chief pleasure. A thorough insight into human emptiness and worldly vanity, a complete conviction of the evil of sin, even in our own particular case, and a desire to forsake it altogether, a solid discernment of the complete sufficiency of Christ to save us in all respects—these things, in daily seeking unto God, are to be attained. We are not so ready to pray as God is to hear. He delights to magnify his Son Jesus, and to show what He can and will do for us through Him. He calls us to nothing in our own strength; and as we cannot have, so we need not think of having, any worthiness of our own. We may come and take freely, what He freely bestows—and, my dear brother, when once, in this way, you can steadfastly rely on the Divine

promises through Christ, so sure as 'faith worketh by love,' you will find yourself enabled to love God; and it is in Christ Jesus that his love will be seen. A union and fellowship with Christ will take place; and it is the sweetest and the pleasantest sensation which the human mind can know. Though the effervescence of it be but short and momentary, and by very transient glances, yet its steady energy is real and powerful. For to encourage us, we should remember the interest we have in Him by the ties of a common nature. The second and fourth chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews represent this point strongly. You may think I deviate from the subject of Resignation, but I know no other way of coming to it. Once brought to love Christ above all, we shall love other persons in the best manner, in subordination. Even to part with dearest friends will be practicable, because (1 Thess. iv. 14) 'if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.' When we can feel any genuine love to God in Christ, we shall be led to such an acquiescence in his wisdom and goodness, that we shall choose his will to take place, rather than ours; and the thought how soon all things shall be set right in a future life, and that He makes all things to work together for good, will reconcile the mind to anything that God pleases. And though the dissolution of soul and body be always a serious thing, and against the feelings of nature, yet a mind whose hope and desire are with Jesus, and which has a constant thirst for spiritual enjoyments as true felicity, and which is loosened from all worldly attachments, must, ON THE WHOLE, wish for death rather than life, as we all wish most, for that which has most of our heart: but the love of God will teach such a one to resign himself, as to the time, to his heavenly Father's will. You will not mistake me, I hope, as if I supposed that all true Christians have learnt all this completely: far from it. But these things are learnt by them in a measure; but not without much conflict, opposition from sinful nature all along, and much imperfection. And though it is not easy to confine by rules the order of the Spirit's operations, yet this seems the general order of Christian virtues, viz., repentance, faith, love, resignation.

“In Christ himself resignation was perfect; ‘Not my will but thine be done;’ and as far as we can trust in Him for grace, so far we may receive grace out of his fulness. Among mere men, St. Paul seems the completest pattern of resignation. What a tremendous view is that of his sufferings in the latter part of 2 Cor. xi ! But how practicable did the love of God make everything to him ! In Philippians iv., 11, 12, 13, he tells us that he had learned to be content in any state, and that he could do all things through Christ which strengthened him; and the original word for ‘had learned’ *μεμνημαι*, alluding to the Pagan mysteries, shows that the learning was of a mysterious nature.

“Dear brother, I write in the fulness of affection, wishing you to make it your main business to learn these things. I am far from thinking that your long course of afflictions has been against your acquiring them. Oh ! let us beg for patience to lie as clay in the hands of His infinite wisdom, who knows how to humble our pride, and to break our wills, and to form us to a conformity to Himself ! And may you be helped to a steady course of praying, and of seeking God, with a willingness to give up all for Christ !

“I have been looking at Dr. Johnson’s* *Life*. The man was unfaithful to his convictions, for the most part of his life at least. Had he been humbled before God, he would have been despised in the world, but would have been comfortable in his own soul. May Christ Jesus visit you, and lead you, dear brother, to true rest.

“Yours, J. M.”

If the following extract from a letter written by Joseph Milner to Mr. Stillingfleet, and docketed “the last letter he ever wrote,” be thought to discover some confusion of intellect, it will, nevertheless, by all who loved the writer, or who revere

* This name is now supplied from the manuscript letter. Dr. Milner, who has inserted this letter in his *Life of his Brother*, has thought proper to omit Dr. Johnson’s name; but there seems now no reason to suppress Joseph Milner’s opinion of the religious character of that eminent man.

his memory, be read with interest, as affording satisfactory evidence of a heart at peace with God.

“I dare say, dear sir, you have no conception how decayed I am. I feel listless, hopeless, sluggish, no heart to stir about at all. Indeed, when I can really stir, which is but little, I am soon jaded; for the loaded vapours make it bad breathing, and that is a trouble by night and by day. If it please God that still any part of the *igneus vigor* should remain a little longer in me, let me beg you to pray to Him to quicken me and overcome my languor. He has dealt marvellously with me of late. I have had a wonderfully instructive dream about Hull. * * * Let us trust, be patient, love our Saviour, and wait for his second coming. May I learn obedience by the things which I have suffered. My kind love to Mrs. Still., who, if I get a little recovery of strength, may seem shortly likely to see me. I beg your love; after the flesh it is sweet, but after the spirit it is sweeter still, and far better.

“But I am knocked up with fatigue.

“Yours always,

“*To the Rev. J. Stillingsfleet.*”

“JOSEPH MILNER.”

It is needless, and might, in this place, be deemed improper, to enter into any detail of the character and history of Joseph Milner. It may suffice to observe, in general, that he had effectually lived down the opposition which, during one part of his ministry at Hull, had raged against him.

Those persons who are anxious to understand that great change in Mr. Milner's religious sentiments, that “revolution” which, notwithstanding that his moral character had hitherto been “without spot,” that he had been “regular, temperate, and decorous, in his external conduct, orthodox in his religion, and loyal in his political sentiments,” was nevertheless so decisive and complete, that, “from about the year 1770, to the day of his death, he became, entirely and sensibly, a different man from what he had been before; and in public and in private,

* See *Life of the Rev. Joseph Milner.*

and in every part of his conduct, illustrated and confirmed, by his personal example, the precepts which he zealously inculcated;" such persons may find full information upon the important subject which occupies their attention, in *The Life of Joseph Milner*, by his brother the Dean; a publication which, besides its rare excellence as a faithful and impartial memoir, and a monument of the most tender, and perhaps almost unexampled fraternal gratitude and affection, exhibits, in the most perspicuous manner, those views of Christian truth which were equally and alike entertained by both these excellent men.

Mr. Milner survived his election to the vicarage of Hull only a few weeks. He died November 15, 1797; and "if lives were to be measured by what men do, rather than by the succession of fleeting moments, his life would be found sufficiently long."

Several gentlemen, who had been pupils of the Rev. Joseph Milner, showed their love and reverence for their instructor by erecting a monument to his memory, in the High Church at Hull.

The following touching and elegant monumental inscription, afterwards discovered to be written by a "clergyman of great erudition, zeal, and piety," the Rev. J. Michell, of King's College, Cambridge, who had not the least personal acquaintance with Mr. Milner, was received by Dr. M. soon after his publication of his brother's life, and may be best inserted under this date. It was inclosed in an anonymous letter containing the following words:—

"The writer of this inscription was warmed by the perusal of Dr. Milner's two performances, *The Life of the Reverend Joseph Milner*, and the Preface to the second volume of the *History of the Church of Christ*, and gave this utterance to his feelings."

SISTE LECTOR
 ET VIRTUTES CHRISTIANAS CONTEMPLARE,
 JOSEPHI MILNER, A.M.
 VIR FUIT INGENIO SINGULARI,
 DOCTRINA, PIETATE, MORUM INNOCENTIA,
 VITÆ SIMPLICITATE, CONTINENTIA, INDUSTRIA
 SPECTATISSIMUS :
 IN DOCENDO, IN CONCIONANDO, IN SACRO OFFICIO
 EXEQUENDO,
 IMPIGER, ATQUE INCORRUPTUS :
 IN RELIGIONE SINE FUCO EXORNANDO, SINE METU
 ASSERENDA,
 SINE AMBAGIBUS DEMONSTRANDA,
 POTENS, LUCULENTUS, INTEGERRIMUS :
 NOVÆ ECCLESIASTICÆ HISTORIÆ SCRIPTOR,
 IN QUA QUANTUM CHRISTI GRATIA
 IN PIORUM ANIMUS DIVINITUS EFFUSA
 CONTRA OMNES ADVERSARIORUM INSIDIAS, IRAS,
 IMPETUS,
 ARROGANTIAM, DOMINATIONEM,
 VICTRIX EVASERIT ET SEMPER EVASURA SIT,
 EX UNDIQUE INVESTIGATIS ANNALUM MONUMENTIS
 CONQUISIVIT, EXPRESSIT, VINDICAVIT.
 EVANGELICI AMORIS, VERITATIS AC FIDEI,
 QUÆ ADEO FORTITER, ADEO FELICITER DEFENDERAT,
 VIVA INDICIA
 EXEMPLO SUO COMPROBAVIT.
 IN MEDIO OPERUM CURSU,
 REBUS ARDUIS OB DEI GLORIAM GERUNDIS
 NEC IMPAREM, NEC DEFATIGATUM,
 NEC SUIS CONFISUM VIRIBUS,
 ABRIPUIT MORS,
 OMNIBUS BONIS PRÆTER SE ACERBISSIMA,
 ANN. DOM. 1797. ÆT. LIHL.
 HANC TABULAM
 IN TANTI VIRI MEMORIAM
 QUEM VIVUM AMORE PLUSQUAM FRATERNŌ DILEXIT,
 QUEM MORTUUM DESIDERIO ET MENTE GRATISSIMA
 PROSEQUITUR,
 PONI CURAVIT
 ISAACUS MILNER,
 FRATER SUPERSTES
 SPE
 CONJUNCTIONIS FUTURE IN CŒLO PER CHRISTUM
 INDIVIDUÆ, SANCTISSIMÆ, BEATISSIMÆ,
 SEMPITERNÆ.

It would be totally vain to attempt to convey an adequate idea of the effect produced upon Dr. Milner's exquisitely affectionate heart, by the death of his brother. The mutual affection of these brothers, united as they were in the bonds of christian, as well as natural friendship, had been, throughout life, unusually tender; and the termination, so far as regards this world, of such a companionship, could not but be exceedingly bitter. There is a sorrow which exhausts, or dissipates itself, in the display of sensibility; but the grief of Isaac Milner for the loss of his brother, was of a deeper and more permanent nature, and may be best expressed in his own simple words: "Perhaps no two brothers were ever more closely bound to each other. Isaac, in particular, remembers no earthly thing, without being able, in some way, to connect it tenderly with his brother Joseph. During all his life, he has constantly aimed at enjoying his company, as much as circumstances permitted. The dissolution of such a connexion could not take place without being severely felt by the survivor. No separation was ever more bitter or afflicting; with a constitution long shattered by disease, he never expects to recover from that wound." Nor did he ever recover. "The world," as he frequently said, "never looked like itself," to him "again."

His feelings upon the occasion of this domestic calamity will, however, still further appear, from some confidential letters referring to his brother's death, and to the composition of the memoir of him, so often cited in this work.

On the very day of his brother's decease, Dr. Milner wrote to Mr. Wilberforce the following most affecting letter:—

“ Wednesday morning, Hull.

“OH! my dearest friend, my beloved brother's last words, or nearly so, were, that 'Jesus was now doubly, doubly precious to him.'

“Christ called him to himself this morning about seven.

“I keep to myself as much as possible, and pray—but, indeed, my dear friend, I fear this may be the last letter you will ever receive from me.

“If the event, which, however, is not worse than the suspense,

should prove too much for my weak frame, and already half-broken heart, remember, there was a corner in that heart preserved to the last for you and your half. Oh! that I had followed his steps; or had now strength, as I have some heart, in the dregs of life to follow them, in warning a thoughtless world!

“I wish tears would come; I should be easier.

“Farewell—I had almost forgotten the principal motive that made me struggle to write at this sad moment; viz., that you may lose no time, if you think you can do anything, towards getting a godly vicar. It will be a sad thing if God should punish a careless town by taking away the gospel from its principal church. I would have exerted myself for Thomason, but I can do little or nothing beyond what I have already done. If you saw me—how thin, and weak, and shattered I am, you would feel for me. Yet—I HAVE A GOOD HOPE*. God does not forsake me. With love to B.,

“Yours,

I. M.”

It is impossible to read this touching letter, without observing the solid evidence which it affords of that piety which was now become a leading characteristic of the writer’s mind. From his youth he had regarded his brother with an intense affection; yet at the sad moment when he communicates to his own dearest friend the death of this brother, the idea uppermost in his mind, is the procuring of “a godly vicar,” for the bereaved town of Hull.

On the 5th of December, 1797, Mr. Wilberforce, with reference to the death of Joseph Milner, thus wrote to Lord Muncaster: “Your sympathetic kindness had too well anticipated Isaac Milner’s feelings. He is the most affectionate of brothers, and the loss has been like tearing off a limb. I hope he will get over it, but it has shaken him sadly.”

Severe affliction has sometimes a tendency to diminish the sympathy of the sufferer with the joys or sorrows of others—to harden, rather than to soften the heart. No such effect, however, was produced upon Dr. Milner. On the contrary, his

* Thrice understroked in the original manuscript.

own deep distress seemed rather to add fervour to his naturally warm affections, and, in an especial manner, to dispose him either to “rejoice” or to “weep” with his friends. His letters, at this period, to Mr. Wilberforce, in whose domestic happiness he sincerely rejoiced, are full of such expressions as “God bless you—may God continue his favours—his uncommon favours—to you both.”

It is very generally known, that Dr. Milner was in the habit of using opium as a medicine. To the use and value of that medicine, in his case, those who knew him intimately can bear testimony. Upon this subject, some misapprehension has existed; it may be sufficient to say, that by Dr. Milner this drug was never, at any period of his life, used otherwise than strictly as a medicine, and by the concurring advice of the first physicians of the day. How effectual it was in enabling him to dedicate to the noblest uses, what he truly called, the “shattered remains” of his health, is known only to the very few persons whose privilege it was to witness his daily habits, and to enjoy his domestic society.

These observations have been suggested by the sight of a letter addressed, about this time, to Mr. Wilberforce, comprising some valuable remarks upon the proper use of the powerful medicine in question; and affording an additional proof of Dean Milner’s ever ready sympathy with the afflictions of his friend, who was himself compelled to make use of opium.

The following letter will, probably, be considered highly valuable, both as exhibiting the reality and depth of Dr. Milner’s piety, together with his fervent and tender affection towards his departed brother, and as throwing light on some other matters which cannot be deemed uninteresting.

“TO THE REV. WILLIAM RICHARDSON*.

“*Cambridge, Queen’s College Lodge,*

“MY DEAR SIR,

February 3, 1798.

“I cannot give any satisfactory reason for it, but so it is, I dread either to see, or to write to, any of my brother’s dear and

* The late Rev. William Richardson of York, one of the most intimate friends of Joseph Milner.

particular friends. Therefore I have written nothing to any of them, except where there was an absolute necessity for so doing. While I remained at Hull, I dreaded the approach of good Stillingfleet; and at last, when I understood he was coming to see me, I summoned courage to tell him, by letter, that I could not venture to admit him—yet, he had written to me the most kind and affectionate letter that ever was penned.

“I say again, I cannot explain the cause of the violent agitation which, I foresee, would take place, on an interview either with you or him; but I feel, that it would be so, certainly: and I know not whether I should survive it. This apprehension is not fancy.

“A sense of suffocation, which is truly most alarming, is, in my case, readily brought on by any violent affection of the spirits. You may well suppose that I have been on my guard, as well as I can—but this severe trial has been too much for me. ‘Tot vulneribus jam percussus, huic uni me imparem sensi et penè succubui.’ Indeed it is of God’s special mercy, that I am alive! But, you will say, does not every man lose near friends and relations?

“Not many in such circumstances. He was the only near relation I had in the world; and I was brought up with him from a child—I remember him as far back as I remember anything, and we went to school together, for many years. Still, I own, there are cases quite as afflictive as this; and probably several without the same mitigating considerations—MITIGATING, do I call it? to be able to say, ‘I have no doubt, whatever, that he is in heaven!’ This is, indeed, a glorious reflection, and it should heal my broken heart. It would, no doubt, if reason had much to do in such a matter; but reason is pushed aside by affection, self-love, and unsubdued passions.

“There is, however, in religion, a reality; I thank God, I can say so, on the best foundation; viz., that in that way, and in no other, I experience some relief. I grasp, therefore, that help, as firmly as I can—but still, dear Sir, my heart is broken! Don’t tell me how much you have felt—I know, and am sure, you have.

“My dear brother requests Mr. Stillingfleet and yourself to

take the trouble to consider what papers, if any, may be proper to be published, and mentions his agreement in sentiment with you two, as among his reasons for making this request. I am very sensible that publication will be a matter requiring much deliberation. The sermons I have sent you are not half of those which he has left.

“ Doubtless his writings are not correct; but I know not whether you may not agree with me in judgment, who am less surprised at finding many defects of that sort, than at finding them so correct as they are, when I consider his numerous avocations, the quantity that he wrote in a little time, and lastly, that he never copied over again anything at all. I know several excellent scholars, who all think, that they never knew any one man, who was so uniformly master of his thoughts as to be at all times able to write so correctly as he did, with so much quickness. The fact is, his mind was always at work, in all possible situations, and overflowed with weighty matter. He was an original thinker; and appears to me always to drive steadily at the point he had in view; and he never took up his pen, without a distinct subject. Some, who were not fond of his sentiments, have represented his matter as frequently indigested; but, in proof, they can only produce faulty expressions; and these are no proof of indigested matter. His expressions were hasty, but his matter was deep and copious, and had cost him a world of thought; he had considered it over and over again. In his compositions I have frequently noticed a considerable obscurity merely from the want of some short explanatory sentences. When these were inserted in their proper places, at the beginning, or towards the end of a subject, or sometimes in the body of a composition, many pages would thus, at once, by such slight insertions, be made right, and become luminous, with very little trouble; which pages, otherwise, appeared almost impenetrable. Such little short sentences as these which I allude to, he often, when he was preaching, felt the want of, at the moment; and he supplied them extempore, and so rendered his addresses perspicuous; and, even, if he had omitted to insert them in the right place, he could still, afterwards, in speaking, supply the defect, though not so neatly;

but, in writing, his mind being ever intent upon the matter, he frequently forgot, that his audience had not digested, and made familiar to their understandings, his argumentations; and so omitted to point out precisely what he was about; when a very short sentence or two, sometimes in the way of hint, or general observation, sometimes in the way of premising, or summing up, would have enabled his hearers, or readers, to go easily and pleasantly along with him, when, otherwise, they had lost the whole clue.

“All this has so much the appearance of apologizing for the defects of my dear brother, that, for fear of being thought very partial to him, I should certainly never have said what I have said so freely, but for two things that occurred to my mind: the first is, I know you loved him so well that, if you be not quite so partial to him as I am, still you will bear with me.

“The second is a curious fact, and I will state it briefly.

“To my knowledge, several persons of the first literary eminence in this country, and of very high rank in other respects, have expressed themselves in the strongest terms of approbation of him as a writer, and in particular of the second and third volumes of his *Ecclesiastical History*,—‘The matter well arranged, the sentiments bold and pertinent, the style nervous, glowing, and perspicuous.’ At the same time they add, that the first volume is much inferior to the other two, and that the author had improved exceedingly as he went on. Now it is true, that I took a good deal of pains with the second and third volumes: the first volume I had never seen, but I have the copy of the second and third volumes by me to prove what I say, when I do assure you, that the corrections are slight, and consist chiefly of such little interpolations as I have been describing to you: they were necessary for elucidation, and yet are by no means numerous. Sometimes a sentence is thrown out as superfluous; very often a worse word is by me introduced instead of the better, merely to avoid a repetition of that word,—a fault of which he was often guilty; and, lastly, the latter part of a sentence is often put first, with no other alteration whatever, and is thus marked in the copy, 2 1, signifying that what stood first must be printed last. These

alterations unquestionably make the book more pleasant to read, and improve the perspicuity; but as to any essential alteration in the style, or any merit on my part, except a little labour, no such things exist; nor did I perceive that he himself had particularly improved. His style had been formed long ago. You know how closely he wrote his copy; and I assure you, the original rough copy was the copy from which we printed. The effect which, as above explained, the insertion of a few very short sentences appears to have had upon the judgment of the public, has surprised me exceedingly. I could not have believed the effect to have been anything like so great,—but so it certainly is; and this is my reason for explaining the matter so fully to you now, though perhaps you yourself may have observed it.

“Here I cannot but lament, that in publishing any of his papers we have irrecoverably lost the assistance of the author. I read the manuscript at first along with him; and when I noticed any obscurity, he could instantly explain what he had intended, and what was the scope of many pages to come; we immediately inserted a line or two, and thus much time was saved. Now, I fear, whether it be in sermons or essays, there may be several blanks of that sort, which it will be very difficult to fill up.

“I beg pardon, dear Sir, for giving you such a deal of trouble. I am sadly fatigued with writing so much; my head aches grievously, and I hardly know what I have written; the whole, however, is directly from the heart, and is accompanied with great agitation and many tears.

“Remember me at the throne of grace, and

“Believe me to be yours most affectionately,

“ISAAC MILNER.”

The manuscript copy of this letter is blotted with tears.

With regard to the improvement in his brother's style, effected by Dr. Milner, his own account is such as might be expected from a tenderly attached and partial relative. It is probable, however, that few persons will participate in the surprise which he expresses at the effect produced by his own

alterations of his brother's manuscripts; since those alterations are exactly such as are required to transform a forcible, but inaccurate and inelegant style, into one remarkable for precision and correctness.

The foregoing letter will leave upon the minds of all who read it, a full conviction of the exquisite sensibility with which Dr. Milner felt the loss of his brother. Such, however, was the elasticity of his mind, that in other letters, written about the same period, his style is cheerful and even sportive.

The following extract is taken from a letter to Mr. Wilberforce, to whom, a few days before, he had addressed a remonstrance on his taking "too little interest in public business, and speaking too little on great questions." It is dated "March 9, 1798."

"I am sorry you have been but indifferent; I can sigh with you. I don't mean always to excuse your writing; but I really can excuse you now and then, if B. will condescend to send me such letters as I received yesterday. Famous verses! spirits light; and very cheerful. Yet, God bless her! I see through all much seriousness. 'We are odd mixtures, Mr. Dean,' she'll say.

"I have just discovered, that my assessed taxes will amount to above 200/. I'll change sides directly, and cry 'No Pitt!'

"The numerous windows in these rambling old buildings are the cause.

"Yours,

I. M."

The following letter, addressed to the aged mother of his friend Mr. Carlyle*, on the occasion of the premature death of her grandson†, and written while the wound which his own heart had received was still fresh, will afford another and a strong evidence of that sensibility to the sorrows of others,

* Chancellor of the diocese of Carlisle, and Professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge.

† George Carlyle, a boy remarkable

for his piety as well as for his extraordinary talents. He died March 10th, 1798, at the age of ten years.

which has already been mentioned as a distinguishing trait in the character of Dean Milner.

“ TO MRS. CARLYLE.

“ DEAR MRS. CARLYLE,

“ The author of that sweet little tract which I sent to the Chancellor the other day took occasion, not a very long while ago, on the meeting and conversation of a few friends, who had not seen one another for some time, to make this observation: ‘ I always notice,’ said he, ‘ that when friends meet together after any considerable absence, and begin to compare notes, there constantly appears to have been one or more of their common acquaintance that have died during the interval.’ I replied, ‘ It is very true, and the repetition of such awful admonitions, respecting the uncertainty of human life, ought to have a great deal more effect on our minds than it usually has; we ought to take warning, and be prepared for that great change, which may happen very soon, and certainly will not delay long. But, alas! how transitory are our feelings on the sight of a funeral, or on the news of the departure of our ordinary friends and acquaintance! Some surprise may be expressed, and perhaps a few pathetic exclamations may break forth; but all this is short and fleeting; neither conversation nor business is interrupted, and we sleep quite as well at night. Not so, however,’ continued I, ‘ when the deceased friend or relative was very near our heart; our pangs are then genuine; we think it almost a crime to take pleasure in anything; the world does not look like itself; and if our hearts do not absolutely break, they are yet never as they were before.’

“ While I was making this answer to Mr. N. my heart was exceedingly full, and I could hardly proceed; but as some persons were present before whom it would have been less proper to have opened my mind, the conversation became general, and very useful, on Christian resignation.

“ You need not be alarmed; I have not taken up my pen to write you a sermon, or even a long essay, but rather to assure you, that not a single day has passed, for some weeks, in which your mournful situation has not, many times in that day, been

present to my afflicted imagination. I know well what you must have felt, and what you must continue to feel. I have often thought it my duty to write to you, and as often have wanted courage and nerves, or have been deterred by the idea of doing no good.

“If I have ventured at last to trouble you with a few of my thoughts, you will, I hope, not think me impertinent, but will excuse me, if on no other ground, at least on the ground that by thus writing, I relieve, in some measure, my own poor heart.

“The observations which make the first page of this letter, recurred to my mind the instant I took up my pen; and I put them down, because I felt assured that you were in a condition to understand their meaning and to feel their full force.

“I shall make no attempts to mitigate your sorrows, by putting you in mind how many comforts still remain to you, or by comparing your situation with my own. I have lost the only near relation I had in the world; one who has often proved himself a sincere friend and a faithful adviser, during an illness of many years’ standing. ‘What relief,’ you will say, ‘can I derive from such considerations? Have not I lost a dear lad whose fellow was not to be found? a dear lad who was, perhaps, nearer my heart than any one of my own children? He was the cordial of my old age. It is true I possess many valuable blessings—but he is gone, and with his departure all else has lost its relish.’ Oh! Mrs. Carlyle! I understand all this but too well; my own heart bleeds while I refresh and increase your sorrows, and my eyes will soon be swollen if I permit myself to go on in this strain. Oh! what pleasing prospects had I drawn to my imagination, from the future company and connexion I should have with that extraordinary boy!” * * * “My poor brother spoke of him from the first week that he knew him, as I never heard him speak of any other child. My brother hated the refined mummery of modern ceremony, and he loved George for his natural simplicity and love of truth. Then he (George,) was an invalid, and passionately fond of history; so had my brother been all his life.

“But no more of this; why do I feed this consuming

worm? Beyond dispute, the loss is great, and not to be calculated. Yet there is a way of repairing it. I say there is a way, and but one, of relieving these melancholy and bitter reflections. I bless God that there is such a way—no man on earth stands more in need of it than I. Naturally soft and affectionate, I am, by long continued indisposition, grown so exceedingly irritable, that any great affliction would absolutely overwhelm me, if Almighty God did not enable me to lay hold of, and grasp hard, those divine supports which religion furnishes. But let me come to the point. I ask you, is it not a most reasonable, and at the same time, a most unspeakable comfort, to be able to say with certainty, that our friends at this moment are actually in heaven, enjoying, and there to enjoy for evermore, the company of God and his Christ, and of angels and good men? And yet, in the two recent instances to which I refer, I find every word that implies less than certainty to be improper; and I speak here with the same positiveness that I do of the truth of religion itself. In regard to one of the cases, I forbear, at present, to enumerate reasons; and of the other, I need only just observe, that though doubtless a partaker of the corruption of human nature common to all, and indebted to Christ's atoning blood for salvation, yet when I put together these things, viz., the ingenuousness of his temper, his very few actual sins, comparatively speaking, and the remarkable goodwill and affection manifested to young children by Jesus Christ when on earth, I find it impossible to entertain the least doubt on this head. This, then, I say, is a source of true comfort, and moreover, a source that will never be exhausted. I have very often reflected, with some degree of wonder, why people are, in general, so very backward to talk, or even to think, about the situation of their friends in another world; certainly the fact is so,—very little is said about them in that respect. How is this silence to be accounted for? On farther notice and reflection, I am convinced that the silence arises, in most cases, from want of satisfactory evidence of their state. Perhaps we have not much fear—but then have we any well-grounded hope? The question is troublesome—the hope is often not very vivid, and is supported with difficulty; and

therefore we don't like to think about it. We content ourselves with saying, 'Who can be sure in such matters?' when, in reality, there is a sad want of good evidence. And thus are we apt to stifle all reflection concerning which side of the gulf our friends are placed on; and this, under a pretence, that our forming any judgment implies presumption. I repeat it, the true account of all this is, that we too often feel that our judgment must be unfavourable, and so we put away the irksome thought. Otherwise, what a glorious and blessed reflection to be able to say, on solid grounds, 'He is in heaven!' There can be no comfort like this—it is an answer to all our complaints, a balsam for all our wounds.

“Indulge this thought as much as you please, and try its excellence and its power to calm a throbbing heart. I put in my claim for some love of this dear departed boy, and yet I find it impossible to invent the least good reason for wishing him here again; neither his body nor his mind was formed for this rough world. Why should you wish him every year to be again afflicted with colds, with rheumatism, and other infirmities? He is now safe, and in full and perfect enjoyment; still human nature pleads very strongly for a little respite. How delightful it would have been to have seen his sweet mind daily unfold, improve, and fill with useful knowledge. So (I confess,) say I, with a deep sigh; and I add, how grateful an employment to have contributed a little to that purpose! But I am powerfully checked by the consideration that he has already learnt more since he left us—much more, than he could have scraped up in years of drudgery in our way of learning here. You will find him greatly beyond us when it shall please God that we join him again. His faculties are already much extended, and will go on extending to eternity; and he is in a climate where every thing thrives that is good. But he would have been a comfort to all about him, and a useful man in the world. I believe he would. Nevertheless, my dear friend, let us not deceive ourselves by any argument of this kind; there is, at bottom, more of selfishness in it than we are apt to be aware of. Will not God always know how to take care of his own world, by furnishing people to do good in it? Or does it look like true

love to our friends to desire to draw them here again from a state of perfect happiness, merely for the sake of some little satisfaction which they might afford to us? In this sort of reasoning there is no delusion whatever; it is founded in good sense, and (I speak from experience) it will often calm the tumults, and repress, in an instant, the murmurs of grief. For example:—why should I complain that my dear brother did not pant with the asthma here for several years longer, and at last die by hair's breadths, after much painful lingering? He would have been of some use, I know, in the world, but God can, at will, furnish plenty of labourers for his vineyard. Therefore, I fear I may make a pretence only of the consideration of usefulness, when, in reality, I wish to gratify my own selfish feelings, and do not cordially submit to the dispensations of Providence. Excuse me, if I here add a single word on a subject closely connected with the above-mentioned considerations.

“We ought not to content ourselves with merely and simply soothing the mind by taking a pleasurable view of the state of enjoyment of our friends or near relatives, in another world. If we stop here we shall be sadly deficient. We should aim at making our own calling and election sure, in order that we may join them with joy, and not be wofully separated from them at last; separated, not for a few months or years, but for a dreadful eternity.

“And this consideration suggests activity of mind and employment, and that, too, of the most rational kind. For in this way we shall be best enabled most effectually to combat any discontented risings of the mind, or melancholic propensities. It is in vain to argue against violent affections.

“Contrive to put something else in their room, that shall fill the mind, and you will succeed much better. The world says, ‘Divert the attention,’ so say I—but not by vain and empty company, nor by dissipation. I say, ‘Divert the attention,’ assuage your grief by such daily meditations and exercises, as will promote our immortal interests, and teach us to set a value on every object, according to its intrinsic worth. So then, while the world recommends, as the cure of sorrow, a change

of place and scene, variety of company, and public meetings for entertainment or diversion, you and I, my dear Mrs. Carlyle, will secretly rejoice, with joy unspeakable, in calmly meditating upon the complete happiness of our departed friends; and we will make it the steady and constant business of our lives to secure to ourselves admittance into the same mansions of bliss and glory. We may possibly be called gloomy enthusiasts, and be described as unfit for the affairs of this world; but I know who will be found possessed of true wisdom at last; and also, who will be found to have used this world, and not abused it. Indeed, there is hardly any use of this world, worth mentioning, except in the preparation for another.

“After all that I have said, or can say, still, still, we have lost our very dear friends, and as I said above, the world will never look like itself again; and tears must flow. To this I answer, I never wish the world to look again as it once used to look to me; nor have I any objection to drop a tear repeatedly, as long as I live, to the memory of any one whom I dearly loved; nor have I said anything in the least inconsistent with so doing—religion does not forbid the tear to flow. Jesus had a compassionate heart; ‘Jesus wept.’ Want of moderation—sorrowing as without hope—is the thing which I deprecate.

“The reflections contained in this letter have, by the blessing of God, been extremely useful in moderating the bitter anguish of my afflicted mind, and in supporting a lively hope; and it is my earnest and sincere prayer, that they may have some little healing influence upon your distressed condition.

“I need nobody to describe to me, how very much several of dear George’s relations and friends are oppressed with grief, and more particularly, his aged and affectionate grandmother.

“I am, dear Mrs. Carlyle,

“Your very faithful and affectionate friend,

“ISAAC MILNER.”

It is not, however, only in the tenderness and affection of his communications by letter, that we discover proofs of Dr.

Milner's sympathy with the feelings or the sorrows of others. Several letters written about this time, bear witness to his active exertions in favour, not only of his own poor relations at Hull, who, by the death of his brother Joseph, had been bereaved of their best friend and protector; but also in favour of other persons, of humble station, who, during his life, had shown kindness to that departed brother.

Such letters are, of course, for the most part, unfit for publication; yet passages of an interesting nature may be gleaned from them.

In a letter of a perfectly private nature, dated April, 1798, Dr. Milner thus writes:—

“I knew you would like to see T. Thompson's letter. I have read it twice this morning, with great pleasure. I certainly never saw anything he wrote that pleased me so well; for besides the allusion to my dear brother, which could not fail to move me, he discovers a strong sense of the importance of spiritual things. I trust he is right; though thriving is always a trial.”

Again, in a letter written during the same month, he thus answers some inquiries concerning the character of a clergyman:—

“I will be perfectly explicit with you, to the best of my judgment. His principles I believe to be, on the whole, tolerably orthodox; and he is, in many respects, more serious than our ordinary parsons. But still, I fear there is little self-knowledge—little, or no humility—and, of course, I fear he is not well qualified to teach. I never heard of his preaching well. He is apt to be contentious, metaphysical, snarling, conceited. His mind is abundantly furnished, and abundantly confused with a deal of reading of a controversial nature; yet I never heard of anything immoral about him, and I verily believe the best situation for him might be in some country place, where he had poor people to instruct, and was quite at the head of them. He would, I think, take pains and be useful. I should be sorry if there were near him any country squires or priggish parsons, who, by their acquaintance, might draw forth the worst parts of his character.”

The following letter will be read, by many persons, with much interest; and, after the lapse of nearly fifty years, no apology can be required for its publication.

“TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“*Queen’s College, May 13, 1798.*

“My idea of Trinity College is this. The management of it is of great academical, and even national importance. The foundation and the prospects are so splendid, that it invites and brings students, in spite of the conviction of danger of corrupt principles. The college fills; they have great choice for their fellows; and, in general, they choose the most able. Hence it is, that they either do now, or soon will consist of men of talents with very few exceptions; and if they get corrupted in their principles during the first years of their education in this place, and further, if a regard to heterodox and Jacobinical principles be also had, in the election of fellows, I leave you to judge what sort of a society they must become. The time when the late master* was appointed, was the critical moment, as it appears to me. Jones, the principal tutor, was then less a decided character, and Lambert had no influence. The late master made Lambert bursar immediately, supported him, and took no care to give a right direction to Jones. Under those circumstances, you remember, I should not have been sorry to have been their master. I was rather intimate with Jones, and knew all the other tutors and assistant tutors. Some of them respected me on the score of mathematical and philosophical knowledge, and particularly Jones; and I was so much senior to them all, that I examined most, if not all of them for their degrees; and this increased their respect and veneration. I have no manner of doubt, humanly speaking, but then I could easily have influenced Jones, and probably so much as to have given him quite a different turn. I do not say that I could do so now,—for though there has never been the least quarrel, or bickering between us, yet a sort of distance, or shyness, took place long ago, on political grounds: and

* Dr. Postlethwaite, appointed in 1789.

Frend's business increased that distance, and, at the same time, fixed Jones' character.

"I don't believe Pitt was ever aware of how much consequence the expulsion of Frend was. It was the ruin of the Jacobinical party as *a University thing*, so that that party is almost entirely confined to Trinity College. Government thought nothing would please them but a man of their own College; and it is true, they (the College) were satisfied with the appointment. But, by that step, the die was cast; and I am not sure that the case is not now irretrievable. I sincerely wish, that Mr. Pitt would not think it necessary to adhere to the system of putting in a man of Trinity, unless he can find a man absolutely suitable; for if the state of the College is to be retrieved at all, it must be by eminence, and energy, and discretion in the master, and by long-continued exertion. * * will never do. I told the Bishop of Lincoln so, long ago, in the most explicit terms: his moral character was exceedingly bad; externally it may be mended, but he is still a loose hand: besides, buffoonery, and indiscretion, and heat, are parts of his character. The best thing you can say of him is, that he is what he is called, a tolerably good classic, and has a strong voice. Whoever heard his Fast sermon, is in a condition to judge of his talents and discretion. I pledge my whole credit for foresight, if the appointment of him be not erroneous and fallacious in the event. Besides, I am certain, he would not be liked by the College at all, and that many aliens would be more agreeable to them.

"Of Zouch I know nothing, except it be the Zouch who was tutor of the college before Postlethwaite, and lived near Wakefield. He was a respectable man as a tutor; but I think I have heard from William Hey that he proved an enemy to real religion. However, if it be the Zouch I mean, I am disposed to believe, though I know nothing of him but by report, that he is better than any other that has been mentioned. If any good is to be done in a case almost desperate, this is the way; the new master should go to Jones and communicate freely with him, and propose mutual support and friendship,—the good of the College to be the common object.

Learning and ability should be the common tie, to keep these two together. Jones is not ill-natured, and he respects talents and knowledge, and he is easily overawed where he knows there is weight.

“The points of difference should be kept out of view, both as to politics and religion; and here the new master should have deep and steady designs. In time he might prevail. If I am asked my opinion about anybody, I can keep a secret, and I shall speak out, and without the least reserve.

“When I say, that in all I have said, I have, on this occasion, whatever I might have had formerly, no respect to myself, I am sure you will believe me.

“I have neither health nor spirits for such a conflict. The success is doubtful, and reproach, chagrin, and uneasiness, might be the consequence. I think, however, that I see how the battle ought to be conducted; neither has the income any charms for me. My mind is much, if not entirely chastised in regard to all such matters.

“I pray God to love and bless you both. I thank B— very kindly for her verses, which have pleased me greatly. You cannot think how pleased I was on reading the lines this morning.

“Yours ever, I. M.”

The disturbed state of Ireland at this period, occasioned much alarm in the minds of all true lovers of their country. Much correspondence upon this topic passed between Mr. Wilberforce and Dean Milner. To the mind of Mr. Wilberforce the danger, exaggerated perhaps by filial and fraternal affection, appeared so imminent, as to induce him to desire the removal of his mother and sister from Hull,—a place exposed, as it was thought, to peculiar peril.

Late in the month of May, 1798, Dr. Milner thus wrote to him from Carlisle:—

“Really I don’t see the danger at Hull in the same light. There is now such a force there, and in the neighbourhood, that no *coup de main* is to be expected, unless indeed the troops should be hastily drawn away to other quarters.

“We get Irish news here sooner than you do, viz., often from Port-Patrick; and I am sorry to say, that on the way-bill the postmaster had just time to write, ‘The rebellion in the North has unexpectedly broken out to an alarming degree.’

“This news came here to-day, and makes us all low; and not the less so, because there is a great obscurity in the account.

“I had last night a very severe head-ache. I took some violent measures,—laid down,—and in two hours all was right. I got up at eleven at night,—took my milk,—sat up till one; I had to preach to-day, and wished not to disappoint: I preached last Sunday also. I am very poorly and languid to-day; however I have got through pretty well on, ‘Fear Him who can kill both body and soul in hell.’

“Remember me to your dear B——, and always know that you are out of my thoughts never for a long time together.

“Yours,

“*To William Wilberforce, Esq.*”

“I. M.

A duel had, at this time, recently taken place between Mr. Pitt and Mr. Tierney. Dr. Milner’s abhorrence of the practice of duelling was uncompromising. The popular arguments in its defence, or in mitigation of its guilt, he held to be fallacious. “Murder,” he would say, when conversing upon this subject, “is not the less murder, because the murderer, in the commission of his crime, necessarily exposes his own life.” Mr. Pitt’s duel is alluded to in a long letter, dated, “Carlisle, June 6,” written in answer to certain questions of a chymical nature, propounded by Mr. Wilberforce, at the desire of some of his constituents, concerning the common practice of using salt in the hardening of files, and some other instruments made of steel. The letter exhibits an accurate acquaintance not only with the subject immediately in question, but also with the devices sometimes employed by fraudulent manufacturers, in order to evade the duties to which they were legally subject,—devices of which the Dean writes, that he had obtained his knowledge “when a lad.” With reference to the duel and other matters, he says:—

“I hope you will do something effectual against duelling. You will never have another so fine an opportunity. It has hurt Pitt’s character more than anything he ever did. Perhaps not so in London.

“I don’t know a single person who does not reprobate the appointment at ——— College. What sad work!

“Surely the Irish affairs go on well on the whole. It cannot be but that Government will now see the extent of the mischief, and that is a great thing. Fellows will tell of one another.

“I feel thankful that you both continue so very well. I can say but little for myself. I am sadly afflicted in the head, and spend many hours uselessly—lying down. I endeavour, however, to make a few sermons, and to think of my ways a good deal, during the retirement thus afforded me.

“In thought, I assure you both, that I am hardly to be said to have left your house since the last time I was with you.

“I want much to hear what you intend about this duelling.

“Remember me affectionately to B.

“Ever yours,

I. M.”

The letter from which the foregoing extracts are taken naturally suggests a reflection upon the vast variety of Dr. Milner’s knowledge. All who knew him will agree in the truth of the observation, that whatever might be the subject on which he happened to write, or to converse, or whatever the point which he had occasion to explain, or to illustrate, that subject, or that point, seemed to the reader, or the auditor, to be the one particular topic towards which he had bent the main force of his mind. In fact his knowledge was so accurate, his mode of explaining was so perspicuous, and his illustrations were so apposite, that the reflection which immediately presented itself to the mind of a person applying to him for information was, “Surely he knows this, better than he knows anything else—surely this is the subject upon which he has spent his strength:” and nothing but long experience sufficed to bring the conviction, that his knowledge was, in truth, almost universal.

No man, certainly, ever acted more constantly in the spirit of Dr. Johnson's observation, "If I am in company with a shoe-maker, I talk to him about the making of shoes." And this he did whether he desired to learn or to teach. Some slight anecdotes lately communicated to me in a private letter, by one of his much esteemed friends, still living, cannot, perhaps, be better introduced than in this place.

"I once travelled with your uncle," writes the Rev. Thomas Dikes, of Hull, "from Carlisle to Leeds. We spent a few hours at Ripon, and walked out among the people on the market day. He accosted a razor-grinder employed in his work; and gave him to understand that he had not properly learned his trade, and surprised the man by the knowledge which he showed on the subject. We then went into a carpenter's shop, where a well-looking youth was diligently employed; the Dean, for some time, looked attentively on; and then earnestly said to him, 'What a shameful thing it is, that a young man like you, should use such antiquated tools; you can never turn any good work out of your hands till you furnish yourself with better implements.'

"The Dean understood the shoeing of a horse, and could tell the blacksmith how it was, that the horse's foot was so often injured. The Dean's comprehensive mind could grasp every subject, from the highest to the lowest. I have often seen him shake hands with some of his old companions in trade. He was never ashamed of his former condition."

Occasionally Dr. Milner carried the practice intimated in the above anecdotes, to what some of his friends might, perhaps, consider an extravagant length; and it sometimes gave rise to amusing incidents. For instance, he was once crossing over from Hull to Barton, in the passage-boat which at that time sailed, and, probably, still sails, at a certain hour each day, according to the state of the tide. It so chanced that Mendoza, the boxer, had been giving lessons at Hull, and was crossing over at the same time. The Dean was observed to make his way towards Mendoza, and to enter, with him, into a conversation which lasted during a great part of the passage. There were persons present who saw the circumstance, and who

hinted to the Dean afterwards, that they felt rather surprised at what he had done; to their observations Dr. Milner replied, "Oh,—Mendoza,—I thought he was at the top of his profession, and I wanted to get something out of him."

The following extracts from a letter to William Wilberforce, Esq., will be read with much interest.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

Carlisle, 20th June, 1798.

"The Irish affairs look but comical, notwithstanding all these victories. Many Irish men and women have come here in great fright, from Port Patrick, and they give a sad account of the state of the country. I cannot but think, that the French, with all their alertness, have been sadly deficient in not risking more than they appear to have done, by way of assisting their fraternity in Ireland. I suppose, that if they could but have got over a few thousand of men, with officers, arms, and artillery, the consequences might have been dreadful.

"The Bishop of D—— is here, with his wife and family. A bad character, I fear; and certainly a violent oppositionist.

"He was at the Cathedral last Sunday, and if he be there again next Sunday, and God grant me tolerable health, he will hear such a discourse as, probably, he never heard in his life. Dr. —— preached last Sunday, a sermon which I thought sadly deficient.

"It was judged right to pay this bishop some civilities; and therefore I called on him, and asked him to a Chapter dinner. When he returned the compliment, we had a very animated conversation. He expressed himself so strongly on the side of opposition, and so much against the Irish government, that I thought it necessary to speak very plainly; telling him that if he held such language in Ireland, it could not fail to have the effect of blowing up more rebellion, and of supporting what there was already. He endeavoured to ride off as well as he could; but made bad work of it, and seemed in extreme agitation."

Dean Milner's health was, at this time, much disordered. A letter written from Carlisle, on the 4th of July, to Mr. Wilberforce, and by him docketed "most affectionate," gives a

melancholy detail of his bodily sufferings; but, at the same time proves his mind to have been filled with calm and pious resignation to the Divine will.

“You will be sorry,” he writes, “to hear this account of me, I know.” * * * “May God prepare me for whatever may be the event!

“I wish indeed I could be with you, when I know you will wish for my company; but I am sure you will see, how peculiarly unbecoming it would be in me, to be deficient in tenderness and attention to my only house of relations. I call my niece and her husband, and their mother, my house of relations, because they are now the nearest relations I have on earth. Your dear B. wrote me a kind letter the other day—you must thank her. But really I know not whether you are to show her all this letter or not; for I am sure her tender heart may feel a good deal too much.

“Farewell, my dear friend, for the present. I have, at different times, written very melancholy letters to you—you must expect no other. My heart has been broken, or nearly so, for a good while. Yet, blessed be God, I do not sorrow without hope.

“Your’s and B.’s most affectionately, I. M.”

A letter written by Dean Milner early in this month of July, contains the following expression of his affectionate condolence with Mr. Wilberforce, on the occasion of the death of that gentleman’s mother.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“I wrote the sheet that comes along with this, this morning, and was bathed in tears most of the time I wrote it. I fastened my door, and indulged my grief.

“I confess the change was unexpected, and I am a good deal surprised. I wish I were by your side, though I did nothing but weep.”

Dean Milner concludes this affectionate letter by recalling to the mind of his friend the “solid ground of Christian consolation,” which remained to him under this dispensation of Providence.

CHAPTER X.

Dr. Milner is elected Professor of Mathematics.—Opposition of Mr. Frend.—Opinion of Counsel.—Correspondence.—Domestic Affliction.—“Rational” way of Preaching.—Luther’s Letter to Caspar Aquila.—Publication of a Second Edition of the first volume of the *Church History*.—Correspondence.—Letter to Rev. Wm. Richardson.—Dr. Milner’s Religious Experience.—Jonathan Edwards.

A.D. 1798. ÆTAT. 48.

IN the month of September, 1798, Dr. Milner was elected to the mathematical chair at Cambridge once filled by ISAAC NEWTON. This professorship had been resigned, by that greatest of philosophers, in the year 1669; and from the time of that resignation till the election of Dr. Milner, four professors only, W. Whiston, N. Saunderson, John Colson, and Edward Waring, had intervened.

This professorship, called the Lucasian Professorship of Mathematics because founded and endowed by Henry Lucas, Esq. M.P. for the University of Cambridge in 1663, Dr. Milner held till his death.

The opposition to Dr. Milner’s election made by Mr. Frend, on the ground that his Mastership of Queen’s College disqualified him from holding the office, and the steps taken by Dr. Milner to settle the question of his eligibility, are sufficiently indicated in the following letter, which also displays, in a strong light, the tenderness of heart which distinguished the writer.

The case drawn up for the consideration of one of the eminent lawyers mentioned in this letter*, with his very decided opinion, that Dr. Milner was neither directly nor indirectly disqualified from holding the Lucasian Professorship, is still in existence, as is also the following declaration of Dr. Milner himself:—“During my being a candidate for the Luca-

* Sir William Scott.

sian Professorship, I considered the duties of the situation very particularly; and moreover, I obtained the very decided opinion of Sir William Scott on certain points, and this for the greater satisfaction both of the electors and myself.

“Dr. Waring professed himself always ready to lecture, or to give advice to any mathematical students who should apply to him; and with respect to the written lectures which the professor is to deposit among the university archives, he conceived that he should best discharge that duty by printing his lucubrations.

“I have the very same intention.”

This declaration is in entire accordance with the sentiments expressed in the following letter:—

“TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

“MY DEAREST FRIEND, “Hull, September 27, 1798.

“Our last letters must have crossed.

“I told you I was elected unanimously, at last, and without a competitor, unless you would call Frennd a competitor, who wrote an indecorous letter, and printed it, and sent it to each Head, proposing himself a candidate and positively affirming that I was disqualified, and this without arguing the point at all.

“The first request I made to Sir William Scott, and Sir William Wynne also, was, that they would seriously and conscientiously tell me, not merely as lawyers, but as friends, whether they thought there was the least disqualifying circumstance in the case. Sir William, after considering all the documents, declared positively on my side, and also gave me a written opinion to the same effect. Had it been otherwise, I told them both that I should instantly have declined.

“This new office, as to study for further attainments in mathematics, will give no trouble at all, but I mean to be efficient, as efficient as possible, in discharging the duties of it.

“This is a severe year upon me! Poor Mrs. C——* is apparently upon her death-bed. Let me have a line without fail.

“Yours always,

I. M.”

* The mother-in-law of his niece.

The next letter gives an account of the happy death of the excellent lady whose illness is above alluded to.

“TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

“*York, Tuesday, 12 o'clock at noon.*

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“*October, 1798.*

“Harder work I never experienced than for the last three weeks, because I have been on the spot an immediate eye-witness to pain and affliction of the severest sort. Mrs. C—the elder, died this morning at 6 o'clock. I set off for York, and am now going to bed (12 o'clock at noon), having been up the whole of the last ten nights watching the poor sufferer during the progress of this painful and mysterious disorder.

“A greater example of true faith and resignation I never saw than in this old lady. Her comforts were not very high, but they were uniform and steady; and as they depended not at all on feelings, but on the promises, she was proof against all sorts of temptation to the last, expressing a firm expectation of a glorious resurrection through the Redeemer. So humble a creature I never heard of, and I am confident that she has not been once heard to murmur, though often to cry out from violent pain.

“Oh! my dear Sir, I have been present at an instructive lesson.

“I mean to proceed immediately to Cambridge.

“You will easily understand from the above, how it has happened that I have not answered your letters. I thank dear B. for her kind letter, and I receive with great satisfaction your account of little William's thriving.

“Yours, with great affection,

“I. M.”

During the month of November, Dean Milner thus writes to the same friend:—

“Oh! my dear Sir, this year has made sad havoc with my outward man. Nevertheless I bless God, on the whole, at times. But I see I have everything to learn, or nearly so; yet,

however, very often I can say, 'I fear not, all will yet be well.' As to poor dear W.'s teeth, they must come. Poor dear jewels! what a vast deal they suffer, and cannot explain themselves, and hardly know what is the matter with them! I shall have great pleasure in seeing him, and noticing how famously he will have come on.

"Remember me affectionately to dear B. I cannot say, with truth, that when you omit to write, I do not sometimes desire the sight of your sometimes scrawling hand-writing, but I can say, that her letters are most excellent substitutes. Whenever she writes, she has the art of making me both hear and see herself, more than any body I ever knew. Tell her that I shall dispute with her, whether young W. be so very handsome as she says he is.

"Yours very truly and affectionately,

I. M.

"P.S. You have my prayers."

Dr. Milner's letters and his private memoranda show that his thoughts were at this time much occupied by religious subjects. Mr. Wilberforce's Diary of this year has the following passage: "July 29th. Much talk with Milner about his preaching, and the growing faults of the young clergy. He conceives them getting into a *rational* way of preaching."

The nature of the censure here implied by the word "rational," is by no means obscure. It may not, however, be disagreeable to the reader to peruse, in elucidation of this expression, the following passage from Melancthon's dissertation *De Spiritu et Litera**; a passage often alluded to by Dean Milner, as conveying admirable ideas respecting the difference between Christianity as revealed in the Scriptures, and that "rational religion" too often substituted in its place.

"The letter," says Melancthon, "means whatever doctrine, ideas, habits, discipline, and good desires, as they are called, any man, by the common light of nature, may attain, without the influence of the Holy Spirit: that is, without the least

* A considerable portion of this Dissertation is translated by Joseph Milner, in an Essay originally published in *The Theological Miscellany*.

genuine fear of God, without any confidence in his revealed mercy, which alone can powerfully comfort the mind, and without any knowledge or worship of Christ.

“On the other hand, the Spirit points out to us the Holy Ghost, really beginning in this life, and in the next completing, in the hearts of God’s people, a new light, wisdom, and righteousness, and a perpetual life of holiness, acceptable to God, and inflamed by the constant motions of the Holy Spirit, with fear, faith, prayer, and love; and in eternal life enjoying the vision of God, and celebrating his perfections.”

This passage, and indeed the whole of the dissertation from which it is taken, forms a valuable comment upon the word “rational,” as used by Dr. Milner.

During the year 1799, Dr. Milner was engaged, as much as his other occupations would permit, in selecting for publication some of his brother’s sermons, and in preparing for the press a second edition of the first volume of the *Church History*.

He visited London during the summer of this year. The following entry appears in Mr. Wilberforce’s Diary*, dated “August 25th. Milner preached his Buxton Sermon on Christianity’s corruptions. All serious persons much struck with it.” “Disputed with Milner about final perseverance.”

Dr. Milner’s readiness to preach whenever occasion offered has been already mentioned; and since, as he himself said of his brother, “He never took his pen in hand without a distinct subject,” and always brought the full force of his mind to bear upon the matter in hand, it will excite no surprise that his sermons were invariably striking and effective. To disputation on religious subjects, he was indeed usually less inclined; yet he was ever ready to admit that “in his heart he loved a good argument;” and few persons, perhaps, were better qualified to discuss a difficult question in theology. Still, however, unless under peculiar circumstances, he was little disposed to enter, in conversation, upon abstruse reasonings and disquisitions. “What is that to thee? Follow thou me,” was a quotation often addressed by him, by way of caution, to persons, especially

* See *Life of Wilberforce*.

young persons, who endeavoured to engage him in the discussion of personal election, free-will, and other such topics, which he was well known to have deeply studied. Such persons were likewise often exhorted by him to meditate upon Martin Luther's remarkable *Letter to Caspar Aquila*, on the subject of God's incomprehensible majesty*.

In the autumn of this year, Dean Milner, who had corresponded as usual with Mr. Wilberforce, "giving him frequent and forcible lectures on the necessity of taking care of himself, and living a more quiet life †," wrote to him from Carlisle, on hearing of the birth of his eldest daughter.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I do indeed rejoice with you very sincerely; and am very thankful that Almighty God smiles so repeatedly upon every thing connected with you. I shall not fail to pray for you all.

"Excellent Stillingfleet is here, and has been here and in the neighbourhood for many days. He was the most intimate friend my poor brother had, and was always exceedingly kind to him in having him at his house, &c. He could not bear to come to Hull for much above a year after his decease.

"Though I have endeavoured to discharge my duty here as well as ever I could, and though I have been enabled, through a gracious providence, to get through four preachings, yet sadness and melancholy of heart stick close by me, and increase upon me. Who would believe this? I tell nobody, but I am very much sunk indeed; and I wish I could have the relief of weeping, as I often used to have.

"I pray that I may thrive in the best things; and I rejoice in God's abundant kindness to you and yours.

"Farewell, with an affectionate remembrance to B.

"Yours affectionately, I. M."

Much as his spirits were affected by the employment, Dean Milner's principal occupation at this period was, as has

* A translation of this letter may be seen among the published Essays of Joseph Milner.

† *Life of Wilberforce.*

been already intimated, the preparation for publication of several of the manuscripts of his departed brother; an occupation which, by vividly recalling the memory of that beloved relative, could not but cause acute pain to his affectionate and sensitive heart.

On the 6th of November, 1799, he thus wrote to his own and his deceased brother's valued friend:—

“THE REV. WILLIAM RICHARDSON.

“DEAR SIR,

“With great truth I can say, that I always receive your letters with much pleasure, though I will confess that your last agitates my poor frame a good deal.” * * * “Headaches, almost perpetual, incapacitate me for many hours every day; the remainder I endeavour to employ as well as I possibly can; and am directed by what I think duty.

“A very material affair at present takes up a great deal of my time; and yet I am very desirous of fighting through it, viz., the correcting and reprinting of the first volume of the *Ecclesiastical History*. It has been much called for, and is now above half done. But this business, and my other necessary, absolutely necessary, avocations, leave me very little time indeed.

“The correction of the first volume is very tedious on the following account: formerly, when the author was at hand, he would clear up twenty of my remarks in one minute; but now I sometimes spend many hours in clearing up an ambiguous or equivocal sentence, for want of the book, or the edition which he used; and I dare not hazard conjectures, nor even all the truth, always, as it may appear to stand from such authorities as I have before me, lest I should make the historian, (who probably would be very consistent, if I could but refer to the authority which he depended upon, and which, perhaps, he has omitted to mention) appear inconsistent, when different passages are compared with each other.

“I take less and less liberty with his statement of facts, and also with his representation of probable causes; for I assure you, the more I probe, the more exact I find him, in reality;

but he very frequently affirms things which suppose his readers to know more than many of them do know.

“ In this situation, I say, your letter agitates me, by presenting fresh work*. I do not mean to press you, because you best know your own feelings about it; and if you persist in saying, or thinking, that ‘it is absolutely necessary for the satisfaction of your own mind,’ that I should see the proof sheets, of course I must give way. Otherwise, I really do not see the necessity of it at all. I am sure I shall be perfectly satisfied with what you do, and so, I doubt not, will those who read the book, for, I dare say, very few great or learned men will trouble themselves with sermons of such a cast, or written by such a character as the author was.

“ After having said so much, it is now my duty to acquiesce, which I shall do most cordially, in whatever way you shall think proper to decide.

“ You are absolutely over-nice; you need not send me any specimen of the paper or type, as I really see no appearance of your having lost your faculties. Seriously, I am, and I hope I always shall be, very grateful to you.

“ Yours, I. M.”

The following letter, which cannot be read without very deep interest, has been already published in the correspondence of William Wilberforce, Esq. Its appearance in this volume may, perhaps, require a few words of explanation.

A finer letter, in point of strong sense, vivid imagery, and deep feeling, has, perhaps, been seldom penned; and the religious experience which it discloses would be well understood by the excellent friend to whom it was addressed, and will not be misunderstood by any who, while they are practically acquainted with the great doctrines of Christianity, are able duly to appreciate the struggle which a belief of those humbling doctrines may sometimes occasion in a mind of such immense power as was that of Dr. Milner.

* Mr. Richardson had pressed Dr. Milner to give the last corrections to the proof sheets of his brother's *Sermons*.

A much more numerous class of persons, however, will not, it is to be feared, comprehend aright the causes of the severe mental sufferings which the Dean, in the exercise of the most undoubting confidence, here lays open to his friend; and some may perhaps be disposed to think, that that confidence, upon a subject so purely private in its nature, ought never to have been infringed.

It is proper to say, that this very remarkable letter is reprinted in this work chiefly from a feeling that the omission of it, while other letters of a nature in some degree similar are now for the first time, published, might, in some quarters, give rise to a suspicion, quite at variance with the truth, that the biographer of Dean Milner regards its contents as in some way derogatory to the religious character of the writer.

“ TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

“ *Queen’s College, Saturday,*

December 21st, 1799.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ In the compass of a letter, I cannot explain to you in how great darkness and temptation my mind has been of late, and indeed continues yet, to a great degree. I can only say at present, that all my bodily complaints are nothing to it. I could rejoice under them if they were double, treble, manifold, if it did not please God to hide his countenance. I cannot explain myself so as to be understood. You would not, could not, believe my narrative of what passes and has passed, night and day, and even in my dreams. I have yet been kept, blessed be God, from despair, but I really know not where it will end.

“ A ray of hope sometimes darts into my mind, that if ever it please God that I fairly get out of my present harassed state, I may be happier than ever I have yet been. I call it ‘a ray of hope,’ but, in reality, it rather resembles a flash of lightning in a dreadfully dark and tempestuous night, than the cheering rays of the sun. Flashes of lightning, at the same time that they dismay and terrify one, partly on their own account, and partly on account of the deep and dangerous ditches which they discover for a moment: these same flashes, I say, at the same moment

show that there is a good turnpike-road between the ditches, and enable the traveller also to avoid the danger, and to proceed on his journey for a time, though under great apprehensions, till another flash comes.

“This image is taken from what really happened to me in Lincolnshire, during that dreadful summer some few years ago, in the night time.

“The stage-coachman declared, that it was as dark as pitch, and very often absolutely stopped till a dreadful flash of lightning showed him where he was. There was a West Indian in the coach at the same time, who frightened every body by his horrid imprecations against the coachman.

“There are certain parts of Holy Writ which I endeavour to grasp with all my might, and this constantly, and so it has hitherto pleased God to support me; but I am sorry to say that my grasp is often a grasp of fear and agitation and necessity, rather than of willingness and holy confidence. I see that there is nothing else to be done, but I do not honour God by submitting cordially to His way of salvation. This is the great point that I have long been aiming at, and I make nothing of it, and yet I know, and am sure, that without this, all the rest is sounding brass.

“My grasp, however, of which I now speak, is strong, and I have had a little relief within the last few days. I do not know whether I make myself understood. I mean this: to submit to the condemning power of the holy law of God, is a hard matter—a very hard matter indeed, to do this thoroughly. My understanding has shown me, for many years, that this is the touchstone of a sound conversion, and I have been busy enough in noting the defect of it in others; but, as to myself, if I have got on at all in this respect, it is very lately indeed. The heart is sadly deceitful here; for, with Christ’s salvation before one’s eyes, one may easily fancy that God is just and equitable in condemning sinners, when, if you put the case only for a moment to your own heart seriously, as a thing likely to happen, the heart will rise against such a dispensation; perhaps, indeed, with a smothered sort of opposition and dislike, but which is very steady and determined.

“ Nothing less than the Holy Ghost himself can cure this, by showing us the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. A sinking man lays hold of a rope thrown out to him, and grasps it firmly. I bless God I never leave hold of the rope, and I trust I shall be found grasping it fast to the last. Neither have I the slightest fear of the rope breaking; but if I do not feel and acknowledge thoroughly, that the whole is a downright act of mercy, in every possible sense that you can twist the matter, I may still be suffered to sink for ever. I see, clearly enough, the way in which that dreadful event happens to many of those that are lost. Experience concurs to show the wisdom of the Scriptures, and the consistency of the Gospel scheme. * *

“ Your last letter, though short, is truly affectionate, and lays hold of me, in several tender places, very closely. The quotation from Milton, which you kindly wish me to advert to, is a favourite passage, and has been so with me for many years. The sentiment is sound and pious, I think; but, like every thing else, is liable to abuse by being carried too far. It is true God will never blame us for want of exertion where power is denied; but I suppose the will is as much shown in feeble efforts as in strong ones, provided those feeble efforts be but proportionate to the faculties; it was so in the widow’s mite, and doubtless it is the same in other things.

“ I purposely said what I had to say on other subjects unmixed with the consideration of your own health. Wonderful beings we are! I hope I need not repeat to you how much I am always concerned when anything unpleasant happens to you; a great deal more, I believe, than you yourself are, or than any body can conceive who does not know what it is to be hampered with such a nervous, irritable, and (if you will allow me) affectionate sort of composition, as I am hampered with. I have felt in this way towards you, now, for many years, and it is not likely that my anxieties on your account, and apprehensions of any mischief, should be less, because God has taken to himself what was very near and dear to me, and left me a sort of insulated being, and very, very—disconsolate, is a weak word,—nearly heart-broken, is far nearer the truth. Indeed, my dear friend, my heart is so full, that I can

hardly get to the subject I am driving at, and I will, God willing, finish to-morrow.

“Yours most affectionately,

“I. MILNER.”

The passage from Milton alluded to in the foregoing remarkable letter, is the fine and affecting sonnet “On his Blindness;” a passage often quoted by Dr. Milner, with much admiration.

“When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide,
Lodged with me useless; though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account lest He, returning, chide;
‘Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?’
I fondly ask: but patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, ‘God doth not need
Either man’s work, or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve Him best; his state
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o’er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait.’”

About this period of his life, Dean Milner was anxiously engaged in the study of the writings of the Rev. Jonathan Edwards. Among his private memoranda of this date, various notices appear of his lending “Edwards’ *Sermons*,” or “Edwards on *Religious Affections*,” to “Dr. Jowett,” to “William Farish,” and to others of his friends. A dissertation, found among his papers, and, as it appears, written during this year, on the “Posthumous Remarks of the late Jonathan Edwards, concerning ‘Faith,’ and ‘Justification by Faith,’” is given in the next chapter, precisely as it came from his pen. To say that in this performance Dr. Milner thinks accurately, and dives deeply into the meaning of the great divine whose work he is considering, would be superfluous. The value of his remarks will be apparent to all who have exercised their understandings upon this fundamental Christian doctrine.

CHAPTER XI.

Dissertation on Jonathan Edwards' *Posthumous Remarks on Faith, and Justification by Faith*.—Quotation from a Sermon by Dean Milner on the same Subject.

A.D. 1799. ÆTAT. 49.

“JUSTIFICATION.

“§ 1. I consider the late Jonathan Edwards' posthumous remarks on Faith and Justification by Faith, as very valuable relics of that great divine. They are contained in Chapter VII. pp. 393—480*; and, though evidently, extremely indigested, they are manifestly proofs of profound thought, and great acquaintance with the Scriptures, as well as of great candour of mind, and exemption from prejudice.

“I have studied them at different times of my life, with all the attention in my power; and I scruple not to recommend a careful and diligent perusal of them to every one who wishes to acquire just ideas on these difficult and important subjects.

“But I wish it to be remembered, that I recommend them rather as containing a number of excellent materials and observations, than as furnishing either regular ratiocination, or accurate and perspicuous conclusions.

“No man could have written this Chapter VII., whose mind had not been long, and seriously, and habitually, employed on this branch of divinity. The quotations and the reflections contained in it, do not always hang together in the way of a well-connected composition; on the contrary, they appear to have been put down as in a common-place book, as they occurred, from time to time, to this great master both of theoretical and practical divinity; and we have to lament, that they appear never to have been reviewed by their author.

* These and other references to the work under consideration are left as Dean Milner wrote them; and will probably, in general, indicate, with sufficient accuracy, the passages alluded to; but it is impossible now to ascertain the particular edition of Edwards' Works which he used.

“ I am much disposed to make one objection to this work—as running through, if I mistake not, almost every part of it, in its present state; namely—that the simple and natural meaning of the word *faith*, seems to be too much forgotten in Mr. Edwards’ definitions and observations; the same thing I have often remarked in the writings of other able divines; and I have conceived, that much of the obscurity and apparent contradiction which we find in them, is to be ascribed to this cause.

“ § 2. I suppose, that most, if not all Mr. E——’s observations on these subjects are true in the abstract, and in a practical sense; but still I think, that his definition of justifying faith is not truly Scriptural; and if my views on this subject are right, he seems to describe those qualifications of a true believer, which are allowed to be essential to that character, as necessarily entering into those very acts of faith which justify a man, and as constituting their primary essence. Let any one run over this seventh chapter, with this idea in his mind.

“ In other words, it may be absolutely necessary for a man to be of a certain character, before he can perform a single act of true faith. The existence of this character may be indispensable, yet, it will not follow, that every act of such a character is of the nature of saving, or justifying faith; nor, yet again, will those acts of this character which really imply the existence of a faith that justifies, derive their essence (strictly speaking,) from those qualifications which constitute that character.

“ The essence of an act to be performed, and the essence of the qualification absolutely necessary to the subject who is to perform the act, are two things perfectly distinct.

“ § 3. To make this plainer.

“ We are called upon, in Scripture, to trust in the promises, and then we shall be saved; and the controversy has been concerning the meaning of the term, *trust*. It is said, that some have reasoned as if the promise was made to an individual A. B.; so that, if A. B. can but believe, that Christ will save him, he is, from that moment, justified, and in a state of salvation.

“ Others, who have seen the danger of this crude and unscriptural representation of the nature of faith, have denied

what is called the doctrine of appropriation of the merits of Christ to a man's self. According to them, there is nothing of personal appropriation of the promises, in the essence of justifying faith.

“The danger of an improper personal appropriation is so obvious, and so great, that I do not wonder, if some of our most thinking and judicious divines shall be found to have carried their precaution in this matter, too far. It has appeared to them, that persons of a warm imagination might easily work themselves up into a belief of their interest in Christ, on very slight grounds, and sometimes even unwarily be drawn into doctrinal systems of an antinomian tendency.

“Now, there is, no doubt, very great danger here; but, nevertheless, I am convinced, that the danger is by no means all on this side. I will not undertake to decide on which side the greater danger lies: but I have little doubt, that the side opposite to antinomianism is the more likely to be taken of the two. There is in our very natures, even depraved as they are by the fall, so much left of the moral principle in our consciences, as to protect most men from the gross abuses of antinomianism; and I may safely observe, on the other hand, that those theoretical divines whose minds have been drawn to use great caution in drawing confident conclusions favourable to personal salvation, are the most likely to stumble on pharisaical grounds of objection; and the more so, because, in so doing, they seem to themselves to be standing up for holiness of life, without which, certainly, no man shall see the Lord*.

“It may be of no great consequence to aim at so balancing matters, that one might be able to pronounce which of the two errors produces the more mischief in practice; but the investigation and statement of the truth, (as it is always important,) should be our chief object.

* § 4. Mr. Edwards, (page 454) observes, that ‘Christ

* “Add to this, that if the essence of faith be supposed to consist in the previous qualifications of the true believer, men will be apt to be content with low qualifications, whereas if faith require an appropriation, they will then strive to increase the qualifications, that they may be entitled to appropriate.”—*Original Note.*

does not promise to be the author of our redemption, but upon condition; and we have not performed that condition until we have believed.' Therefore, we have no grounds until we have once believed, to acquiesce in the statement that Christ will save us. Therefore, the first act of faith is no more than this, 'the acquiescence of the mind in what he does declare absolutely;' (so in page 418,) 'it has been said by many, that the soul's immediately applying Christ to itself as its Saviour, was essential to faith. Doubtless, an immediate application is necessary; but that which is essential, is not the soul's immediately applying Christ to itself, so properly, as its applying itself to Christ.'

"These passages afford a sample of what I conceive to be that erroneous view of justifying faith, which pervades this chapter.

"And now to explain my meaning as briefly as possible; I not only allow, but maintain, that those things which Edwards has described as essential to justifying faith, are really essential to it, in a certain sense; that is, justifying faith cannot exist, unless these things be present in the subject who believes; but still, they do not, strictly speaking, constitute the essence of that act of the believer which justifies him. They are rather to be denominated qualifications of the believer, previous to his exercising that faith towards the Saviour which justifies him. It is, probably, true in ordinary practice, that the qualifications of the subject, and his subsequent acts of justifying faith, proceed step by step, and may appear to intermix with each other so as to render it not easy to mark the distinction. That is, the qualifications of which I speak are, in their commencement, often very feeble and imperfect, and so are the exercises of faith which accompany, or rather follow them; and afterwards, both one and the other increase till the believer becomes more settled and established. However, there will be no necessity, in this inquiry, to dwell on such cases as these, notwithstanding their frequency. We are now inquiring into the nature of justifying faith, itself, and also into the nature of those qualifications of the subject who exercises those acts of faith, which warrant his justification on the true Scriptural plan:

and, therefore, the consideration of cases where the subject has only acquired dark and obscure views of the Gospel, in other words, when he sees only as it were through a glass darkly, can be of no use in this inquiry. We must endeavour to obtain clear and decided notions of the doctrine of faith, by studying the characters of those who are allowed to possess justifying faith in a lively and vigorous degree.

“ § 5. Once more—

“ Let us carefully review Mr. E——’s method of representing this matter; (page 454.)

“ ‘The first act of faith,’ says he, ‘is no more than this,—the acquiescence of the mind in what Christ declares absolutely. It is the soul’s resting in him, and adhering to him so far as his word reveals him to all, as a Saviour for sinners—as a sufficient Saviour—as a Saviour suited to their case—as a willing Saviour—as the author of an excellent salvation—so as to be encouraged heartily to seek salvation of him—to come to him, to love, desire, and thirst after him as a Saviour, and fly for refuge to him.’

“ Now it appears to me, that in all this, Mr. E. is only, as it were, on the very edge of justifying faith, and has not actually laid hold of it—so as to have given a correct description of it.

“ It is true, that all this must be in the mind of a true believer—but, still, he has another step to take, before he can be said to ACT FAITH personally, in his own case. In short, all this is a preparative for the exercise of faith: nay, it is an essential preparative, and, in that sense, is essential to justifying faith; but yet not essential, otherwise than as a preparative, to that act of the believer which (in strictness of speech) justifies him. It seems more correct to say, that this preparative is essential to the state of that man’s mind who is to exercise justifying faith. For without this preparative, no man can have the faith which justifies.

“ A metaphor may, perhaps, illustrate this matter. Thus, a man’s legs are essential to his being able to walk; in other words, there must be legs for a man to perform the act of walking; nevertheless, the mere existence of his legs makes no part of the essence of walking.

“ To put this more generally, I would say, certain qualifications may be essentially necessary to the exercise of a true act of faith, and yet they may make no part of the essence of the act itself.

“ You must be duly qualified in order to exercise faith; but this qualification may exist without the least real faith: but here is the distinction: not a particle of real faith can exist without the preparative, or, what is the same thing, without the qualifications.

“ § 6. These things being always kept in view, I may now proceed to state more distinctly what I conceive to be a true definition of the nature of justifying faith. It is that act of the soul, so qualified or prepared as above described, by which a man is led to apply the Gospel promises to his own individual case; that is, he believes that Christ will do for him all that he has promised to do for those that fly to Him, as a Saviour, for refuge. He does not pretend that he finds in the Scriptures any promise to himself personally, but, on the contrary, he finds that all the promises are made to characters; he believes himself to be such a character as that is described to be, to which the promises are made; and in that conviction, together with a full persuasion of the faithfulness of Christ, he appropriates the promise to himself.

“ It is this act of appropriation in which essentially consists the nature of justifying faith.

“ To appropriate the promises without the previous qualification or preparative, would be enthusiasm and delusion; not so when the sinner has carefully examined himself on that head which respects his qualification.

“ This idea agrees with the words of Scripture. The promise of Christ is a promise of rest to all that are ‘weary and heavy-laden.’ The being weary and heavy-laden is absolutely necessary to qualify the sinner to come to his Saviour: it is by no means, I allow, the whole of the qualification; but it is an essential ingredient in it, and serves well to explain the nature of that preparative which must precede any act of justifying faith.

“ § 7. It appears to me, that a man may go still farther

than the being weary and heavy-laden, and yet still fall short of exercising true justifying faith. Mr. Edwards says, (p. 418.) that the soul's 'applying itself to Christ is more properly justifying faith, than his applying Christ to himself.'

"But I think he does not speak correctly in this instance. A sinner may certainly apply himself to Christ for all Gospel blessings and may fail, for want of the aforesaid preparative, or qualification; but so far, as I conceive, is this qualification or preparative from being of the nature of justifying faith, that even a sinner so prepared, and even truly prepared, may fail of obtaining, according to the Scriptural account, a true state of justification for want of faith in his application, *i. e.*, for want of this very appropriation which so many persons are apt to consider as unscriptural and delusive.

"Mr. Edwards is endeavouring to expose and counteract a great delusion no doubt; but in doing this, I think he describes what is essential to the character of the sinner who applies successfully to his Saviour, while he professes to be describing what is essential to justifying faith; whereas, if my statement be true, that which is strictly essential to faith is, the application of Christ to the believing soul in a personal act of appropriation.

"§ 8. It must, however, be owned, that in Mr. E——'s distinction between the soul's applying to Christ and its applying Christ to itself, there is a considerable degree of obscurity, indeed so much obscurity, that, without committing or being guilty of any violence of interpretation, this author's sentiment may be made to tally very well with the definition of faith which I am now proposing.

"For example, Mr. Edwards (p. 408) allows, that in the first act of faith the soul humbly and heartily applies and seeks to Christ, and sees such a congruity between the declared mercy of God and the disposition he then feels towards Him, that he cannot but hope that that declared mercy will be exercised towards him.

"'Yea,' continues he, 'he sees it would be incongruous for God to give him such inclinations and motions of heart towards Christ as a Saviour, if he were not to be saved by Him.'

"§ 9. Now let any one pause here, and consider what there is in this account that falls short of appropriation: (certainly

very little, if any thing at all :) and then let him further consider, whether it be not true that, in proportion to the excellence or perfection of the qualification, there will not necessarily, as it were, be connected with it the appropriation of which I speak. And if this be admitted, which I think can hardly be denied, then the chief difference between Mr. E——’s account of this matter and mine, is, that he makes the essence of justifying faith to consist principally in the qualification, and I describe it as consisting in the act of appropriation; yet always remembering, and always maintaining, that this act of appropriation must be the act of a sinner qualified as above.

“ Now I greatly mistake if this view of justifying faith do not agree both with Scripture and the use of common language, in regard to such words as faith, trust, belief, &c., better than Mr. E——’s view of it.

“ Mr. E——’s view of it, unless, indeed, we are allowed to comment upon it, and to interpret it with the aforesaid degree of latitude, confines the belief of the sinner to mere general ideas of Christ’s redemption, as also to mere general ideas of the character of a truly contrite sinner. Now, for anything I see, a very wicked and unconverted man may see the evidences of the Word of God, and also the general meaning of the gospel way of salvation; and, lastly, that there is no other way of salvation; and yet he may not have one grain of confidence that he himself shall be saved, that is, not have one grain of true justifying faith: but when it is added, that the sinner, besides seeing the truth of all this, sees a propriety in it, ‘acquiesces in it,’ and ‘seeks to Christ heartily and humbly;’ and conscious ‘of his own disposition towards Christ, cannot but hope that the mercy of God will be exercised towards him;’ and, lastly, sees ‘that it would be incongruous for God to give him these inclinations in case he were not to be saved;’ then it is, as I have already said, that I seem to perceive that Mr. Edwards, in fact, includes an appropriation of the mercies of Christ by the sinner to his own soul; in other words, it is then that I perceive in Mr. E——’s description the traces of faith,—justifying faith,—which carries him much beyond general views, and even much beyond any general approbation of the Gospel.

“CONSEQUENCES OF THIS VIEW OF JUSTIFYING FAITH.

§ 10. “It is now time to notice what may at first sight, perhaps, appear to be a formidable objection to this view of justifying faith.

“The language of Scripture is, He that believeth shall be saved, and ‘he that believeth not shall be damned.’

“A very solemn and awful declaration, no doubt! and one which should set us all upon carefully examining ourselves, whether we be, or be not, ‘in the faith.’

“The objection may run thus: If every unbeliever is to be damned, and if belief, or justifying faith, implies, in its essence, a personal appropriation of the benefits of Christ’s redemption, then (in strictness) no one can be saved, except he be able so to appropriate the merits of Christ to his own case: Christ’s flock, it is allowed, is a little flock; but how exceedingly, nay, how alarmingly, will that little flock be lessened by such a definition as the above, which seems so much to narrow the way, and straiten the gate that leads to life!

“§ 11. The answer is this.

“If in any particular or individual case it should be found, (what I take to be not uncommon in practice,) that there may exist a true sound state of the qualifications or preparatives, in the sense above stated, and yet the sinner, though so qualified or so prepared, may not yet have been able to lay hold of the mercies of Christ in the way of a personal appropriation of them by faith, to his own case; this must be owing either to a want of a clear view of the freeness of Christ’s salvation, caused, perhaps, by some extraordinary temptations of Satan, or by an excessively deep sense of unworthiness, producing an unreasonable and improper timidity of resolution, with lowness of the animal spirits, or, lastly, in some cases, from a degree of dulness or imperfection in the intellect itself; for it is by no means true, that the clearness of a contrite sinner’s perceptions does always keep pace with the sanetified affections and sensibilities of his heart.

“Now whenever instances of this kind take place, I cannot suppose that such characters are to be excluded from the

kingdom of God, even though they may never, in this life, attain to the brightness of Gospel light, or, in other words, to the full assurance of hope. Such persons, it is true, can scarcely be said to have attained a perfect faith of appropriation; yet who can deny but that they may still have hold of the hem of Christ's garment, or who can suppose that their defects or imperfections, in regard to the matter of faith, are not pardonable defects, insomuch that God, who alone sees the heart, may impute to them that faith which they seem to be on the very edge of attaining?

“§ 12. If it should here be further objected that, according to these ideas, it is not faith that saves a sinner, but certain qualifications or preparatives, I observe, that it may appear, perhaps, on a review of what has been said, that an answer has, in fact, been already given to this objection.

“For we have already seen that the contrite sinner, who possesses the requisite preparatives, though he may have been too diffident to exercise a faith of appropriation, may yet fairly be said to be in a probable state of salvation. Yes! in a probable state of salvation, even though he do not possess that faith which (in strictness) justifies. It may well be doubted, for example, whether the thief on the cross had obtained, in strictness of speech, the faith which justifies; yet who can doubt of his salvation through the merits of the Saviour? .

“The Holy Scriptures, in describing the way in which salvation is obtained, lay open that great and most important matter with all possible clearness and precision. Among many other passages I would mention that most explicit one in the Acts, viz., ‘Repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.’ Here it should seem that repentance is to be found in what I have called the qualifications or preparatives. I do not say that repentance and those qualifications are convertible terms; but I see distinctly that those qualifications imply a very great part, if not the whole, of repentance—and then it is particularly to be observed, that there is superadded the expression, ‘Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ!’ Briefly, therefore, the repentance—the being weary and heavy-laden—the mind's acquiescence in the Gospel plan of salvation—in one

word—the qualifications or preparatives, are the firm groundwork upon which the believer stands, in order that he may embrace the promises by the simple act of appropriating the merits of Christ to his own soul; for it is, indeed, by this last-mentioned act that he becomes united to Christ, in which union his safety, or salvation, consists.

“So much seems necessary in order to give a clear idea of the Scriptural plan of the salvation of a sinner, but when that idea is once clearly conceived, it does not follow but that some latitude may be allowed in the practical application of it. Thus, for example, when the woman in the crowd strove to touch the garment of Christ, there was, doubtless, in a certain sense, an actual exercise of personal faith. She not only believed that there was virtue in Christ to heal her, but she believed also that there was a willingness in the Saviour to heal her on her making such an application.

“§ 13. On this subject a very important question arises, viz., whether Mr. E.’s view, which I have stated in these pages, be the safer view of the two, and the more likely to produce good practical consequences; or again, whether this view, which insists on a personal appropriation of the Saviour’s merits by faith, be not attended with considerable danger, and liable to much abuse, if taught and insisted on in all its simplicity.

“To satisfy these inquiries, I would, in the first instance, observe, that the previous question in a doctrinal matter of this sort ought always to be, ‘Is the statement true and certain, or is it doubtful, and perhaps false?’ If a doctrine be really found in Scripture, and be agreeable to the analogy of faith, we are not to be alarmed on account of any invidious representation of its consequences in regard to any imaginary danger. We are, in general, very poor judges of the consequences of doctrines. The simple inquiry, therefore, ought to be, whether the doctrinal point on which we are inquiring be, or be not, taught in the word of God. If it be taught there, no dangerous consequences can possibly ensue from properly inculcating it. Moreover, it has constantly been the practice of controversialists in religion to lay stress on some popular objection grounded on the score of danger, which they suppose must

infallibly attend on the tenets of their opponents; and this practice is not to be commended.

“§ 14. After having premised so much on this supposed head of dangerous consequences, I now proceed to observe that a very diligent consideration of this matter has convinced me that the aforesaid idea of justifying faith, which I here undertake to explain and support, so far from being dangerous in its consequences, is, of all things that can be imagined, that principle of practical religion which cannot fail to insure a harvest of good works. The ‘secret of the Lord’ is said to be ‘with them that fear Him;’ and, to my mind, that very secret is here, viz., that no man can appropriate to his own soul the saving mercies of Christ, who is not habitually fighting the good fight. I believe that it does not please God to give this assurance of hope to low and negligent exertions, or to poor and mean attainments in the Christian life. A hypocrite will find that he cannot support the belief that Christ has saved him, so long as he is inactive or unfruitful in the Christian course.

“I would endeavour to open this matter somewhat more explicitly, and for this purpose let us keep in view the difference between Mr. E——’s notion of justifying faith and my own.

“After what has been said that difference may be briefly expressed in these words. Mr. Edwards represents the faith of the believer as consisting in an application to the Saviour. On the contrary, availing myself of Mr. E.’s own words, I consider it as that act of the believer whereby he applies the Saviour to himself.

“§ 15. It is, I think, abundantly clear from Scripture, that, whatever constitutes the essence of justifying faith, the possessor of the right faith is in a state of salvation: and further, it is equally clear that he that believeth not shall be damned, so that salvation and a true faith are infallibly connected together. These things could not escape the sagacity and diligence of Mr. Edwards.

“The next step of this very accurate reasoner seems to have been this, viz., that whoever applies to the Saviour in the sense which he has described, or in other words, whoever possesses the qualifications which I have been describing as

the necessary groundwork for a subsequent appropriating faith, cannot fail to be, also, in a state of salvation; and then the conclusion seemed to be perfectly unexceptionable, that justifying faith consisted in the aforesaid qualifications.

“In one word, justifying faith secures the safety of the believer; so do the qualifications just mentioned; and as nothing short of justifying faith can secure the safety of the believer, it would follow, that justifying faith and these very qualifications must be, in substance, the same thing. And thus, if I am right in my stating of the errors of Mr. Edwards, I think I cannot be wrong in this mode of tracing his mistake.

“It appears to me, that this great divine was led into the mistake by not observing, 1st, that a well-grounded appropriation of Christ’s merits implies every good thing which his system of qualifications can be supposed to contain, so that there can be no room left for delusion; and 2ndly, that the qualifications themselves, when abundant and truly of the right sort, though they do not imply an actual appropriation of the Saviour’s merits, do, nevertheless, imply so much of a disposition to lay hold of the Gospel promises, and to appropriate them, as to exclude all doubt of the salvation of him who is allowed to be so qualified.

“§ 16. Still I keep my mind on the question just stated, namely, which of the two views of justifying faith is the safer? and further, these very considerations will very much help us to elucidate that important question. And here my mind is led to inquire into the practical consequences of the two systems as thus stated.

“To me it appears very clear, that the man who considers justifying faith as consisting only in a general belief and approbation of the Gospel way of salvation, will be much more likely to rest contented with low views of the holiness of God, and with a feeble contrition and penitence on account of a sinful nature and sinful practice, than one who cannot rest satisfied with his views of Christ’s salvation till he is enabled to lay hold of the promises to his own personal comfort.

“The former may say, ‘God is holy and just, mankind are fallen and wicked, and Christ has purchased redemption,’ and

may, I think, much more easily thus rest contented with slight views of the nature of conversion and sanctification, than the latter can do, who examines himself whether he be actually weary and heavy-laden, and not only examines himself on these points, but prays importunately for deliverance from the plague of an evil heart, and for ability both to rejoice in God's salvation, and also to relish the beauty of holiness. The one may be content with knowing that he is to apply to the Saviour for every blessing, while the other feels that *he has* applied for the grace of God, knows whom he has trusted, and goes on cheerfully in the narrow way.

“§ 17. And here a distinction of some consequence in this inquiry occurs to my mind.

“An erroneous or ill-grounded appropriation of the merits of Christ is, I allow, much more dangerous than a defect in the aforesaid qualifications; but then, I think, such a delusion is, in fact, much less frequent, and, from the reason of the thing, much less likely to happen, than the other.

“A truly serious and intelligent person, who has studied the Scriptures, will not easily appropriate the merits of Christ to his own case, without a very strict examination into those qualifications which entitle him to do so. And if, in fact, he be striving to ‘enter in at the strait gate,’ or, in other words, be striving to obtain peace with God, by a sound faith in his Son, he will labour to attain those holy views of the divine character, and along with them, that deep contrition of soul, which will enable him to trust in Jesus with a conscience at ease through the blood of the covenant.

“§ 18. Whereas, on the other hand, a person who is instructed to look at the qualifications as the essence of his faith, and the foundation of his peace with God, may, as it appears to me, be much sooner brought into a belief, that he has obtained enough for the ease of his conscience in this world, and the safety of his soul in the next. I am, at present, not speaking of downright hypocrites who are deceiving both themselves and others, whatever may be their views of justifying faith, that is, whether they think it consists in qualifications or in appropriation, but of truly sound Christians, so far as a

judgment can be formed; and here I cannot but think (after much consideration), that the Christian whose notion of justifying faith consists in the attainment of qualifications, as its essence, is in much more danger of becoming negligent, and contented with a low state of grace, and, perhaps, of deceiving his own heart, and even of falling away at length from the soundness of Gospel doctrine and Gospel practice. The reason is, that his system is much more loose and undefined, and unless great care be taken, is liable to degenerate into pharisaism.

“Not so the other character. It is true, he must labour incessantly to obtain the very qualifications so often spoken of, but then he does not rest in those qualifications. They are to enable him to believe, that is, to appropriate the merits of Christ to his own case. His object, therefore, is by far more simple than that of the other, who rests in the qualifications as the end of his Christian exercises.

“§ 19. This, I think, is a distinction of considerable consequence in practice. For, it may be further observed, that the simplicity of which I here speak, pervades every part of the practice of that believer whose faith consists in a direct appropriation of the merits of Christ. It is by no means confined to the single act of believing. I wish I could so trace the difference between the two characters, now in the view of my mind, as to render that conception of the thing (which seems abundantly plain to myself) easy to be apprehended by others also.

“The appropriating believer has the Saviour before his eyes in every thing that he does. He looks constantly to him for orders, because he is the captain of his salvation, and he is fighting under his banners. In all his distresses he cries to him for help, because he has put his trust in him, and to him committed his cause. He is little shaken by temptation, because he is acquainted with his deliverer. He is not always seeking for his treasure, because he is conscious that he has found it; accordingly he values it and rejoices in its possession.

“It is very true that he was led to obtain this treasure, this pearl of great price, through the medium of qualifications and

preparatives. These qualifications pointed out to him the necessity of a Saviour, the misery of man, and the holiness and mercy of God; they therefore impelled him to lay hold of the proffered means, but having obtained this great end of all the means, it is the less necessary for him to keep these in perpetual contemplation, because the presence of his Saviour does for him all that he can desire, and all that can be needful for his happiness and for his progress in the Christian course.

“§ 20. As I trust it is the sincere desire of my mind to state all the arguments which occur to me on this subject, with strict impartiality, I must not dissemble that there does seem to be (after all) a certain view of this question which may be supposed to be favourable to Mr. E.’s conceptions of the nature of justifying faith.

“It may be urged, *e.g.* that notwithstanding all the opposition which I have made to Mr. E.’s ideas, I still have been compelled to make several very important concessions.

“*E.g.* Do I not allow that the qualifications of which we have so largely treated, are essential to the character of the true believer? Do I not allow that the Christian cannot possibly be justified without them? And then, further, have I not, in fact and substance, admitted that that act of appropriation by which the believer applies the Saviour to his own case, is an act not absolutely essential to his salvation? Have I not admitted, that if the qualifications be but genuine, the act of appropriation may be safely dispensed with, and that, in reality, this act may be considered as, without doubt or controversy, virtually implied in the mind of him who possesses the qualifications?

“Lastly, if these things be really so, is it possible to support a doubt on which side the advantage lies? and does not this great rule of practice suggest itself to our minds, *viz.*: ‘Let your anxiety be respecting the qualifications; examine them narrowly—use all diligence about them; watch every avenue to delusion in this matter. If you secure the qualifications, you cannot be essentially wrong—any other defect you may have will be venial; for, in truth, it will be rather a theoretical, than a practical defect.’

“§ 21. On the other hand, the man who lays great stress on his system of appropriation may (it is true) be safe; but still, his safety depends on the soundness of his qualifications, rather than on the confidence of his appropriation. In his appropriation, he may easily be deluded; and he is the more likely to be so, in proportion as he sets a high comparative value on that attainment, and thinks meanly of the requisite qualifications.

“It may, therefore, be thought, that, at the best, there can be but little gained by the system of appropriation, however correctly it may be understood in theory, or however justly applied in practice; but it is very obvious, that by a misapprehension of the doctrine, or a misapplication of it, the greatest mischief may be the consequence.

“§ 22. In this statement, it will not be denied, that there is so much truth as to call for abundant practical caution: and the caution will ever be found to consist in studiously contending for the due qualifications as essentially necessary to form the foundation of personal appropriation of the Saviour’s merits. For, no doubt, if this consideration be left out, or only slightly insisted on, we corrupt the word of God and pervert his Gospel to the destruction of the soul. But be it ever remembered, that on no occasion are we to surrender the truth, because it may, by possibility, be perverted or abused. Our business is to take care, that while we are contending for the sound and essential doctrine of appropriation, we do not forget, or lower, or speak lightly of the requisite qualifications. These must be insisted upon with all our might, and all our care and diligence. Moreover, the answer to such statements as the above in favour of the qualifications, whenever these are insisted on to the disparagement of the doctrine of appropriation, will ever consist in the two following things:—

“The first is, that this doctrine, when properly taught, by one who rightly divides the word of God, not only possesses every advantage which the system of qualifications can pretend to, but also carries the believer much further in his Christian views and conceptions, than that system can possibly do; and

no wonder: it is more Scriptural in itself, and therefore it is not to be treated as a piece of mere technical theory in religion. By this system the union with the Saviour becomes more close, more steady, and consequently cannot fail to prove more productive. The man who rests his all on preparatives and qualifications, or does so in a great measure, may, I allow, be still substantially right, in the main; but the man who is in the habit of appropriating, is he, who, I think, has a much more distinct view of Jesus Christ as his Redeemer, and will probably abide in him more uniformly throughout the course of his pilgrimage.

“To illustrate and support this point by Scriptural expressions and Scriptural examples, would be a very useful work, if undertaken and executed by one who is wise in the Sacred Writings, and who has had experience of the Divine life in his own soul, as well as of the artifices and buffetings of Satan.

“§ 23. The other thing to which I have just alluded, which ought also to be kept in mind, by any one who wishes to observe upon the aforesaid statement in favour of the notion of qualifications and preparatives, has already been touched on, in the course of these remarks, and particularly at § 16, viz., that whatever may be said in general, on the heads of the safety of qualifications, as opposed to the idea of appropriation, in the article of justifying faith, there is very great danger of a Christian’s resting content with much inferior degrees of holiness, and much slighter attainments of personal connexion with the Saviour, and much lower gifts of the Holy Spirit.

“And here also, I conceive, much might be said, to good purpose, on the great danger of resting in such low and doubtful qualifications. It might easily be shown, that it is by no means true, that this side of the question is so very safe as it is pretended to be.

“The man who is eager to appropriate, and who cannot appropriate without a broad and solid foundation to support him, such a man will, most probably, be anxious to abound in the true Christian preparatives or qualifications. Not so, I believe, the man whose system is to rest in the said qualifica-

tions; and the reason is very plain. The former has an object to obtain; he cannot gain his object, that is, he cannot appropriate, without the preparatives; he, therefore, labours to possess them: but the latter, having no distinct object in view, beyond a general notion of Christian qualifications, appears to me to want altogether that spur which accelerates the course of the former.

“Thus the argument is turned the other way; and a person well furnished with Gospel doctrines may, I think, prove this point, with much clearness and precision.”

It may be allowable to conclude this chapter with the quotation of an eloquent passage from one of Dean Milner’s sermons, apparently written while his mind was employed upon the subject of the foregoing dissertation*.

“It may be hard to say whether I do more harm by preaching ‘Peace! peace!’ to a mere nominal Christian, to a wicked worldling, who has obtained no saving interest in the Redeemer’s merits; or by denying to a sincere believer in Christ, that consolation and rest to his conscience, which the Scriptures hold forth to such characters. In both cases, I should act very ignorantly and very unfaithfully. The true servant of Christ has a right to look up to the Father of Jesus as his Father, and to Jesus himself as his elder Brother: and if this be so, why is not the man to be told so, in so many plain words? But in regard to one who, by sin, is daily crucifying his Saviour afresh, there can be neither truth nor propriety in applying the same language to him: he must, in the first place, deeply repent in dust and ashes, and, by prayer and application for mercy at the throne of grace, through Christ, must acquire ground to believe that he has an appropriate interest in the merits of the Redeemer.

“‘But have not all men (it will be asked) an interest in the sufferings and death of the Son of God? Has any particular person a ground for higher pretensions in this matter? Are we not all sinners, and therefore all on a perfect level in this

* See *Sermons of Dean Milner*, vol. i., p. 196.

respect?' Such questions, I acknowledge, are quite pertinent to this inquiry; and the answers which they call forth will very much elucidate the subject before us.

“It is very true, and be it ever remembered with unfeigned and universal gratitude, that Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. So far, every human creature that treads this globe may be said to have an important interest in the sufferings and death of Christ. Indeed, so very important is this truth, that it is the very first consideration that gives any good ground for hopes of pardon to a guilty sinner, and affords ease to his burdened soul. Here he fixes his foot; and though surrounded with fears and misgivings, with guilt and danger, still he may bid defiance to despair. ‘Christ,’ says he, ‘died for all sinners, without a single exception. The gate is strait, I do believe; but no one shall tell me it is not open.’ Such is the poor penitent’s argument, and, God be praised! it is a perfectly sound argument—and his interest in Jesus Christ is, so far, effectually established. I say, so far, because we must here most carefully distinguish, and remember, that this is by no means that interest in Christ which enables the sinner, in the true spirit of adoption, to cry ‘Abba Father;’ this is not that interest in Christ which a sanctified penitent servant of God has obtained.

“Once more; this general, or rather, universal interest in the Redeemer, of which I have been speaking, important as it is, is no more than what the greatest, and I may add, the most impenitent sinner alive may have. Nay, he actually has it, whether he ever makes use of it or not; and, on the dreadful supposition, that he dies impenitent, it will, at the last day, be his greatest condemnation, that he did not, while alive, make use of this interest. * * * * *

“There is, therefore, something further to be acquired, beyond this general or universal interest in Christ Jesus; something to be done by which an appropriate interest may be established; something on which may be grounded the relationship of Father and Son, between Almighty God as a Father, and the penitent sinner as one of his children—between Christ Jesus, the elder Brother, and the penitent

sinner, as a brother and joint heir with Christ his Lord. In other words, that general interest which all mankind have in the salvation and redemption by Jesus must be carried into effect by every man for himself, in each particular case, in order that Christ may not have shed his blood in vain.”

The above quotation cannot fail to be interesting to the readers of this memoir of Dean Milner, both as exhibiting a considerable accordance with the preceding thoughts on justification, and also as affording a fair sample of the usual style and manner of his addresses from the pulpit.

CHAPTER XII.

Animadversions upon Lord Grenville's Answer to Buonaparte's Letter to George III.—Correspondence.—Religious Experience.—William Hey, Esq.—Liberality of Dean Milner towards the poor of Leeds.—Letters to Rev. Wm. Richardson.—Distress of Mind.—Professor Carlyle.—Remarks on the Religious Experience of Dean Milner.—Letters.—Dr. Haweis' *Impartial History of the Church*.—Dean Milner's *Life* of his Brother.—Subsequent additions to the *Life* respecting the change in Joseph Milner's Religious Views.—Dr. Milner's Feelings during the Writing of the *Life*.—Elasticity of Spirits.—Charge of Irregularity recently brought against the late Rev. Joseph Milner.—Dr. Hook.—Letter to the Rev. James Stillingleet.—Dr. Haweis.—Letter to a Friend on the dangerous Illness of his Son.—Letters to Rev. Wm. Richardson.—Opinion of the present Bishop of Calcutta upon Dean Milner's Religious Publications.—Dean Milner's attachment to Cambridge.—His conscientious Employment of Time.

A.D. 1800. ÆTAT. 50.'

DEAN MILNER'S political sentiments, his decided and strong attachment to the existing institutions of the country, being considered, it is impossible not to perceive and admire the sagacity which dictated the letter from which the following extract is taken, on the subject of Lord Grenville's answer to the letter then recently addressed to King George III., by Napoleon Buonaparte.

It is needless to say that numbers of persons belonging to the political party to which Dr. Milner conscientiously adhered, thought and advised differently; but in politics, as in all other matters, he invariably thought for himself.

“TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

“*Queen's College, January 21, 1800.*

* * * “If I had had his* note to answer, I would have been a deal more civil in words, but equally firm in substance. They were, I think, perfectly right in not letting the King answer—but why could they not have said, ‘We are glad to hear of the very name of peace, in any way or in any form;

but what signifies asking us whether the war is to be eternal? You propose nothing; we have formerly proposed, and have been sent back with contempt. You show no disposition to peace but in talk; and at the very same time, you tell your armies you are going to invade us, &c., &c.’

“It seems to me, that if Buonaparte were meditating some violent measure, either on us, or on the allies, or both; and wished to influence France, and make the people contribute freely, and the soldiers fight in earnest, we, by such an answer, should concur with him most effectually.

“In a word, conceive him at the head of his troops, with our answer in his hands, and commenting upon it.

“I cannot think, that any thing would have been lost, by shewing a disposition to hear.

“I would have stated the objection arising from the instability of their government; but still, I would not have considered it as an effectual bar to hearing what they have to say. It is ridiculous to talk of Buonaparte’s government being a government only of a day or two; be it so. Suppose he offers to quit Belgium, and to put you and the allies in possession of everything they could wish; would you refuse the advantage because he is an upstart?

“There is no probability of any such thing, I believe, in the main; yet I declare I should be surprised at nothing; and I would never have exasperated him, nor shut his mouth. Hear him, I say, hear him; but don’t give up a particle to him. I suppose it will be said, that he wanted his authority to be recognised by us—it may be so—but possibly, he wanted it to be rejected. I don’t know enough of the interior of France, or of his particular views, to say well what he wants; but I am sure, there would have been great use in letting him go on, and in seeing what he is driving at. There would have been no harm in expressing the utmost doubts as to his stability, nor would I have expressed those doubts at all in friendly terms; but there is a deal of difference between friendship and civility. Nothing like a wish for his stability, should have come from me: and for similar reasons, I would have said nothing about the old line of princes. Alas! alas! only think—in a very

short time you may be on your knees to this very B., and begging him to admit you to negotiate! I hope our people will not ride the great horse; it is such a horrid measure. Not that, on the whole, I expect a successful negotiation; but I wish the argument to be on our side when it is broken off, and that we may say with truth, as the Americans did, ‘We have exhausted the last drop of the cup of reconciliation.’ Those that give our Ministers credit for more discretion and foresight than I do, may view this matter in a different light. They may suppose, that they know, that nine parts out of ten of France are ripe for restoring monarchy; and that the allies, the three great powers, have solemnly coalesced, and sworn to set all matters on their old footing; and lastly, that they will keep their vows. If all this be absolutely foreknown, I grant it will make some difference in the reasoning; but really not a great deal, even then; still I would have given him civil words, however I had thought it necessary to guard against strengthening his authority.

“Every body that I see, thinks with me, except W—who has long been violent for the Duke of Portland, Wyndham, &c.”

The following letter to Mr. Richardson of York, although somewhat similar in its character to one addressed a short time before to Mr. Wilberforce*, is, if possible, yet more touching and affecting. It cannot fail to be read with advantage and with deep interest by all religious persons; and to such of the religious friends of the late Dean Milner as may still survive, it will be in the highest degree satisfactory.

These considerations justify its publication.

“TO THE REV. WILLIAM RICHARDSON.

“*Queen’s College Lodge,*

“MY DEAR SIR,

“*4th February, 1800.*

“When we are upon a footing of ceremony with people, we seldom fail to answer their letters very punctually; and I assure

* Chap. x. p. 177.

you I have often thought it to be an odd sort of proof of friendship, to neglect, for a long time, the kind communications of those whom we sincerely love and regard. It is far from being the best sort of proof, I admit; but still it is a real proof—at least, I must not give up the point just now, when I have before me (unanswered) your truly kind letter of the 23rd of November last.

“It set my mind at ease at the time, in regard to the subjects it referred to, and I have looked it over several times since with great pleasure. I have experienced a very afflicting winter on the whole. I have had a deal of pain; but by far the worst to bear is the affection of the mind.

“My views have, of late, been exceedingly dark and distressing; in a word, Almighty God seems to hide his face.

“I entrust the secret hardly to any earthly being. I endeavour to pour out my heart before God; but really I receive so little that I can fairly call answers, in any shape, that my heart fails, and I know not what will become of me. I feel assured, that, for a good while, my earnest desire has been to serve God according to my station, and to give myself wholly to Him; and I hoped I was going on tolerably well: but I find it no easy matter to look death and judgment in the face; and the thing which most dispirits me is, that my own case takes up so much of my attention, that, in a measure, my usefulness is destroyed, or at least lessened.

“I see my fault to be, that I am impatient in prayer, and do not hope and wait quietly: but how to get the better of this, I am utterly at a loss. I don't know whether I make you understand me perfectly. In one word, as my prospects here in this world grow darker and darker as to bodily decay, I would fain have my evidences of a good hope brighten,—else, what is to support me? There is, doubtless, a good deal of bodily affection mixed with this; but it is not all so, and the devil is very busy. I bless God, however, that I never lose sight of the Cross, as the great thing to cling to; and though I should die without seeing any personal interest in the Redeemer's merits, I think,—I hope, I should be found at his feet. If I am to be saved at all, it is assuredly in this way.

This conviction has not yet been shaken in my mind; but it is a blind sort of faith, and nearer allied to despair than to confidence. I see plainly, indeed, that there is no other way, but still I do not see but that I may perish.

“I will thank you for a word at your leisure. My door is bolted all the time I am writing this, for I am full of tears.

“The first volume of the *Ecclesiastical History* is nearly reprinted: it has been a very laborious job; but if I am spared I will try what I can make of the fourth volume.

“I am ordered by the Archbishop to preach at St. James’s Chapel on Friday, the 28th instant, and I certainly intend to do so. They don’t often hear the truth, I fear.

“I. M.

“P.S. Our good friend Stillingfleet wrote to me, by this post, the kindest letter imaginable: quite in his style.

“I have heard from Carlyle, at Constantinople; all is well. I repeat it, I am extremely pleased with Bulmer.”

The state of Dean Milner’s health at this period induced him to recur to the advice of his friend, the late William Hey, Esq., of Leeds, whose letters exhibit eminent piety and friendly regard, as well as professional skill.

In a letter dated February 19th, 1800, this gentleman writes,—“I will endeavour to dispose of the liberal supply you have sent me, in comforting many distressed persons.”

This passage refers to a sum of money sent at stated times by Dr. Milner to Mr. Hey, to be by him distributed among such of his poor patients as might be unable to procure for themselves the comforts which their circumstances required. It would ill become the biographer of Dean Milner to publish the deeds of Christian liberality which were done by him in secret; but it may be allowable to say, that amid his many acts of benevolence, to strangers, as well as to his own poor relatives, he was ever ready to allow the peculiar claims of his indigent fellow-townsmen of Leeds; with respect to them in particular it might be truly said, that “the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon” him; and he “caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy.”

Mr. Richardson, as it appears, replied very kindly to the affecting communication from Dean Milner, dated February 4th, and the Dean, always peculiarly grateful for kindness, thus again wrote to him from the residence of Mr. Wilberforce, in Old Palace Yard.

“TO THE REV. WILLIAM RICHARDSON.

“*Old Palace Yard,*

Westminster, March 7th, 1800.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“I will seize a vacant moment (and it is but a moment) to assure you that your very kind letter of February 17th, which is now before me, was truly a cordial to my mind, almost overwhelmed with darkness and sorrow.

“May God bless you and visit you with his choicest blessings, for so noticing your poor friend.

“I would hope you are not entirely mistaken in my case, and I know you dare not flatter; yet, on the other hand, I must not, I fear, give you that full credit for understanding my situation in spirituals, which I should wish to do.

“Next to any immediate act of kindness which you are so good as to show to my poor self, there is no possible way in which you can so effectually secure and call forth my grateful feelings towards you, as by the friendly attention which you pay to the writings of my deceased brother. I know the trouble such an undertaking gives; and therefore I know how to appreciate your regard to his memory. Still I entreat you not to flag in this matter*. Again, my dear friend, God bless you.

“Your affectionate I. M.”

The following letter to the same excellent friend affords, besides other interesting matter, an instance of the great kindness which it was Dr. Milner's invariable practice to bestow upon such deserving young men as were recommended to his favourable attention.

* Mr. Richardson was engaged in preparing for publication a volume of Joseph Milner's *Sermons*.

“TO THE REV. WILLIAM RICHARDSON.

“*Queen’s College Lodge,*

April 10th, 1800.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“Mr. B. kindly called upon me to-day, to say that a friend of his was going to York to-morrow morning; and so I take advantage of the opportunity to write you a short letter, though I have nothing very particular to say.

“B. really is a very amiable, mild, taking young man. I am greatly pleased with him. His public dispute called his *act*, is lately put off till the next term, on account of the death of a Master of Arts of St. John’s. When such an event takes place in term time, it causes three days non-term, and no business is done: so poor B., who was ready charged and primed, must keep in that state till he has an opportunity of firing. He was very little discomposed about it, though he said he could not well set about other business till he had got that off his mind. I have known some people in his circumstances exceedingly ruffled by such an event.

“He seems, indeed, excellently disposed, and I wish his modesty would let him call upon me oftener than he does; for it would really be a pleasure to me to do a service to such a lad: and those subjects have been so familiar to me for a long time, that it gives me no trouble to assist one in his situation. I gave him some advice about spending his summer, but I mean to send for him and examine him particularly.

“May Almighty God bless you always, and return seven times into your bosom your kindness shewn to me lately, both in what you said, and in the dispatch you used in answering my letter.

“I cannot but think there is something sadly wrong about my views, or my way of going on, in some respect or other, or I should not be so very much in this great darkness and dismay. I assure you I sometimes think my mind will lose all its tone. I aim as much as possible at two things:—1st, to keep up a steady, praying, waiting spirit, for light; and, 2nd, to surrender my own will to His will entirely, and therefore to

allow no known sin. This must surely be right ; but I suppose I do not do what I say. There is something wrong, I am satisfied, or I should not be so miserable, and have so little confidence towards God, at the times when I most want it. There is nothing that I see clearer, than that my continued afflictions are useful and even necessary to me. In intervals of health, I can pray very sincerely for the return of illness, if expedient. I really tremble when I grow better, so disposed am I to wander into the old way of worldly-mindedness, and of pleasing self ; but when the fits of illness come, I do not, I believe, properly kiss the rod. Yet I really cannot charge myself with much murmuring ; I thank God, I have got over that a good deal ; but a sort of melancholy sulkiness comes on, and a want of cheerful submission. No earthly being can tell what I suffer in mind and body. I should be very grateful to you to write again to me at your leisure.

“ It pleased God that I got through my business in London tolerably well.

“ There are certain things that I must do, or else I must give up all. I endeavour to go on as well as I can, and to live, as it were, from day to day ; my motto is, ‘ Sufficient for the day,’ &c. &c.

“ I am your obliged and faithful friend and servant,

“ I. MILNER.

“ N.B.—The last account from Carlyle was very concise ; he was quite well ; had travelled four hundred miles through Asia Minor towards Jerusalem ; he was at Kemar, opposite Cyprus.”

There are, probably, persons who think that “ the surviving friends of Dean Milner,”—to adopt the words which he himself used in reference to his departed brother,—“ would have consulted his reputation much better by stifling the contents” of this, as well as of some preceding letters, “ than by thus publishing them, and proclaiming the weakness, and even the wickedness, of human nature*.”

* See Dr. MILNER'S *Life of his Brother*.

The author of this Memoir willingly confesses, that she has felt some doubt upon this subject. In addition, however, to the important consideration of the unquestionable nature of the evidence afforded by this and others of Dr. Milner's confidential letters, of his genuine and deep anxiety on the great subject of religion, she had, for her direction and guidance, his own example. Acting, doubtless, with a view to the glory of God, and the spiritual advantage of his fellow-creatures, he did not deem it necessary or expedient to withhold from the public eye various private reflections of his departed brother. On the contrary, he has suffered the readers of his *Life of Joseph Milner* to "enter" with him "into his closet," and to "watch the genuine effusions of his soul," while prostrate before God. He was well aware that by thus laying open the secret recesses of his brother's heart, he should cause much surprise to persons unacquainted with the real nature of the Gospel of Christ, and might perhaps give occasion to some anxious inquiries, such as, "What is the cause of all this mourning, under a sense of sin? What means this uncomfortable darkness of mind? Whence this lamentation over the strength of corruptions, and the difficulty of resisting temptations?" To all such inquiries, he gives the true answer, alike applicable in this, in that, and in every similar case. "These complaints," says he, "are made because he who utters them has an entire hatred of sin, and an exquisite sensibility in perceiving its motions, and because he hungers and thirsts after righteousness*."

A remark of Joseph Milner, already quoted, may perhaps here occur to the reader's recollection:—"They are always the most distressed who have the least reason to be so; it is the best sign in the world."

The following very interesting letter gives the first intimation of Dr. Milner's intention to write a 'Life' of his brother, and exhibits his views and feelings with regard to that publication:—

* *Life of Rev. Joseph Milner.*

“ TO THE REV. WILLIAM RICHARDSON.

“ 15th May, 1800,

“ DEAR SIR,

Queen's College.

“ I have before me your's of the 13th April last. You will have thought me long in answering, particularly as you must now be near the conclusion*. * * * * When you hear all, you will, perhaps, rather wonder that I have done so well as I have, though I have but a lame account to give.

“ 1. I have learned not to trouble myself about *errata*; I do as well as I can during the printing of the sheets; but after all is over, I really think that the insertion of an *errata*-sheet is only proclaiming one's own errors or negligence, and it makes people look at it and say, ‘How badly,’ or ‘How carelessly, this book is printed;’ persons who, perhaps, would not otherwise have found out one single error. Observe, I speak only of common, little, trifling, errors, such as anybody can correct.

“ 2. I had only to reprint the author's introduction to the second edition of the first volume†, and then it would have been done, but a most vile affair has happened, which gives me a good deal of trouble. Dr. Haweis has lately published an “impartial history” of the Church of Christ. If you have seen it, you will perceive that it is quite Jacobinical in Church matters throughout. He speaks handsomely of my brother in places, but he has his eye constantly upon him, to pull to pieces his notions of establishments.

“ All this would not in the least have affected me: but there are in it the most abominable misquotations and misrepresentations of his (my brother's) sentiments, insomuch that my friends are clear that they ought not to pass unnoticed by me. The good to be done is, I trust, my object, when I say, that I acquiesce in their judgment, and am writing a sort of long advertisement or preface to this said volume; if I am able to work, it will be ready in three or four weeks.

* Of the revision of the volume of *Sermons*.

† Of the *Church History*.

“3. Besides the above, I wish to write something like a ‘Life’ of my poor dear deceased brother. I am at work, and have honest Stillingfleet’s papers before me.

“My first view was to have written myself all that may be called the domestic part of his life, and then to have requested you to have picked from Stillingfleet’s account* a few pages, and also to have added your own brief sentiments respecting the internal change of his mind in religious matters. You would, either of you, have done that much better than I could; and, further, it would have been a very great pleasure to me to see such an account of his life go down to posterity with all our three names bound together. I do not yet entirely give up the hope that something or other of that sort may be done†; but, when I set to work, I really found it would so embarrass me to keep clear of the religious part of his character, that I could not get on at all on that plan, and therefore I have much encroached on what I had intended to leave to you and to Stillingfleet.

“I have written rapidly, and the thing is very incorrect at present; but my friends, who have seen it, say it will do exceedingly well, and, that, though long, it is very entertaining.

“Here, again, I wish every line that is not likely to do some good to be blotted out. In commending my brother, I know I am going most expressly against his wish; however, I say not a word but what is most strictly true.

“4. Now to come to the point. I mean to send you this life of my brother in about a fortnight, by Mr. Ogle, of Jesus College. I could send it sooner, so far as I am concerned, because, having Dr. Haweis to take under hand, I am hard worked, and I must send you it very rough. Indeed I wish, and do beg of you to cut and slash, and do exactly with it as you think fit. You will find in it many entertaining things, and

* Mr. Stillingfleet, as appears from the printed *Life*, had himself compiled, and transmitted to Dean Milner, a *Life* of his brother Joseph.

† In substance it has been done; for

the names of Richardson and Stillingfleet will always be associated in memory with those of JOSEPH and ISAAC MILNER.

some instructive, which, probably, you have never heard of: it has almost broken my poor heart to write it; and, I assure you, I live from day to day, expecting every day, or nearly so, absolutely to break down. * * *

“ I leave it to your judgment entirely, to add a little more from *Stillingfleet*, if you think proper, and also to insert a page or two of your own, on the nature of the change both in my brother’s heart and head, in religious concerns.

“ This plan I cannot give up: it would, I repeat it, be very pleasant to me; but then I do not press you,—judge for yourself when you see the thing, and the state it is in.

“ I shall be ready, whenever you please, with the volume of *History*; for I hope to have it all printed off, and *Dr. Haweis* well flogged, before I come to you at *York*, on or about the 19th or 20th of *June*; if that should suit, so as not to interfere with your summer excursions. * * * As to the publication of the books, a month or two is of little consequence; or rather, I think, people get more settled towards *September* and *October* than during the summer months; and we had better not spend our fire to no purpose.

“ I shall wait for your opinion and advice, and am, dear Sir,

“ Your obliged friend,

“ Very sincerely, I. M.”

The sparkles of constitutional gaiety, which enliven this otherwise grave and serious letter, will forcibly recall the memory of *Dr. Milner* to the minds of those who enjoyed his personal acquaintance.

The following extracts from a letter, addressed to the same friend, and referring chiefly to the composition and publication of the *Life of Joseph Milner*, exhibit, in a strong light, the Dean’s extreme tenderness of heart, and his unbounded confidence in the judgment and good-will of *Mr. Richardson*.

“ *May, 1800, Queen’s College.*

“ MY DEAR MR. RICHARDSON.

Thursday night.

“ It was very much my wish to have a few hours more to employ upon the narrative which I send you. Still, I don’t

know that I could have done much more at it, unless I could have had a previous talk with you.

“Friends are partial, and often, not quite sincere. They are here very much pleased with what I have written; but I do entreat you, if you have the least regard for me, to do with this manuscript exactly as you think best. Cut and slash,—cut and slash as much as you please.

* * * * *

“I send you good Stillingfleet’s narrative along with it; and if you think it right to pick out a few pages of his, and to add a few of your own, descriptive of the interior of my dear brother’s religious principles and religious feelings, it would be exceedingly acceptable to me; but I do not press you.

“I have not neglected business, I assure you; I have been most uncommonly worked; you know I told you how Dr. Haweis plagued me. You will now do just as you think fit; and I shall expect your commands, whether I am to come by York about the 20th of June, or to wait till my return from Carlisle.

“Oh! my dear Sir, if you did but know how the wounds of my poor heart bleed afresh during this business, you would pity me. At the same time, I will freely own that, though I feel, and bitterly, yet there is something of a sort of sense, that I am doing what I ought to do on the occasion, and that thought relieves; but, do save me all you can.

“Yours very affectionately,

“I. M.

“*To the Rev. William Richardson.*”

The following most characteristic letter, having been written in the most unrestrained freedom of confidential intercourse, throws yet greater light upon the feelings and wishes of Dr. Milner concerning the composition and publication of his *Life* of his brother.

“ TO THE REV. WILLIAM RICHARDSON.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND, “ *Queen’s College, June 4, 1800.*

“ I received your kind letter with the proposals, &c.*, the very morning that Mr. Ogle set off from this place with my little parcel for you.

“ 1st. First, then, I must be at Carlisle on the 22nd instant at farthest, and consequently I must leave York some time on the 20th.

“ 2ndly. In regard to being at your house; you are very good, and I take it exceedingly kind,—I feel it, I assure you. At the same time, believe me, a man of my infirmities would rather be at an inn, than at any friend’s whatever: he can indulge his ill tempers better.

“ 3rdly. It has been supposed that M—— A——, of Leeds, was particularly well acquainted with my brother’s state of mind at the time of his change, and had interviews with him.

“ I dare say you have heard my brother speak of that matter; and I confess, my opinion is, that he would not communicate anything material; for if I remember, he was thought by my brother, not to have conducted his advice very prudently.

“ He is a worthy creature, and, I believe, is much improved; and yet it was a strange thing to bid his audience ‘ Read the *Anti-Jacobin Review,*’ and that I heard him say from the pulpit, last summer, myself.

“ You will know best whether he is likely to communicate anything useful.

“ 4thly. You will now have read my papers; I fear they are too long, but I did not well know where to stop. You will have observed, that all I have said does suppose something to be added respecting the heart-work, the internal struggles, the change of views, &c.

“ 5thly. I wish, really, you would be so good as to say no more about ‘ spoiling my work,’ with the addition of yours, or any body’s else. It is not to be considered as a thing of that

* Proposals for the publication of a second edition of the first volume of
JOSEPH MILNER’S *Ecclesiastical History*.

sort: it is a plain, simple narrative, and reads well enough, because the matter arranges itself, and because the life itself also is truly entertaining. When you have read and considered it, you will best know what it wants. I repeat it, I should like us all to go bound up together, that is what I should like, but I see the difficulty, and my heart is almost broken with the business.

“When I have mentioned my wishes as above, I do not mean to say that I want you to take much trouble, and yet it is unfair to ask you to appear at all in it, without giving you a respectable magnitude and portion—I really feel all that, on your account. If you like better to add a little without your name—or—nay, I know not what to say.

“I give you *carte blanche*.

“6thly. I return you a few copies of the Proposals which I have got struck off.

“I rather think it may be as well to clip off the bottom sentence about Haweis just at present; and to let that fulmination appear just at the time or a fortnight before.

“A sad ruffled letter—

“But I am always yours truly and affectionately,
“I. M.”

All persons who were intimately acquainted with Dr. Milner will allow, that the foregoing letter may be justly styled “most characteristic.” It strikingly exhibits, besides other remarkable qualities, that peculiar elasticity of mental constitution by which he was happily distinguished—happily, because this elasticity was the very quality of mind which, if the expression may be permitted, protected him against the otherwise overwhelming force of his own fervent affections.

For the purpose of rectifying a mistake which the perusal of the above letter may possibly have excited in the minds of some readers, it is proper to observe, that the *Life* of Joseph Milner is published exactly as it came from the pen of the Dean, without any such addition, in that part of it which relates to the great change in his brother’s religious views, as in this letter he desires.

In a note appended to the printed *Life*, a declaration to this effect is made by the Rev. William Richardson.

It should also be observed, that to the subsequent editions of the *Life*, large and important additions were made by the Dean himself.

The motives which induced him thus to enlarge this work, are thus stated by himself*.

“The writer has been informed, that, after all the explanation furnished in the several pages of the first edition of this narrative, respecting the religious sentiments of Mr. Milner, and the change which they underwent, some well-disposed persons have expressed a wish that still further light had been thrown on these subjects.

“Two distinct questions are asked:—

“1st. What defect or failing could there be, or what change could be necessary in the character of a clergyman, who, from his first going into orders, is stated to have been a proficient in literature sacred and profane; perfectly orthodox in opinion; zealous and practical in preaching; and exemplary in conduct?

“2ndly. If an alteration for the better really took place, what are the circumstances which contributed to the improvement of a character, apparently already so excellent? In one word, what is the history and the nature of the alteration?”

To these inquiries, which, as Dean Milner observes, “are not questions of speculation or mere curiosity,” but which “lead to discussions of the last importance,” brief, but comprehensive and satisfactory answers are afforded. Otherwise than luminously and impressively, Dr. Milner could not write upon any important subject; it may, therefore, be easily believed, that in replying to the weighty questions here propounded, he writes with extraordinary force and perspicuity. The *Life of the Rev. Joseph Milner* is, however, so well known, that it is sufficient to refer the serious reader to any of the later editions of that truly admirable piece of biography†.

* See second edition of the *Life*, to a charge lately brought against Joseph Milner, in common with some

† It is perhaps proper here to advert to other excellent clergymen of the pe-

The second edition of the first volume of the *History of the Church of Christ*, of which, with its long preface, Dr. Milner, in his letter to Mr. Richardson, dated May 15th, speaks*, as likely to be “ready in three or four weeks,” was published in the succeeding August.

To this publication allusion is made in the following letter.

“TO THE REV. WILLIAM RICHARDSON.

“MY DEAR SIR, “*Queen’s College, September 8, 1800.*

“You must know that the present Bishop of Lincoln and myself were very intimate at Cambridge.

“About two years ago, he desired me to get him my brother’s first volume of *Ecclesiastical History*. I did not succeed; nor, to say the truth, did I take much pains about it, as I foresaw there would soon be a second edition. I therefore thought it but right to send him a copy of the second edition of Vol. I., the moment it was struck off; and the inclosed is the answer from his Lordship, received by me yesterday.

“You will think it curious enough to read I am sure; and therefore I have thought it worth while to send you it; but I beg you will not fail to return it*.

riod; a charge of “daring violation of the regulations of the Church;” See Dr. Hook’s *Visitation Sermon*, first edition, published in 1838. It is true that in the third and subsequent editions, the accusation is cancelled; but as that circumstance may have escaped the notice of many persons who may have a high respect for Dr. Hook’s authority, I may be permitted to observe that an attentive perusal of the *Life of the Rev. Joseph Milner* might have convinced Dr. H. of the injustice of such an accusation. It is there expressly stated, that according to the best legal opinions which the kingdom afforded, “Mr. Milner, by meeting his own parishioners in his own parish, had done nothing contrary to any law whatsoever.”

The chapter “On Ecclesiastical Establishments,” in the second volume of the *History of the Church*, is likewise decisive as to the sentiments of the author of that work.

Joseph Milner was, doubtless, a man of extraordinary zeal; and in his laborious discharge of his sacred office, probably taught “from house to house,” in a manner unusual among clergymen of less energy; but so far from being guilty of “daring violations of the regulations of the Church,” he would, from principle, have deprecated any approach to such a line of conduct.

* See page 211.

† This letter was not found among Dr. Milner’s papers. It is therefore probable that he had destroyed it.

“It is a lamentable truth, that the bishops of our country do not understand the real state of religion; and yet I am not sure, that their ignorance has not, in some cases, its uses.

“The Bishop of * * * , for example, has, I am told, acted very inconsistently; that is, he has, in certain instances, been most unreasonably severe with godly young men, and, in others, has shown himself sufficiently friendly.

“May God open their eyes, and incline their hearts!

“As to binding up my *Animadversions* with *The Sermons*, as the Bishop of Lincoln hints, I think your proposal the better, viz., to give them to the possessors of the first volume of the *History*; and they may, indeed, also be given to such purchasers of the *Sermons* as appear to be reading persons.

“I am, dear Sir, yours affectionately,

“I. M.”

The following truly affecting letter reveals most unreservedly the views and state of mind of Dean Milner while engaged in the composition of the *Life* of his brother.

“TO THE REV. JAMES STILLINGFLEET.

“*Queen’s College Lodge,*

September 10, 1800.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“I acknowledge I was in debt to you for a letter, and for a very kind one too. The contents of this last, also, furnish a new proof of your kindness, and of that tenderness with which you always treat *mentem meam exulceratam*.

“Indeed, my dear friend, I never expect that sore to heal.

“In regard to my feelings respecting the *Life* of the deceased, most certainly no job was ever undertaken by me with so much reluctance, nor executed with so much perturbation and tumult. They say that does not much appear in the writing, which I very much wonder at—and so far it is well.

“Your very kind letter truly and verily sets my mind at ease: not that I did not know very well, that you would perfectly excuse me—yet still there was a sort of delicacy in the matter: and it is highly agreeable to me, that you have had the consideration and the good nature to speak first, and so to leave me no doubt on the business.

“ If your papers had contained the plague I could not have been more fearful of opening them; nor did I once untie the string or peep into them, till I was flogged by good Richardson last winter, to let him have the *Life*.

“ The first thing that struck me, after I had read yours, was, that there were a number of entertaining things about him and us, which took place when he was a boy, which were only known to myself, or if you had heard of them, you had probably never heard them very exactly, nor in detail; and so, that there was nobody but myself that could execute that part well.

“ Thus the idea with which I sat down to write was as follows: that the *Life* should be considered and owned to be written by us three; viz., you, Richardson, and myself—that each of us should execute our respective parts exactly *ad arbitrium*, that is, at the pleasure of the individual; and I conceived that a sort of whole would belong to what each should do; and lastly, that the three wholes would constitute one finished whole complete.

“ Such were my ideas at setting out, and if you have seen the manuscript, you will have observed, that it ran all, for many pages, upon that plan. I conceived that my part would principally be the anecdotes and the minutiae, and particularly of the very early part of his life; and then, that yours and Richardson’s would comprise the graver and more important parts. I was greatly pleased with this plan in my own mind; and permit me to say and assure you, that the idea of our (all three) going down together, bound up, was to me a soothing and most pleasant reflection.

“ Why, then, was not this plan adhered to?

“ The fact is this—I began as I have said; nay, I went on, almost, if not entirely through, with this system still in view.

“ I wrote as rapidly as possible; I could not stop to compress or reflect—my heart would have broken if I had—or at least, I should very soon have been incapacitated for going on—so on I went, slap dash, through all the parts of his life—putting down all that I could recollect, or that struck me as particular; still, as you will observe, steering as clear as I could of the

history of his own internal change of mind in religious things; and still meaning, that all that, and all that was connected with it, should be left to you and to Richardson.

“But it seems, that I had been so particular, and had swelled the pages to such a degree, that Richardson thought there was not a deal wanting; otherwise, it was still my wish, that so much might be selected from your account, and so much added from Mr. R.’s, as should complete the whole—and, that your part and his part should consist pretty much of such things as I was less able to speak to.

“Such were my ideas; and I thought such a system might be made to appear tolerably consistent.

“But, my dear friend, I felt that I was, in this business, the most incompetent judge in the world: and, therefore, I was, and am most happy, that Richardson undertook to settle the whole without calling upon me any more, for my opinion or interference.

“This was most exceedingly kind on his part—for indeed, I cannot make you understand how much this matter tried my spirits and shattered constitution. I begged of Richardson to cut and slash my pages, and to alter, and, in short, to do exactly what he thought best with all the materials; and if you had been at York, instead of him, of course I should have made precisely the same request to you.

“All this is not to be considered as apology, no, nor any part of it,—you don’t want any apology, I well know; but after the love and kindness you have shown, and the pains you have taken, it would have been brutal not to have explained to you the history of the thing.

“I have so little room left, that I must be as pithy as possible. 1st. I hope your dear E—— goes on well. Does God bless him, and preserve him in the same modest, diligent, inquiring state of mind, that he appeared to be in, at Carlisle? How beautiful are such dispositions in a youth! and how soon are they, usually, apt to be lost! 2ndly. I do beg, that we may contrive to meet somewhere—you used to come often this way—I beg we may meet either here, or in the north. 3rdly. I am sorry you should think I am too severe with Dr. Haweis; I

think, that when you have read his book, you will alter your opinion. Every body I have asked, has thought that he deserved the drubbing.

“ Yours, I. M.”

“ N. B. The misrepresentations of facts of which Dr. Haweis has been guilty, merit all the blows he has received, completely. On that head I am convinced, and have no remorse—but the doubt with me has been, whether there be any part of him sound, as a servant of our common Lord? and here, the more I have inquired, the worse I have liked him. See how scandalously he is misleading the public, in giving them a general notion of evangelical preachers. Hear our friend, Mr. Richardson, on this head, and his opinion of Haweis. His character, of old, is very problematical.”

To another friend, Dean Milner, in reference to the same subject, thus writes :

“ In regard to Dr. Haweis, I have briefly to observe, that neither any contempt he could have expressed, nor any opinions he could have advanced, would ever have induced me to take the least notice of him, if he had not been guilty of the grossest misrepresentation of matters of fact. No man reveres more than I do, both liberty of thought and liberty of expression: but when a person falsifies facts in the supporting of his opinions, he ought, in my judgment, to be exposed as very dangerous: and on this head, my good and worthy friend, permit me to say, that I do not see how the judgments of well-disposed persons can possibly be divided.

“ I am, dear Sir, always yours, faithfully,

“ ISAAC MILNER.”

On the 19th of September, Dr. Milner, to whom Mr. Wilberforce had written warmly concerning his own domestic happiness, thus replied to him:—“ Perhaps these wonderful smiles are for some future trial; continue to watch:” and this very reply found Mr. Wilberforce, who was at Bognor with his family, in the deepest distress on account of the dangerous illness of his wife. On hearing of the affliction which had thus befallen

his friend, Dr. Milner hastened to Bognor, and remained with him till the danger was past.

“What a blessing to have such friends!” is Mr. Wilberforce’s remark in his Diary, with reference to this occurrence*.

About the beginning of October, Dr. Milner, ever ready to regard any claim upon his attention, thus wrote to Mr. Wilberforce:—

“Yesterday I received a letter from Matthew Montague, strongly recommending Mr. Perceval to be University Counsel if Mr. Le Blanc be made a Judge, and urging also your favourable opinion of him in the strongest terms.

“I think the office is but five guineas per annum, or a retainer, and I hope we shall have no business for him. I have answered that I think the Vice-Chancellor appoints or nominates, and that the University usually acquiesces in his nomination. I never remember a contest.

“If there should be a contest, my long residence has connected me directly, or indirectly, with so many lawyers, that it would be highly improper in me to engage my little interest before I know the candidates, particularly as two lawyers are of our own college.

“— will be a candidate also, I doubt not, and I am sure he will think himself the fittest for the office. I confess I think him exceedingly unfit, and I wish, in order that all difficulties may be removed, that somebody may be fixed on decidedly fit and experienced.

“From all I have heard, however, I have reason to believe, that Perceval is both brilliant and solid.

“Christian says, ‘Oh, no!’ and calls him flippant, and will not, in the conversations I have had with him, hear of any body but himself for University Counsel.

“Yours affectionately, I. M.”

Mr. Perceval was elected University Counsel in October, 1800, and held that office till the year 1807.

* See *Life of Wilberforce*, vol. ii.

On the 5th of November, Dean Milner, always disposed to sympathize with others in their affliction, thus wrote to an old and valued friend, one of whose sons was dangerously ill:—

“ Queen’s College Lodge,

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

November 5, 1800.

“ Your two last letters have made our hearts exceedingly heavy, and the prospect is truly afflicting to poor Robert* in his peculiar circumstances. We see him constantly, and endeavour to be a little support to his spirits; but I trust he habitually looks to the right place, where alone sound support is to be had. I was about writing to you a few lines the two last evenings, but felt so sorrowful and so indisposed, and had so little to say to the purpose, that I omitted to do it.

“ I endeavour always to remember your afflicted son and all your family in the warmest applications I can make to the throne of grace. I would have written to John himself before this time, and have often been tempted to do so, but that I feared to flutter him too much, and perhaps injure his tottering health. You may, I think, venture to tell him that I have the most affectionate feelings towards him at all times, and that I now reflect, with most peculiar pleasure, on the bold and decided part which God has enabled him to take in the ministerial functions since he was in orders. He conducted himself here, where the trial was difficult and formidable, with such a mixture of warmth and prudence as he may now review with solid comfort. Far be it from me to suggest the least false or self-righteous source of comfort; but this I say, if, in any dark moments, he should be tempted to doubt whether he loves Christ or not, I can have no doubt, nor ought he to have any, but that Christ loves him; otherwise He would never have made him so much his willing instrument and servant in the ministry. Such things never come from mere human nature. Let him, therefore, consider the whole of last year as it was, viz., a gracious smile of his Redeemer, and a smile too that may be preparatory to his present suffering. You may add also, if

* A younger son of the same friend, and a Student of Queen’s College.

it will not fatigue him, that I have mentioned repeatedly (since he left us) with peculiar pleasure, the frequent conversations we had together on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

“May God support you, dear Sir, in this new affliction. He has carried you through many already, and with very evident profit.

“I remain your affectionate friend,

“ISAAC MILNER.”

To the reader who, by the perusal of Dean Milner's confidential letters, has already been made acquainted with his feelings during the preparation of the first volume of his deceased brother's sermons, and the writing of the *Life* which is prefixed to that volume, the following letter, written soon after the publication of the book, will not be uninteresting.

“TO THE REV. WILLIAM RICHARDSON.

“*Queen's College Lodge,
November 7th, 1800.*

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“Many thanks for your last letter. Your letters are always comfortable to me, let you write about what you will.

“The sermons please me, and (so far as I can judge) others also, much beyond expectation. Dr. Jowett speaks in the highest terms of their merit in regard to strength, conciseness, harmony of numbers, arrangement, and sense, though he confesses that there are a few inelegancies which may be easily mended in a second edition. My health had hindered me from hearing my brother preach often, for many years; and I now perceive that he had worked himself from a style, that in his youth was rather flowery and diffuse, into one that is strong and nervous and sufficiently polished, except in a few instances. Indeed, I am convinced that you must have had a world of trouble to bring them into the state in which they now are. I really see nothing in them that can be called desultory in the least; and they are full of matter and wisdom. The ‘*Life*’ too, gives great satisfaction: but why would you leave out what was nothing but the strictest truth*? However, I must say no more. God bless

* This refers to some strong expressions of regard towards Mr. Richardson, used by Dean Milner.

you! I see, in every line you have written, your love of the deceased and your sincere regard for his memory, and for his credit, and your neglect of your own. Oh! my friend! how this book has made me feel afresh! yet with a degree—a considerable degree of satisfaction!

“My brother used generally to put upon his sermons, the the year and month and place of preaching;

“I value every relic of his writing so much, that I hope the manuscripts of those printed have not been destroyed, though I fear they may be. If not, pray preserve them carefully, with all the others. You truly say, that to read those sermons is like being with him. It affects me beyond measure.

“Yours very affectionately, I. M.”

Besides the composition of the *Life* of his brother, Dr. Milner during this year, edited the second edition of the first volume of the *Ecclesiastical History*, to which he prefixed a treatise entitled *Animadversions on Dr. Haweis' Impartial and succinct History of the Church of Christ*. With respect to Dean Milner's *Life* of his brother, it is allowable here to quote some remarks subsequently made by the present excellent Bishop of Calcutta*: “His sentiments,” writes the Bishop, “on the great truths of the Christian religion, will be found fully stated in the continuation of Joseph Milner's *Church History*; and, perhaps, yet more distinctly, if possible, in the *Life*, prefixed to the first volume of his brother's posthumous Sermons. He has here given his clear and decided views of the leading doctrines of the Church and of the Reformation, the history of which he had so carefully studied.”

Of the second edition of the first volume of his brother's *Church History*, the editor has himself spoken, in a letter already given in this work †; and his own preface to that edition, is in exact accordance with the statements made in the letter.

To the *Animadversions on Dr. Haweis' History of the Church*, the reader will likewise have observed some allusions in Dean Milner's letters to his excellent friend Mr. Richardson of York.

* Dr. Wilson.

† See Chap. X.

Of that very able performance, which is incorporated with the Dean's preface to the second edition of the first volume of Joseph Milner's *Church History* and of which the writer himself declares, that he was induced to undertake it, from "a strong sense of the utility of the Ecclesiastical Establishment of this country," it is needless to say more, than, that while it is such as might be expected from a man of Dr. Milner's decided opinions and warm feelings, when employed in clearing from gross misrepresentation, and exculpating from imputed blame, the memory of a beloved brother, it is likewise an example of Christian moderation and forbearance*.

Dr. Haweis being dismissed, Dean Milner, in this preface, which is an elaborate performance not repeated in the subsequent editions, "most gratefully acknowledges the liberal patronage of the University of Cambridge," who had, at their own expense, already printed three volumes of his brother's *Ecclesiastical History*, and who had engaged to print the remaining manuscript papers relative to the same subject.

"Their kindness and consideration in this matter," writes Dr. Milner, "certainly makes an indelible impression on my mind, and if anything could increase my affectionate attachment to that learned body, after so long and active a residence among them, it would be this honourable token of respect to the memory of my deceased brother; who himself, many years ago, as a student in the same seminary, received distinguished marks of approbation †."

Dr. Milner adds, that "the more he has examined and compared with each other, the original authorities, which are frequently obscure and contradictory, the more scrupulously faithful he has found" his brother, "in his statement of facts, and the more judicious and discreet, in separating truth from error, and in assigning the just degrees of probabilities." He

* A rejoinder to Dr. Haweis' reply to this work, entitled *Further Animadversions on Dr. Haweis' Misrepresentations*, was published by Dr. Milner in the year 1802, and will deserve the

notice of the reader under its proper date.

† This passage, extracted from the Preface to the second edition of the first volume, is prefixed to the later editions of the *Ecclesiastical History*.

observes, “if the alterations from the old edition should, in some few instances, appear, on comparison, to be greater than might, from this account, be expected, the reader is to understand, that these alterations are to be justified either from actual remarks of the author in manuscript, or from the editor’s recollection of his conversations.”

He concludes thus: “The smaller alterations, however,—in the use of particles, and of particular words, and in the construction of sentences, are very numerous,—and if the editor has helped the perspicuity of the author, without diminishing his force, he has gained his aim.”

These notices of Dr. Milner’s *Life* of his brother, and of his *Animadversions on Dr. Hare’s History*, with the extracts given from the preface which contains those “Animadversions,” will serve, in conjunction with his own letters, to convince every candid person, who takes into the account his various avocations as Head of a College and Dean of a Cathedral, that his time, at this period, must have been most fully occupied; in fact, when the afflictions both of mind and body under which he at this time laboured, are considered, the true matter for wonder is, rather, that he accomplished so much, than that he accomplished no more.

CHAPTER XIII.

Commencement of Dr. Milner's acquaintance with Henry Martyn.—Fourth Volume of the *History of the Church of Christ*.—Luther.—Commentary on the Galatians.—Professor Smyth.—Passage in his published Lectures.—Dean Milner's alleged partiality to Luther.—Correspondence.—Rev. W. Terrot.—Letter to a young Friend in his last illness.—New edition of Joseph Milner's *Sermons*.—Internal Management of Queen's College.—Tutors.—Correspondence.—London Bridge.—Professor Farish.—Sunday Travelling.—Dr. Haweis.—Rev. T. Ludlam.—New edition of *Life of Joseph Milner*.—Sir William Wynne.—Letters.—Mrs. Stillingfleet.

A.D. 1801. ÆTAT. 51.

As Professor of Mathematics, it fell of course to Dr. Milner's lot to examine, in the January of each year, the candidatés for the Smith's Prize; and it sometimes happened that this accidental personal intercourse with eminent individuals led to intimate acquaintance and enduring friendship.

The year 1801 furnished an example of this kind. Henry Martyn was the Senior Wrangler of that year, and was first introduced to Dean Milner on occasion of the examination for the prize above mentioned. The Dean was struck by the remarkably amiable and somewhat pensive expression of his countenance, and on entering into conversation with him, and discovering that his native place was Truro, in Cornwall, chanced to ask him whether he had ever known anything of a Mr. Walker, a clergyman of that town. Mr. Martyn's answer at once revealed to him the character of the Senior Wrangler before him. With unusual animation, and a countenance altogether changed, as Dr. Milner used to say, when he afterwards spoke of the occurrence, by its glowing and beaming expression of grateful affection, he replied, that he had indeed known Mr. Walker; and that his father and others of his relatives had reason to bless God, that such was the case.

There was little opportunity for further conversation at that time; but it is needless to say, that the Dean was much interested by the deportment of the youth whom he was examining. He made further inquiries concerning him, and

had afterwards frequent intercourse with him; taking, as was his custom with regard to those young men of whom he entertained a high opinion, many opportunities of showing him kindness. When Mr. Martyn “took leave of him,” on quitting the university, “he was much affected, and said himself that his heart was full*,” an expression indicating, when used by him, more than common affection. After Mr. Martyn’s departure for the scene of his labours in the East, Dean Milner never ceased to feel a warm and peculiar interest in his exertions, and their success, and heard of his early death with very sincere sorrow.

The principal occupation of Dr. Milner’s leisure hours, during this year, was the preparation for publication of the fourth volume of the *History of the Church of Christ*, edited, as the title-page bears, “on the plan, and in part from the manuscripts” of his late brother. The early part of the year was indeed, of necessity, and according to invariable usage, occupied by the arrangement of college business, the settlement of accounts, &c.; but the evenings, even of the busiest days, were devoted to the purpose above specified.

The contents of the fourth volume of the *Church History* are, as Dr. Milner, in his Preface, observes, “of such a nature as not to have found their way into our ordinary ecclesiastical histories.” The characters and motives of several individuals who appeared upon the scene during the period of time comprehended by this volume, and who by their lives and writings, paved the way for the Reformation, had been, by previous ecclesiastical historians, either neglected or misunderstood, and consequently misrepresented. Wickliffe, John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, were in reality little known; and above all, many serious and generally well-informed persons were very imperfectly acquainted with the religious part of the character of Martin Luther.

“Some of his natural qualities,” says Dr. Milner, speaking of Luther, “have been the subject of much observation: but the ruling principles of the man, those principles which were

* See MARTYN’S *Journals and Letters*.

eminently spiritual and Christian, are almost buried in silence.”

To the elucidation, then, of the character of Luther, Dr. Milner devoted his most strenuous efforts. “The German theologian” had indeed, as he says, been considered and represented by his brother, as “a distinguished subject of Almighty grace; which, by enlightening his understanding, changing his affections, and animating his hopes, prepared him in a most wonderful manner for the extraordinary part which he was appointed to sustain;” but the Dean had access to materials and to sources of knowledge which were unknown, or inaccessible, to the author of the early volumes of the *Church History*; and it is, therefore, not surprising that he has brought to light, concerning this great Reformer, much interesting matter and many authentic particulars with which his brother had no means of becoming acquainted. He spared no cost in the obtaining of such books as might assist him in his undertaking, and often sent for them to German and other foreign libraries, regardless alike of the expense or the delay thus incurred. In addition to this, it may be observed, that Dr. Milner was a cordial admirer of Luther, and that he, therefore, experienced a positive pleasure in searching into every part of his history. His own words, when speaking of his deceased brother’s sentiments with regard to Luther, may, with equal truth, be applied to himself:—“He loved him as a man of plain dealing and unfeigned piety; he admired him as a champion of truth; he revered him as an instrument of God, highly honoured, and expressly chosen for the purpose of defending and propagating the Christian faith; and he contemplated his success with delight and astonishment.”

It will, therefore, be easily believed, that, in this fourth volume, “uncommon pains” are taken with the affairs of Luther, especially during the first years of his wonderful exertions; the greatest pains, however, are bestowed upon the elucidation of the sentiments of the great Saxon Reformer, with regard to the fundamental articles of Christianity; and, as embodying in the fullest manner the great Protestant doctrine of justification by faith, considered by Luther, in common with

the whole body of the Reformers, as *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesie*, especial notice is taken of his Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians. One short passage referring to this commentary lays open so explicitly Dr. Milner's own opinions concerning the all-important doctrine of justification by faith, that it may with propriety be here quoted.

“Luther's *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*,” writes Dean Milner, “is in itself so excellent a performance, was read with so great avidity immediately after its publication, and was so instrumental in promoting the glorious cause of Protestantism, that it seems to have a superior claim to the attention of the historian. I have repeatedly read and meditated on this treatise, and, after the most mature reflection, I am fully convinced, that, as it was one of the most powerful means of reviving the light of Scripture in the sixteenth century, so it will, in all ages, be capable of doing the same, under the blessing of God, whenever a disposition shall appear among men to regard the oracles of divine truth, and whenever souls shall be distressed with a sense of indwelling sin; for I perfectly despair of its being relished at all by any but serious, humble, and contrite spirits, such being, indeed, the only persons in the world to whom the all-important article of justification will appear worthy of all acceptance. The author himself had ploughed deep into the human heart, and knew its native depravity; he had long laboured, to no purpose, to gain peace of conscience by legal observances and moral works, and had been relieved from the most pungent anxiety by a spiritual discovery of the doctrine just mentioned. He was appointed in the counsels of Providence—by no means exclusively of the other Reformers, but in a manner more extraordinary and much superior—to teach mankind, after upwards of a thousand years' obscurity, this great evangelical tenet, compared with which, how little appear all other objects of controversy! namely, that man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Christ*.” * * * * “In this admirable piece of divinity, the author, by numberless arguments, and particularly

by the marked opposition between law and faith*, law and grace†, proves, that, in justification before God, all sorts of human works are excluded, moral as well as ceremonial. He restores likewise to the Christian world the true forensic sense of the term justification, and rescues it from the erroneous sense in which for many ages it had been misunderstood, as though it meant infused habits of virtue, whence it had been usual to confound justification with sanctification. The incomparable theologian before us settled the true bounds and limits of the Law and the Gospel, and distinguished between acceptance with God and personal holiness. The former, he shows, is received as a free gift on Christ's account alone, by faith in the heart of a humbled sinner, and implies complete pardon and reconciliation with God; the latter, which he insists on as equally necessary for eternal happiness, he describes as conjoined, but not compounded, with the former; imperfect always in this life, but sincerely pressed after and delighted in. By this doctrine, rightly stated, with all its adjuncts and dependencies, a new light breaks in upon the mind, and Christianity appears singularly distinct, not only from Popery, but also from all other religions. Neither the superstitions of the Papist, nor the sensibility of the humane, nor the splendid alms of the ostentatious, nor the most powerful efforts of unassisted nature, avail, in the smallest degree, to the purchase of pardon and peace. The glory of this purchase demonstrably belongs to Christ alone; and he, who in real humility approves of, acquiesces in, and rests on Christ alone, is the true Christian. Thus self-righteous persons are rebuked; thus distressed consciences are relieved; and thus men are enabled to bring forth all the fruits of righteousness. An ill use, no doubt, has frequently been made of the precious doctrine here stated, and St. Paul's writings abound with admirable cautions on this subject. The sixth chapter to the Romans is full to the point. But this very circumstance, namely, that the true Christian notion of justification is apparently liable to a charge of anti-nomianism, unquestionably demonstrates that Luther and the

* Gal. iii., 12.

† Gal. v., 4.

other Reformers did not mistake that apostle's meaning; because, on the supposition that St. Paul really meant to ascribe the justification of a sinner before God, to human works, in any sense of those terms, the very plausibility of the objection loses all foundation. However, not to insist further on this argument, let him that would be wise in the things of God, study this great Christian article of the revealed method of fallen man's acceptance with his Maker, and let him do this with prayer for divine illumination. Let not any man suppose, as ignorance is ever apt to do, that evangelical truth is so plain and obvious, that every one may attain it without attention, industry, or effort. Let him rather be told, that the way of life is deeply mysterious, and has great difficulties belonging to it, though, nevertheless, of infallible attainment to every humble, seeking, persevering soul."

It may be sufficient to add, further, that "to furnish solid and luminous information concerning the interesting transactions of this memorable period," and at the same time to "compress the narrative into a moderate compass," was Dr. Milner's object; and it was no easy task. In the execution of it, he certainly "believed himself to be employed in the service of his Heavenly Master, and in the humble hope of His blessing and protection," he committed it "to the judgment of candid and impartial readers."

A passage bearing upon Dr. Milner's account of the life and character of Luther, may, with propriety, be here cited from a very interesting work lately published*.

"I must mention, before I conclude," writes the accomplished author of the work in question, "the two last volumes of Dean Milner's *Ecclesiastical History*. The reason for which it is necessary that I should recommend these volumes to your attention is this, that they contain, particularly in the life of Luther, the best account I know, of the more intellectual part of the history of the Reformation. In other words, they contain the progress of the Reformation in Luther's own mind, a very curious subject.

“Such were the great talents and qualities of Luther, and such the situation of Europe at this time, that the Reformation, in fact, passed from the mind of the one into the mind of the other.

“I therefore consider these two volumes, particularly in the lives of Wickliffe and Luther, as a most entertaining and valuable accession to our general stock of information, and one that may be considered as accessible to every student.”

“Dr. Milner,” continues Professor Smyth, “appears to me too determined a panegyrist of Luther. This, however, may be forgiven him; not to say that it becomes me to speak with diffidence, when I speak to differ from one whom I know to have been so able, and whom I conceive to have been so diligent.”

Professor Smyth had before observed, that, with “the particular system of doctrine upon which the *Ecclesiastical History* is written, he, as a lecturer on history,” had “nothing to do.”

The discerning reader will, doubtless, perceive that Dean Milner’s sincere belief in that “system,” of which the doctrine of justification by faith is the fundamental article, and Luther the able and zealous expounder and advocate, is the source of his admiration and reverence for the great Reformer.

In addition to the continuation of the *Ecclesiastical History*, of which further notice will be taken in a succeeding chapter, Dr. Milner was, at this time, occupied in preparing for publication a second edition of the first volume of his brother’s *Sermons*. Busy, however, as he was, he neither neglected to correspond with his friends, nor did he decline any useful extra work which circumstances might throw in his way.

With reference to the *Sermons*, some extracts from a very beautiful letter written to Dean Milner, by the late Rev. W. Terrot, may here be introduced.

“4, *Brompton Grove,*

Knightsbridge, London.

“DEAR SIR,

“Having found the sermons which I mentioned to you when I had the pleasure of seeing you in town, I send them to you in great hopes that you will hereafter publish them.

“ I have copied also two other sermons which your late dear brother sent me.

“ One, to teach us to go to Christ exactly as we are—the hardest lesson in the world. 1 John v. 11. ‘ This is the record that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.’

“ The other, on Christian Perfection, Gen. xvii., 1. ‘ And when Abraham, &c. . . . Walk before me and be thou perfect.’

“ These sermons he selected for me when I was setting out in the ministry, to teach me the great doctrines on which I was chiefly to insist, and which, by the blessing of the Lord, I have found to be powerful to awaken and convert my fellow-sinners, and which are all my hope and stay, in the present critical state of my health. I hope it is not wrong to pray that a great blessing may attend the writings of the man who was the first instrument of turning me from ways that were evil indeed; but this idea is always in my mind, that his reward at the last day will be in proportion to the quantity of good done, by what he said, and by what he, being dead, yet speaketh.

“ Pray accept the assurance of those sentiments of respect and affection with which I have the honour to be,

“ Dear Sir,

“ Your most obliged and faithful servant,

“ *To the Rev. Dr. Milner.*”

“ W. TERROT.

Early in this year Dr. Milner, ever tender hearted, and ready to sympathize with others in their affliction, wrote to the son of one of his oldest friends, during his last illness, the following truly Christian and very touching letter.

“ MY DEAR JOHN,

“ It was a very great pleasure to me yesterday, to see, through your brother Robert, your own handwriting; and the more so, as you permit me to write to you a few lines—indeed, with great good-nature, you invite me to write at length. I must not, however, take an improper advantage of the concession; I must beware of fatiguing either your body or your

mind. It was the apprehension of doing mischief, either in the way of fatigue or of agitation, that has kept me, hitherto, from venturing to send you a letter; but I perceive, from all accounts, that you enjoy so extraordinary and so blessed a composure of spirits, that I trust no harm will arise from this step.

“Before I knew whether I durst write to you or not, I thought I had a great deal to say. I fancied that a sort of storm was coming on, and I supposed that there was plenty of room for counsel and precaution; but, on the contrary, I now find, that there is a most wonderful calm; and I feel disposed to say little beyond expressing my gratitude and admiration on account of His power and goodness, who, when he pleases, rebukes the winds and the sea.

“It is not to be denied, my dear John, that the sweet calmness of mind which you experience has still something awful in it, which ought to be observed on such an occasion. How much is your present situation of bodily weakness to be envied, when compared with that of the numerous strong, powerful, rich, and wise, who have not learned the humbling doctrines of the Gospel!

“I repeat it—I have little to say to you; I am lost in wonder; yet, in writing, I experience a very pure and a very vivid satisfaction, and this because I see nothing to suspect, nothing to fear, nothing to complain of, nothing to be anxious about. I dare not add, ‘nothing to wish otherwise,’ because, so far as my own feelings are concerned, I almost every day lament that I make so little progress in the trying Christian doctrine of resignation. Human nature pleads powerfully; we are not easily reconciled to loss of health, friends, and worldly comforts; and the temptation is the more insidious because there is a degree of regard to these things, which is lawful.

“We persuade ourselves that we could give up all these temporal blessings at another time, or, what we call the proper time, more in the course of nature; but, in my judgment, I am most perfectly convinced, that if the mind be not brought to think God’s time the proper time, it will give them up with reluctance at any time.

“Some years ago, when my brother was supposed to be in great danger from a fever, I had hard conflicts in this matter, and he wrote me a very wise and instructive letter on the nature of Christian resignation *. I pray God to support me when the trying moments come—otherwise, I know Satan will buffet me at his will.

“From these reflections you will collect, that I have no pretensions to advise you, at present, in spiritual things. No—I rather wish to learn the history of God’s dealings with you. It is true, you are but young; but no age, no experience, no strength of abilities, can supply the lessons which God teaches those who surrender themselves, not partially, but entirely, to his instructions. You are too weak to acquaint me with those lessons, therefore by no means attempt it: your friends will inform me: I shall listen with delight, and, I hope, with profit.

“As humility is the life and soul of the religion of Christ, there is perhaps hardly anything which ought more carefully to be avoided, in the intercourse between friends, than the saying or doing of anything which has a tendency to puff up; we are all of us, sufficiently disposed to this evil of ourselves: yet, in the very important duty of self-examination, we are not to affect to be blind to what God has done for us. It is to me, and it ought to be to you, an unspeakable satisfaction, in your present state to reflect, that it had pleased God to enable you to take so decided and so active a part in teaching practical religion, for above a twelvemonth before this illness took place. It is true, that with God, all things are possible; but I am convinced, that the fact to which I refer, is a more strong and more pleasing evidence than almost any other that can be conceived, in a state of great weakness, when neither the memory nor the understanding can exert itself with vigour.

“I mention this to you now, (as I have, I believe, mentioned it every day since you began to be unwell, sometimes in the way of joy on your account, and at other times, in the way of exhortation to our common friends) as a thing that should call for your constant gratitude and thanksgiving. I

* See Chapter IX.

believe you could say with truth, that you were glad to go into his courts, &c.

“I reflect, also, with a true pleasure, on the many conversations which we had together (a little before you left Cambridge) on religious subjects, and particularly on the Epistle to the Romans, that rich field both of doctrine and of practice, and also on the nature of the evidences of the being in a spiritual state. Keep in mind what you insisted on, viz., ‘that all things will work together for good, &c. &c.’ It is a most precious promise.

“But I am breaking my resolution, both in being too long, and in proceeding to instruction.

“Tell your affectionate (I cannot call him afflicted) father, that I receive all his letters with satisfaction and thankfulness, and that I wish him to continue to write as often as his great labours will permit him. Oh! my dear John! to be the son of such a father is, of itself, a blessing that calls for continued praise. He has had hard rubs in the course of God’s providence, and I doubt not but he has profited by them; but the thing that always strikes me particularly is, how wonderfully Almighty God has blessed him in his children. The explanation is, he is a praying father, and God is a hearer of prayer.

“God bless you, my dear John, now and for evermore. I am a poor, feeble creature, and could weep sadly over your bodily afflictions, if I were to give way to my feelings. But I can check myself, and, through God’s mercy, can join all your dear friends and relatives in encompassing you about with songs of deliverance.

“I am very affectionately yours,

“ISAAC MILNER.”

With the present Lord Archbishop of York, then Bishop of Carlisle, Dean Milner communicated by letter frequently, both upon religious subjects in general, and his brother’s sermons in particular.

“I send you by this post,” writes the Bishop, January 29th, 1801, “the few further notes I have made on reading your brother’s sermons. * * * * * In

essentials I perfectly agree with your brother's doctrine, but some things, if taken as detached passages, I should explain rather differently."

The following letter treats of several interesting matters:—

“TO THE REV. WILLIAM RICHARDSON.

“*Old Palace Yard, Westminster,*

“*W. Wilberforce's, Esq.*

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

March 6, 1801.

“I find myself here *ex officio*. I am a member of the Board of Longitude, and we meet three times a year at the Admiralty to receive and judge of proposals, &c. And excessively entertaining it is to see how many persons, of desperate fortunes, imagine they merit rewards for their skill in finding out the longitude at sea. One foolish fellow writes to me and says, ‘As you have the disposal of four, or five, or &c., thousands of pounds for assisting persons in their schemes, I think it my duty to ask for one thousand. I believe that will be enough to enable me to complete my scheme.’ Some of these applicants are absolutely crack-brained, and others ignorant in the extreme. About a year ago, a fellow came from Norwich and thought he had found out the longitude merely because he had hung an immense weight of lead to a telescope, which he supposed would steady it at sea.

“Sir J—— and Lady Catherine —— were here last night.

“She is going on exceedingly well. * * * I cannot, in the compass of a letter, make you master of ——'s character. Such a strange jumble is the human heart, that I am not without hopes that he has, at times, very serious thoughts about eternity, and very serious convictions of sin. Last summer he told me, that one night, when he had remained restless and feverish for many hours with severe thirst, his mind was strongly impressed with the dreadful state of those in eternity, who should in vain ask for ‘a drop of water to cool their tongues.’ * * * —— is extremely friendly and open to me, and has nothing about him like double dealing that ever I perceived. But I am in great apprehension, that the more

thoroughly he becomes acquainted with Christian doctrines, the more he will dislike those who speak out, unless it should please God to alter his views.

“You will, however, agree with me, that we are not to temporize in the least, beyond proper civility and respect. He is quite orthodox in opinion, and he has permitted me to open myself to him in the fullest and plainest manner that I could devise. He assents to almost everything that is said; I hardly know anything of the doctrinal sort to which he does not assent; and yet when we come to practical teaching of congregations, I immediately perceive that we are wide asunder. He sees that I do not think him sound, and this keeps him in a state of irritation in his own mind. He would fain quarrel with nobody, and I do verily believe, that he has a sincere regard for me.

“There is a sixpenny thing just put into my hands, called *A Reply, &c.*, from Dr. Haweis. On the whole it is sadly disingenuous: but yet he confesses very honestly in one place, and, in general, is by no means so boisterous as I had expected him to be.

“I really hope my animadversions may have done him some good; he is most decidedly a peg lower, and it is very plain, that he does not wish to provoke a rejoinder from me. I believe it will hardly be necessary to take notice of him at all; the utmost will be a sentence or two, when the Life of my brother is re-published*.

“N. B. I have been much pressed, and by most respectable friends, and very particularly by the master of this house, to add a number of instructive circumstances or anecdotes respecting the private and public conduct of my late brother, when I publish a new edition of his life.

“Mr. Wilberforce, I say, in particular, by letter mentioned this to me, and said, that I might say many things of him (my brother) which were very well known to be true, and to which the people of Hull would bear testimony, and which, lastly,

* A rejoinder, under the title of *Further Animadversions, &c.*, was, however, published in the year 1802. See note Chap. XIV.

would be of service to be known, and by no means appear ostentatious.

“Now I confess, that anything like this is totally against my first judgment, and, however agreeable it might be to an affectionate brother to see the amiable parts of the character of his dear relative set forth in detail and handed down to posterity, I say I dislike the thing; and I am pretty sure that my brother himself would have hated it exceedingly. I have only to say, that when such a man as Mr. Wilberforce points out the propriety of such a step, and tells me, that he himself remembers several parts of his conduct which might with great propriety be recorded, I am staggered. Tell me honestly how it strikes you, and in this I would wish both you and myself to be decided in our judgments, purely by the consideration of doing some good, be it more or less.

“I have found it absolutely impossible to attend much to the fourth volume*, at the same time that these sermons are going forward; but the moment they are dispatched, I shall attack it again if all be well. * * *

“Our friend William Hey has indeed behaved very much like a Christian during his late severe trials. I never in my life read more affecting letters than from him.

“God bless you, my dear friend.

“ISAAC MILNER.”

“N.B. While I have been scribbling this long letter, I have had twenty people about me, disputing concerning Catholic emancipation.”

Numerous and various as were the claims upon Dean Milner’s attention, during the periods of his brief visits at the house of his friend Mr. Wilberforce, he was less constantly occupied there, than in his own study at Cambridge or at Carlisle; and therefore generally seized the opportunities which these periodical visits afforded him, to “clear off,” as he used to say, some of his unanswered letters.

The following letter, written by Dean Milner from Cam-

* Of the *History of the Church*.

bridge, soon after his return from this visit to Palace Yard, treats of an important subject.

“ TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

“ *Queen’s Lodge,*

March 24th, 1801.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ The case is this. At Queen’s, we happened unfortunately to have several clever Fellows, some time ago, who should have filled our offices of trust, as tutors, &c., but were disqualified on account of their principles. I was positively determined to have nothing to do with Jacobins or infidels, and custom has placed in my power the appointment of the tutors, provided they be Fellows of our own College. Our own being very unfit, we went out of college sorely against the wish of several; however, by determining to make no jobs of such things, but to take the very best men I could find, I carried the matter through, in no less than three instances:—Thomason, Barnes, Sowerby. The consequence has been, that a belief has taken place, that we should continue to go out of college for candidates for fellowships, after the cause had ceased. I have applications without end to this purpose; and not only so, but admonitions, sometimes anonymous. I inclose one that came lately. You cannot think how plagued I have been, from a variety of quarters, on this head, though I endeavour to make it known everywhere, that we have now got two good tutors, and have no reason for going out of college.

“ The Bishop of Lincoln called on me the other day with Dr. Turner, and was inclined, I think, to have talked more politics than usual, if there had not been a third person present.

“ N.B. It is very positively said here, that Pitt and the Bishop of Lincoln had a bill ready, if not printed, to take away all from the clergy, and to make them pensioners at the Treasury.

“ Yours, I. M.”

As affording evidence that, in the midst of his constant and various avocations, Dean Milner was ever ready to give his best attention to any *extra* labour which he was requested to

undertake, it may be mentioned, that, in the spring of this year, he addressed to the Government, at their request, a very elaborate Memorial respecting the construction of the Bridge across the Thames, then about to be built. His letters at this period contain various allusions to this affair. To Mr. Wilberforce he thus wrote: "My Memorial will be at length; explaining my reasons, and entering fully into them. It would be very easy to make a great parade, and to crowd a paper full of algebra; but I am determined not to mislead.

"I have given a great deal of attention to the subject, and have consulted authors; and I am convinced, that a conference of the practical engineers with the theorists, is the only way to get on to any purpose." This letter concludes with a strong recommendation of the late Professor Farish, as a person whose mathematical and mechanical knowledge might be very useful on the occasion in question. "I am, *bonâ fide*," writes the Dean, "most positive, that there is nobody here equal to him, or to be compared; but delicacy will be required in hinting this."

The second edition of the first volume of Joseph Milner's *Sermons*, which the Dean on the 6th of March had announced to Mr. Richardson, to be "half printed," and "much called for," was now nearly completed; not, however, without much harassing labour. This appears from the following letter.

"TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I would have written to you last night, if it had not been for T. Thompson, who dropped in upon us in the afternoon, quite unexpectedly. By the by, I am very sorry to say, that this is the second time he has come to us by travelling on Sunday, and without any apparent good cause; certainly none, but a little worldly convenience! I am truly sorry to see such conduct: I gave him a hint of it pretty strong. He would not have done so in your grand-father's time, when there was no income tax; and when, if there had been one, he would not have been troubled with it.

"I never, I think, worked so hard in my life as at present,

to get my brother's sermons out before I go to Carlisle. I have made, and am making, considerable additions to the *Life*; and the *Sermons* are printed so much closer, that, without making any thicker book, I shall be able to add four, or five, or six fresh sermons.

“I have many other things to do; in particular, some sermons to prepare for Carlisle. What can I do? I don't throw away a single hour when I can by possibility work; in fact, this excessive attention is quite too much for me; I hurt myself by it.

“God bless you. If you should not be well, you know I, of course, throw all aside, and, in case of necessity, come up at a moment's warning. So God bless you and preserve you.

“N.B. I mean, if I live, so to order things in future, as never again to be hurried in this manner by my own business. But many are expecting these sermons; and if they are not done now, it will be autumn before they can come out.

“Once more remember me affectionately to B. and the little ones.

“Yours, I. M.

“P.S. How does the little, *little* baby? Write me a single line to set me easy about yourself.”

The actual completion of the second edition of the *Sermons* is announced in a very characteristic letter, from which the following extracts are taken.

“TO THE REV. WILLIAM RICHARDSON.

“*Carlisle Deanery,*

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

June 30th, 1801.

“I have at last got the new edition of *Sermons* ready; and, considering my infirmities, this has been no easy job. The *Life* is doubled at least. By casting your eye over the old edition of the *Life*, and comparing it with the new, you will instantly perceive what is additional. From page 34 to page 52 of the new edition is entirely new, and may, I hope, prove useful. I shall be very anxious to hear your judgment of it, and the more so, as I know you will give it me very sincerely.

“ You will wonder beforehand how I could increase the *Life* so much, without spoiling it. But suspend your judgment till you see it; and then, I trust, you will not think, that, in lengthening it, I have at all broken through the principles upon which the *Life* was originally written. There are many additions to it, of which you will take notice as you go along, besides that above-mentioned.

“ I have added a sentence or two more to what I said about Ludlam; but I understand that there is a most abusive attack on me by T. Ludlam. I wish I had known of it a few days before I had finished this volume; because I might have added an advertisement, or a page, in answer.

“ I have not seen the *Spleen* just published; but I hope it will not require an answer. Tell me if you think it does. I am tired of controversy.

“ Haweis has behaved abominably, and I thought it right to take notice of his false quotations; and I have every reason to be satisfied with the effect of my animadversions. I hope, indeed, they will serve to check the progress of that shocking member of the Church. His reply was that of one who squeaks miserably; but yet he said some things which, I thought, called for a fresh lashing. I have, therefore, printed *Further Animadversions*, (twenty-four pages, price 6*d*).

“ Here I end with Haweis, whether he write again or not.

“ The little strength and leisure I have, I wish to employ upon the fourth volume of the *Ecclesiastical History*, which will take up a deal of time, and require a deal of care. The manuscript was in bad order, and the author not at hand to explain.

“ Besides, if ever I answer Ludlam at all, I should wish the work to have more permanency than usually belongs to a pamphlet. When you see his pamphlet, let me know what you think. I dare say, when I first see it I shall be violently inclined to respond; but I have experienced, that feelings of that sort go off, or lessen exceedingly, with a little time: and before this time twelvemonth most persons, probably, will have forgotten the dispute.

“ I have printed some copies of the *Life* for myself,

(separate); but I think it better that the *Life* should not be known to be separate, (at least just yet,) lest the sale of the *Sermons* be injured by that circumstance coming to light. Many persons may buy the *Sermons* for the sake of the *Life*; and one would not check the sale of them, by circulating the *Life* by itself. I ought to say, that I have added to the volume of *Sermons* two long new ones, so that the book now contains much more than before.

“N.B. Let nothing that I have said about the *Life* hinder you from following your own judgment in that affair. Give or sell it to individuals as you like; only, I think it should not be sold publicly yet.

“I am, dear Sir,

“Yours affectionately, I. M.”

The attack upon Dean Milner, by Mr. T. Ludlam, mentioned in the above letter, was the more painful to him, on account of his past friendly intercourse with that gentleman; it is, therefore, peculiarly satisfactory to find him expressing, as he does, his conviction of the transitory nature of the feelings which that attack could not but excite in his mind.

Ever active in his endeavours to serve his friends, Dr. Milner, during this summer, took much pains to ascertain, for the benefit of a deserving clergyman, a particular point of law affecting the prospects of that clergyman in the Church. Other matters also, which came under his cognizance in his capacity of Dean of Carlisle, occupied much of his time. Nothing can be more true than a declaration which he occasionally made respecting himself,—that he disliked to do anything “by halves.”

A detail of the circumstances of this affair, even if it could with propriety be given, would not be generally interesting. Suffice it to say, that the Dean suffered not the matter to rest till he had obtained, respecting it, the opinions of several eminent civilians; among whom may be mentioned one of his own much-valued friends, the late Sir William Wynne.

This gentleman was, in 1803, elected Master of Trinity Hall; and in consequence of that event, spent, subsequently, a

certain portion of his time at Cambridge. Dr. Milner esteemed him as a man of sense and integrity; and by his death, in the year 1815, was deprived of a friend, whose society might have tended to cheer the closing years of his life.

On the 2nd of October, Dr. Milner thus wrote to Mr. Wilberforce:—

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“I have thought, and think every day, of the scenes of last year at Bognor; and particularly of the night when I awakened you; but I did not remember the day so exactly as you now point it out.

“I wish my heart were duly affected,—God’s mercies are very many and various. It is a sad thing to call on Him only when we are afflicted. We need a sense of his goodness. See my poor brother’s private thoughts.

“I wrote you a few lines last night. As to myself, I surely ought to consider that my grandfather died at sixty, my father at fifty-seven, my brother Joseph at fifty-three; that my eldest and robust brother never reached fifty, and that I am in my fifty-second year. Prepare! prepare!

“In the business about which I wrote to you, as in many other concerns of the like nature, Pitt sure has been greatly to blame. He has been a poor patron to this University, considering his opportunities: I am quite convinced that old North was infinitely better,—more attentive and considerate,—distinct from all his blameable jobs.

“I have, however, written to Lord Hardwicke, and also to Mr. Yorke, who has returned me a very obliging answer.”

In the September of this year, Dr. Milner received at Queen’s Lodge a visit from his old and valued friend, the Rev. James Stillingfleet. The following letter, which he wrote to that gentleman soon after his departure from Cambridge, must be interesting to every reader.

“ TO THE REV. JAMES SPILLINGFLEET.

“ *Queen’s College Lodge.*

October 12, 1801.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND.

“ I take it very kind in you to have remembered us so affectionately. May the God of all consolation requite you many fold into your bosom. But I must call you to order on one point. It is really stuff to talk of our kindnesses to you and yours. I hope I am, and shall ever be, disposed to do whatever I am able for you or yours, by way of showing that I do not entirely forget the real and essential kindnesses which you and your excellent rib conferred upon my poor brother deceased; I verily believe his life was prolonged by those kindnesses: and I am well convinced that he might have been continued to us some time longer, if he could have been persuaded to lessen his labours a little; but his heart was too much in the work to allow of relaxation; and so far as he himself is concerned, it is my great satisfaction,—my *dolorum dulce lenimen*,—to think that he is far better where he is, than dragging out a few painful years with asthma, &c., &c.

“ In regard to kindnesses, I have really had no opportunity of showing you more than bare civilities. Several times during your short stay with us, I was going to attempt to make Mrs. Still. understand how much and how deeply my mind was impressed with a sense of her repeated motherly attentions to her poor friend; but it proved too much for me,—I could not get on, but was always stopped, *in limine*. My poor heart is irritable at best, and is so extremely sensible whenever that string is touched, that I am soon overwhelmed. The world has never looked as it used to do to me, since the event alluded to; and perhaps it is better for me that it has not; for I have long seen it very plain that mild methods will not do for me. Nothing but the rod answers at all: and may God grant that I may kiss the rod cordially, and remember that He afflicteth not willingly.

“ I am but poorly; and attacks, though gentle, are felt by an old sufferer,—much more than by a fresh hand, who has never been in the wars; and the effects also are much longer in repairing.

“God has been merciful to us in regard to my poor niece, who gains ground, I think, every week.” * * * “We all of us talk of you every day, and wish you would make it convenient to stay some days with us on your return.

“Come, I say, and then we will talk matters over about your summer journey, and contrive to make it very economical; and also settle several other affairs.

“Yours truly and affectionately,

“As also Mrs. S——’s and Edward’s,

“I. M.”

Mr. and Mrs. Stillingfleet were among the friends whom Dean Milner most entirely loved and esteemed. Towards Mrs. S——, in particular, his heart overflowed with gratitude, on account of what he used to call her “motherly kindnesses” towards his deceased brother. She was, indeed, a woman well deserving of the affection of her friends. Mr. Richardson, of York, once said of her, in conversation with myself, that there was about her “a meekness of wisdom” quite irresistible.

CHAPTER XIV.

Confidential Correspondence.—Chapter Business.—Illness.—Sermon at Whitehall.—Rowland Hill.—Fourth Volume of *Ecclesiastical History*.—Vigour and Perseverance of Dean Milner.—Accident on Stainmore.—Prominent trait in Dean Milner's mind.—Anecdotes.—Rev. Mr. Church.—Letters.—Domestic Affairs.—Discovery of the Invisible Girl.

A.D. 1802. ÆTAT. 52.

IT was intimated in the last chapter, that towards the close of the year 1801, Dean Milner had exerted himself for the benefit of a deserving clergyman, and in the arrangement of certain other affairs respecting which, in his capacity of Dean of Carlisle, he possessed considerable influence. Some of the consequences of his friendly efforts, which were, upon the whole, successful, are mentioned in the following letter,—a letter which carries forward the Dean's personal history, and is otherwise exceedingly interesting.

“TO THE REV. JAMES STILLINGFLEET.

“*Queen's College Lodge,*
17th March, 1802.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“Dr. Kipling had told me before the receipt of your last kind letter, that I was indebted to you on the score of epistolary correspondence.

“I can bear animadversions of this sort, because they evidently originate in kindness.

“I am never so much inclined to pour out my heart to a friend as when I am in affliction. I know not whether you have heard of poor * * * * 's deplorable situation. Only two days ago, the first news arrived from Mr. Thompson, that ‘he lies most dangerously ill.’ As far as I can collect, there is very little chance for him indeed, for he appears to have been declining for some months past.

“Mr. Thompson says he expressed great fear of hell, and prayed very earnestly. Bad as this situation is, you will, I am sure, prefer it to that of the Duke of B. who died lately,

with the fortitude of a heathen. I am quite shocked at that relation.

“Poor * * * *’s conduct has been, I understand, quite unexceptionable for a good while; and certainly his conscience has been uneasy for a long time.

“I wish you would drop a line to Mr. Dykes about him, and to Mr. Scott, and say what you think proper about such a case. Alas! it will perhaps be too late!

“What I particularly fear is, lest his wife, who is a Papist, should bring about him some parson of her own persuasion, who might pretend to absolve him, make him easy, and draw his dependence from Jesus Christ to some wretched formality. If you could see him yourself, it would be a great comfort.

“In regard to * * * *, I think about it just as I did when you and I talked together. I am by no means clear that the change would have been for my comfort on the whole, or even much for my advantage. Any little advantage from increase of income has no charms for me.

“You would hear how I exerted myself in the winter by going down to Carlisle, and managing about some small pieces of preferment; small, but of great consequence. My presence was absolutely necessary to support F——, and on some other accounts. Also, I secured, through Dr. Coulthurst, the living of Elland to a son of poor Miles Atkinson. I had been very ill in October and November, so ill, that unless Mr. Farish the surgeon, and my niece’s husband, had gone with me all the way, I should not have dared to venture to go; and, as it was, I doubted whether I could reach Carlisle; but God was merciful. I had previously done my best by writing and negociating. I verily believe I wrote above forty letters, to the Bishop, the Prebendaries, and their different friends and connections; God be praised, everything succeeded.

“For six weeks I had a most frightful intermission of the pulse, at about every fourth beat. This complaint did not permit me to sleep, and harassed me exceedingly. It left me about a month ago.

“I was appointed to preach, on Ash Wednesday, at Whitehall; and I was very anxious to discharge that duty, particularly

as I had been disappointed by ill-health at the time of my former turn at the same place, soon after I was made Dean. I went to London, but I was so poorly, that I was obliged to have a substitute ready.

“It pleased God, however, that about seven o’clock in the morning of Ash Wednesday, I found myself wonderfully better. I instantly sent my boy three miles to tell my deputy not to come. I preached on ‘the one thing needful,’ for an hour and twenty minutes, to a crowded audience, and to the Bishop of Oxford, who would think it queer work, I dare say. Many more would have been present, but the report had got round, that I should not be there. You would have been entertained to see Rowland Hill at the Chapel, expressing his approbation in too marked a manner.

“I have worked exceedingly hard at the fourth volume* since I saw you—a great deal too hard for my health; insomuch, that I really find it absolutely necessary to relax, or I shall be quite entirely knocked up. The manuscript was by far the most unfinished of any; and as the author is not present to explain obscurities, I often spend many hours in consulting authorities, and making out doubtful expressions; so that, when you consider my infirmities, and the many and various duties I have to discharge, respecting the education of youth, as master of a College, my connections at and with Carlisle, and my domestic affairs, you ought rather to be surprised, that I have actually struck off two hundred pages. The finishing of a book that contains so much matter, and so closely printed, is a great work. I sometimes despair of living to finish it; which, however, I have much at heart, if it be the Divine Will. As to going on with it—I dare not indulge the thought, though it does come across me sometimes.

“I thank you much for the valuable relief† you have sent me of my dear brother. I will try if I can make anything out about the dream.

* Of the *History of the Church of Christ*.

† Viz., the letter from Joseph Milner, docketed “the last he ever wrote.”
Chap. IX.

“Your letter of January 8th gave me great pleasure. I rejoice to see you so much in earnest about Divine things; and if I had time and strength, I would obey your directions about writing in defence of the True Church, occasionally.

“N.B. It is well for you, that I have no room to scold you for staying so long in the south, and yet not giving us a little more of your company.

“I sincerely pray that Edward may continue to conduct himself to your satisfaction. With grateful remembrances of Mrs. S.’s kindness,

“I am yours, most affectionately,

“ISAAC MILNER.”

The writing of “above forty letters,” and the winter journey, mentioned in the foregoing communication to Mr. Stillingfleet, afford together, an example of the persevering vigour which Dr. Milner invariably exhibited in the performance of whatever he undertook. The truth is, that whether in health or in sickness, he quite forgot *himself*, when there was a duty to be performed, or a friend to be served.

Respecting this journey to Carlisle, undertaken, as it was, in the depth of winter, it may be mentioned, that an accident occurred in the course of it, something similar to that which, so many years before, had happened to Dr. Milner while travelling abroad with Mr. Wilberforce. In crossing a mountainous district between Yorkshire and Westmorland, called Stainmore, the road being totally obliterated by snow, the Dean’s carriage was dragged from off the beaten track, and was upon the very brink of a steep and deep bank. Its descent was arrested by the united strength of Dr. Milner’s fellow-travellers; he himself, being, of course, unable to render any assistance.

In his numerous subsequent transits over the same wild tract of country, he seldom omitted to allude to the narrow escape here recorded, as one of the providential occurrences of his life.

The approbation expressed “in too marked a manner,” at the Chapel of Whitehall, by the venerable Rowland Hill,

naturally recalls the recollection of another incident, related, I think, in the life of that excellent man. Dean Milner having, during one of his many visits to London, heard Rowland Hill preach at his own crowded Chapel, went to him in the vestry after the service was concluded, and, cordially shaking him by the hand, said, in the hearing of several persons, "Mr. Hill, Mr. Hill, it is this *slap-dash style* of preaching after all, that does all the good."

One other passage in the above letter to Mr. Stillingfleet, calls for a few remarks.

"I often," says the Dean, speaking in reference to the fourth volume of the *Ecclesiastical History*, "spend many hours in consulting authorities, and in making out doubtful expressions."

In elucidation of this declaration, I may venture to quote a passage from a private letter to myself, written by one of the Dean's intimate and valued friends.

"One prominent trait," writes the Rev. J—— F——, "in the great mind of Dr. Milner, was the steady perseverance with which he pursued any object of inquiry which he had once started; he would not let it go till he had made himself master of it. It was this valuable property which made his extraordinary powers tell in every department of science; it was this which, at least, contributed to place him at the head of the mathematical tripos in the year of his graduating. And as his honours and preferments were a due homage paid to his attainments, it was this which seated him in the Lucasian chair, and advanced him to the deanery of Carlisle.

"But this property, which always stuck by him, showed itself in cases wherein it proved sometimes inconvenient, sometimes amusing.

"The public greatly regretted the slowness with which he proceeded in the continuation of his brother's *History of the Church of Christ*; but if any think that the delay arose from indolence, they are in error. He was, indeed, often incapacitated by pain and bodily infirmities, but not by want of mental energy. The fact was, he would slur nothing over; he would not put down upon his paper what he had not established

by proof; and if the libraries of Cambridge would not afford him satisfaction, he would send to Germany; and, therefore, what he has done, he has done well. * * *

“On one occasion, the same valuable quality was the cause a temporary disappointment. I was anxious to introduce to the Dean the late Rev. Mr. Church, then going out as a chaplain to Madras. Desirous that a young minister going out on so important an errand should have the advice, instructions, and encouragement, of so able a counsellor, I took Mr. Church to the Deaenry. The Dean was at home, and alone; this was what we wished. But, alas! the Dean had seen, in Ainsworth’s *Dictionary*, as an authority for the use of a word, “Auct. Phil.” What *Auct. Phil.* meant, the Dean did not know, and, unfortunately, neither of his visitors could tell him. Mr. Church was introduced, and very kindly received, but still *Auct. Phil.* was on the Dean’s mind, and he turned to volume after volume, till, to the no small joy of his visitors, he found that it meant Auctor Philomelæ. He then entered into conversation with Mr. Church, discussed with him the duties of the situation to which he was going, and gave him very judicious advice.

“This instance shows the mental property of which I have been speaking. It is not such as to exhibit it in advantageous operation, but, on that very account, it shows more clearly the strength of the principle, because it shows it acting in opposition to considerations which might have checked it, and no doubt it was an exception to the general rule; in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, such a propensity would be attended with the most beneficial results.”

Many other anecdotes might be related in evidence of the existence and the strength of the “mental property” alluded to. Of its solid use and value, no doubt can be entertained.

As to the rest, Dr. Milner was himself as fully aware as could be the most familiar of his acquaintance, that his habit of always thoroughly investigating whatever subject, great or small, presented itself to his attention, was sometimes inconvenient, and sometimes almost ludicrous; and, being at least as good-humoured as he was industrious and persevering, he not unfrequently joined in the friendly laugh raised against him upon such occasions.

With reference to the fourth volume of the *History of the Church of Christ*, a person, with whom Dean Milner had but little intercourse, thus wrote to him on the 24th of May, 1802.

“I hope it will have the effect desired; if it has, it will greatly rejoice my heart, for sure I am, that much good may, and, I trust, will, be derived by every reader. It is a work that will edify and entertain all serious and pious minds.

“I trust that this may find you restored to sound health, and may the blessing of God in Christ Jesus attend your labours.”

Such communications were always welcome and refreshing to the mind of Dr. Milner, and the more so, when they came from quarters whence he had no reason to expect them.

The following extract from a letter written by Dr. Milner to the late Rev. John Scott, of Hull, has reference to the person whose illness is mentioned in the letter with which this chapter opens:—

“April 20th, 1802.

“The account you were so kind as to send me of poor * * * *, lately deceased, was exceedingly acceptable. It was certainly quite as satisfactory as could be expected in those circumstances, and to me, much more satisfactory than if he had gone out of the world without any fears, which, I dare say, might easily have been brought about by management; such management as, I doubt, some of the Methodists frequently use in speaking peace, and even triumph, improperly, to certain persons at the point of death. Instructions of that sort draw the mind from its main concern, viz., deep humility and self-abasement under conviction of sin. Indeed, I cannot but hope the best of * * * *.

“1. Because I reflect with great pleasure, that I may be sure you would not overstate to me the good side;

“2. You gave him the right instructions in every respect; and,

“3. What did drop from him was perfectly right as far as it went; and to all this I add, that I think his perseverance in hope, his placing that hope on the right foundation, his showing no disposition to mitigate his faults, and his being enabled to

support a praying spirit throughout his illness, and to the last—these things put together are surely inconsistent with the supposition of God's having left him to despair and a reprobate mind. Yet, after all, his case is undoubtedly a lesson, rather than an example."

The following letter contains, in addition to other interesting matter, some satisfactory reasons for what might be considered the slow progress of Dr. Milner in the continuation of the *History of the Church*.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"Deanery, 22nd July, 1802.

"Your letter to me of June 3rd was comfortable to my feelings in several ways, and I was thankful to you in my mind on the receipt of it.

"I have put off giving you an answer from time to time, under one pretence or another, till I begin to suspect, that, if I wait till I can do and say as I wish, I shall never write at all. Let it be noted then, that I seize the very first day on which the franks of members of parliament begin to avail.

"Poor ———— always remembers you affectionately, and with much gratitude. He takes it for granted that you will have heard of his illness. He has not put pen to paper for many months, and he is now so emaciated as to be quite a shocking spectacle to those who knew him before.

"The doctors agree that his case is not dangerous, but that he may remain ill a long time, and perhaps never perfectly recover.

"He is an old friend of mine, and I have a great and very sincere regard for him and his; and I wish, if it might so please God, to be useful to him in more ways than one.

"For some years past, and long before this illness, his mind was, I think, deeply impressed with the importance of eternal things, and he had, at the same time, some strong convictions of sin and of a sinful nature, and also, I trust, some real desires to be taught spiritual wisdom. His spirits are so weak, and he is capable of so little attention, that there is but little opportunity of judging whether the good work of the spirit of God be going on in his soul. I hope and pray for the best.

“I fear you think me long about Volume IV. of the History. My answer is this, most conscientiously. I believe that I have worked harder in that business than I ought to have done. Some weeks of the latter part of last year were, as you know, closely and successfully employed about matters here, and I took, in the winter, a troublesome journey to Carlisle. Then came on our annual examination in College, &c. &c.

“Add to this the particular attentions which I think it right to pay to such individual students as are going on well, by way of encouraging them and inciting others. Then duty called me to preach in our chapel more than once, and once at Whitehall. Lastly, many hours are spent on the sofa in pain of the head, &c.

“I therefore ask you, whether you think I have been idle, in having now actually printed off upwards of 250 pages, that is, nearly the half of the fourth volume, and this from a manuscript very imperfect, and which often gives me a deal of trouble in making out references and doubtful matters. I hope to get to work again before long.

“To the list of interruptions I might well have added ‘family concerns.’”

This allusion to “family concerns” has reference to the departure from Cambridge of Dr. Milner’s niece, with her husband and a part of her family, an event which was, indeed, a severe trial to his social and affectionate disposition. She took along with her but a part of her family, because he could not prevail upon himself to relinquish the whole. The eldest daughter he detained; and very great was the bitterness of the separation between the uncle and the niece, who was herself as tender-hearted as the relative whom she quitted. From that time forward, his affections certainly centred in the child thus left to his care. He concludes his letter as follows:—

“My niece being thus settled at Hull, it will, I know, naturally occur to several of my friends, that this new arrangement will bring me more into the neighbourhood of that place, and indeed, to Hull itself.

“This may possibly, to a certain degree, be the case. But

I know my own feelings. Hull can never more be the place of my residence, for any length of time.

“As soon as ever the fourth volume is completed, I will ask your advice, and take a comprehensive view of what is to be done about *his* works.

“Yours most affectionately,

“ISAAC MILNER.”

It was during the year 1802, that “The Invisible Girl” attracted, by her marvellous performances, crowds of wondering visitors.

The general nature of the mechanism by means of which this ingenious deception was effected, is now sufficiently understood: but when the invention was new, it excited an almost incredible degree of interest and astonishment. Princes, peers, and bishops, swelled the admiring throng.

In common with thousands of other persons, Dr. Milner was attracted by the fame of this exhibition,—if exhibition it may be called,—visited the scene of wonder, and witnessed the magical effects produced: but unlike the greater number of those thousands, he could not rest till he had discovered the secret. That he did discover the secret, has been mentioned, I believe, in some periodical publications; but beyond this fact, nothing authentic has been hitherto made known.

His own account of the matter, contained in the following letter, exemplifying as it does the persevering character of his mind, will not be deemed uninteresting.

“TO JOHN PEARSON, ESQ., GOLDEN SQUARE.

“Queen’s College Lodge,

December 18, 1802.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Since I parted with you, I have had further intercourse with the Invisible Girl. I went again with Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Bankes; and we all came away in the same state of ignorance and admiration, with which you and I left the room in Leicester Fields.

“Mr. William Farish, and Mr. Robert Jarratt, called upon me in Palace Yard; and as they had not seen the performance,

I described the wooden frame, the glass ball, the tin trumpets, and, in short, every part of the apparatus, as accurately as I possibly could. It is very remarkable, that while I was describing the four brass rods which go from the wooden pillars of the frame respectively, and are in a horizontal direction, all in one instant, it bounced into my mind, that there must be an opening in the said brass rods just opposite the centre of the mouths of the trumpets, and that the girl spoke (from some adjoining room) through a pipe which terminated just opposite the said centres. The brass rods above-mentioned appeared to me sufficiently thick to conceal a tube of the necessary size; and as the wide circular ends of the trumpets came so very near the supposed openings in the brass, I saw clearly that all the phenomena might take place from such an arrangement. Whether the trumpets communicated with each other or not, was a point of little consequence. In either case, the sound, or the breath, coming along the main pipe, from the girl, through the wooden pillars, and to the orifice which I have supposed to be in the brass rod, would rebound from the wide opening of the trumpet, and be sufficiently well heard, and in the same way the breath would blow on the face by rebounding; for the said wide opening would collect all the sound, or wind, and would condense it, so as to prevent it from being dispersed. I felt perfectly confident that this was the right explanation of the whole matter; and so thought Mr. William Farish, and Mr. Jarratt.

“I went to Broomfield that night: I got a funnel from Mr. Wilberforce’s kitchen, and a metal pipe from his organ; and I soon convinced myself that my explanation was, in substance, right. That the girl should see, had (you know) appeared to me no difficulty: now as soon as I blew into the funnel, the wind rebounded upon my face directly, and made the same sort of sound as the girl’s blowing did.

“In the next place, as there must be four openings, correspondent to the four wide mouths of the trumpets, I saw that there was no reason to suppose that the sound came from one more than from another,—in fact, it comes from all four at once; and there being four places at which it bursts into the

room, there must be a sort of uncertainty in referring the sound to its proper place: and this agrees remarkably well with the phenomena. Further, if you put your head down, under the frame, the sound seems to come from above, because all the orifices are above; whereas, if you put your head to the trumpet's wide mouth, it rather appears to come from below; so it ought to do, as we shall see presently.

“In ruminating over this matter at Broomfield during the evening, I saw, that the more I considered the explanation I have given, the more perfectly it appeared to agree with all that I had seen or heard. One single doubt only remained, viz., ‘The sound, when she blows, ought, perhaps,’ said I, ‘to make some noise, a whistling sort of noise, as it comes through a nick or hole in the brass pipe.’

“I mentioned this distinctly to Mr. Wilberforce, and said I should like to go again, for that I was sure the whole thing must be explicable only on the principle I had suggested; and that, perhaps, the whistling noise was prevented by a bit of ivory, or of some such substance, along which the air might pass, just as it came into the room.

“I recollected that there was a sort of net-work about two inches broad, made of brass, very small brass; but I could not recollect upon what the whole brass frame rested, or whether there were another brass rod parallel to the upper one through which I have supposed the sound to come; neither could Mr. Wilberforce assist my memory on that point. We had both totally forgotten that there was a cross wooden bar, just at the bottom of the said brass net-work, which bar reached from pillar to pillar. Neither of us had the smallest recollection of that wooden bar.

“Mr. Farish and Mr. Jarratt went, the day following, with the full impression that they should find an orifice at or about the place that I had described: but the master of the show was amazingly alive to their examinations, as soon as he saw to what part they directed their attention, and would not let them touch anything. However, they clearly saw four openings, not in the brass indeed, but in the said wooden bar, and therefore a little below the centre of the funnels, or trumpets. This

minute difference, however, does not affect my claim to the discovery—for the principle of the sound, or the breath, striking the funnel, and of its rebounding, and, in short, doing everything as I had said and predicted, turned out to be exactly so. The opening being a little lower, is certainly more favourable to the rebounding from the oblique surface of the trumpet's mouth: and the wooden cross-bar is capacious enough to hold a pipe of great diameter. Mr. Jarratt, I fancy, first perceived the nick in the wood; and, if they would but let one examine thoroughly, I have no doubt but that it would be found that there is a sloping direction given to the opening. I went a third time to see all with my own eyes. The men pretended that I had not discovered the main secret: 'Then,' says I, 'I may mention my opinion anywhere.' They entreated me not to do so, in the strongest terms. Mr. Wilberforce put a piece of paper to the opening, and the girl's breath blew it away. I would have this to be communicated to no more persons than already know it: but I thought it best to give you the exact history of the business.

"I could make, any day, an apparatus which would answer all the purposes of that in Leicester Fields. The nick in the wood, through which the sound comes into the trumpet, is in the ornamental nick (or moulding) made in the mahogany bar, and does not appear different from the other parts without a close attention; and can only be seen well on the side next the window. There it appears more open for about an inch. On the very first day I went, I remember I wondered why there should be a brass frame to hinder one's mouth and face from getting close to the trumpet. You can't think how surly the fellows were at first, and how they said one must touch nothing, and would not let us put anything against the orifice; but Mr. Wilberforce slyly put a piece of paper there, which, as I said before, the girl's breath blew away.

"Yours, I. MILNER."

Subsequent to his discovery of the main secret upon which the clever deception in question depended, Dean Milner, who, as the readers of his *Life* must be aware, was never satisfied

till he had probed an affair to the very bottom, frequently visited the exhibition in Leicester Fields, almost *en ami*. The exhibitor, sensible that there was, in fact, nothing further to conceal, took delight in showing him all the minutiae of the contrivance; being, in truth, well remunerated for his civility by the multitude of visitors attracted by the Dean's frequent presence and lively conversation. Dr. Milner had even, when he chose, admittance behind the scenes; and for this privilege, he on one occasion paid at least its full price. He had entered at an early hour, the apartment of the invisible agent in the mysteries which he had succeeded in fathoming; and such was the influx of visitors throughout the morning, that to emerge from his hiding-place, without betraying much of the secret, was impossible. The manager implored him not to ruin his fortunes; and the good-natured Dean, finding that he must make up his mind to remain for some hours where he was, and being quite at home with regard to the various signals habitually transmitted from the outer to the inner room, amused himself by relieving the *invisible girl*, who was, in fact, a little decrepit old woman, from a part of her tedious duty. While she cooked her dinner (a mess of soup, as he used to relate), he observed for her the signals given, and in fact did all but speak. Nothing of all this, however, did he mention, except to those few persons to whom the secret was already known, until the astonishment and admiration excited by the *invisible girl* had passed away. Afterwards, indeed, he did frequently relate the whole adventure with much glee.

CHAPTER XV.

Misunderstanding between the President and the Fellows of Queen's College.—Written Documents.—Industry of Dr. Milner.—Election of Fellows by Royal Dispensation.—Comparative advantages of Open or Close Colleges.—Domestic Affliction.—Board of Longitude.—Sentiments with respect to Public Affairs.—Letter to the Rev. William Richardson.—Preaching at Carlisle.—Fourth Volume of the *Church History*.—Accuracy of the *History*.—Dr. Milner's qualifications as an Ecclesiastical Historian.—Habitual Study of Theological Subjects.—Remarks upon Dr. Kipling's Work on the Articles of the Church of England.—Hebrew Language.—State of the Country.—Recollections of Dean Milner, by a Clergyman formerly of Queen's College.—*Christian Observer's* Critique upon Milner's *Church History*.—Dr. Milner's Remarks on the Critique.—His Opinion of the *Christian Observer*.

A.D. 1803. ÆTAT. 53.

THE beginning of the year 1803 was marked by certain differences of opinion between Dr. Milner, in his capacity of President, and the Tutors and other Fellows of Queen's College—differences which led to discussions of a character highly distasteful to the frank and friendly spirit of the Master.

It would be easy, were it necessary, to prove, by means of documents now in existence, that throughout these occurrences Dr. Milner acted with a determined view to the real good of the society which he governed, and with a steady firmness of purpose, tempered by the natural urbanity of his disposition. But in order to demonstrate this, it would be necessary not only to enter into some matters which are now no longer interesting, but also to incur the hazard at least, of wounding the feelings of some persons who still survive.

One observation should, however, be made.

It is notorious that there have been persons, very ill informed, no doubt, who have suspected that after his settlement at Queen's Lodge, Dr. Milner contracted habits of self-indulgence; in short, that he became indolent.

The very full and carefully digested statements which he, on all important occasions, made in writing, with the arguments *pro* and *con*, for the guidance of his own judgment respecting

matters affecting the well-being of his college, statements which were found among his papers after his death, and which of course have been preserved, are sufficient, even if there were not abundance of other evidence, to clear his memory from this imputation.

As examples of the nature of these written documents, I may mention two manuscripts of considerable bulk, and evidently put together with great care and labour.

One of these embodies a full account of the "Misunderstanding," already alluded to as having taken place in the beginning of the year 1803, "between the Master and his Tutors," with the causes which led to that misunderstanding, and the line of conduct which, after a full consideration of the circumstances, the Master thought it his duty to pursue.

The other manuscript, also dated 1803, is entitled "A Statement of Facts relative to the Election of Fellows by Dispensation."

This latter subject was pressed upon Dr. Milner's consideration, in consequence of a general wish existing in the minds of the majority of the governing part of the Society of Queen's, a wish, be it observed, in which he was disposed cordially to coincide, to elect to a Fellowship, by dispensation, his county being full, a gentleman distinguished both by character and learning.

Both these manuscripts are drawn up with much ability, and are highly interesting and characteristic.

Concerning the first, however, little can be said, without betraying matters which, in his accustomed spirit of charity, Dr. Milner had certainly determined to conceal. Suffice it therefore to observe, that in this very able production he investigates and lays open, with his usual perseverance and penetration, the whole chain of causes which had produced the unfriendly state of feeling actually existing in the breasts of certain individuals towards himself; having, at first, as he says, with a passing gleam of his constitutional gaiety, felt "like Ajax, at his wits' end; not on account of his enemies, but on account of the *darkness* which surrounded him."

Those who have read the foregoing portion of this very

imperfect memoir of Dr. Milner, must be aware that he was a man of an exquisitely susceptible and affectionate temperament; lest, however, any person should be inclined to imagine that the "misunderstanding" alluded to, although irritating at the time, was but, after all, the consequence of some such trifling ebullitions of temper, as will sometimes take place even among friends who in the main cordially esteem each other, it may be advisable here to insert a short extract from the concluding part of Dr. Milner's manuscript.

"I have now," writes Dr. M., "but two very brief observations to make. The first is but a repetition of a declaration which I made at the outset of this narrative; viz., that by far the most agreeable event that could happen to me, would be to see matters assume such an appearance of perfect amity and cordial reconciliation, that I might cheerfully and at once commit these papers to the flames.

"The second observation is, that if all my endeavours to restore harmony in this society, and general prosperity to the college, should finally prove abortive, there will be one resource left to me, of which I cannot be deprived; viz., that of publishing these papers, and of depositing among the college archives this, or a more complete testimonial of the facts and reasons which produced these differences among us. Such an exact statement of the truth may prove serviceable to an impartial posterity, and it will be an ample justification of my present friends in the support which they may be pleased to afford me. With respect to others, even they, when passion and prejudice shall have subsided, and shall have given way to cooler reflections, may discover, through the help of these pages, by what steps they have been misled, and how erroneous a judgment they have formed of the Master's conduct. In such an event, some of them may, perhaps, at last experience painful feelings, when they shall come to understand how much their unjust treatment of the Master has been calculated to destroy the comfort, and injure the reputation, of a man whom they were bound to have regarded with sentiments of kindness and gratitude.

"The public reputation, indeed, of the Master has hitherto

been assailed in vain, notwithstanding the industrious circulation of many plausible charges. It is his triumph to find, that these are no sooner propagated than they are understood to be notorious falsehoods, and that he is respected as much as ever by those whose good opinion he values."

The latter part of the extract above given, will be read with satisfaction not only by the surviving personal friends of the late Dr. Milner, but by all who revere his memory.

The same "plausible charges" against him, which were put into "industrious circulation" during his life, have been, in some few instances, renewed since his death.

The above extract certainly proves, that to his own conscience, Dr. Milner stood acquitted of these charges; and if his innocence be not thereby absolutely demonstrated to the minds of others, it is because his biographer declines to make public facts and circumstances, which, in his tender regard for the feelings even of persons who had shewn him but a scant measure of kindness, he has gone to the grave without divulging.

It would have been improper in a work purporting to be a *Life of Doctor Milner*, to omit all mention of an affair which, at the time of its occurrence, so deeply affected his comfort, and of which he thought it expedient to leave, in writing, an accurate account.

It is, perhaps, scarcely necessary to add, that time brought the truth to light. The purity and integrity of Dr. Milner's character became daily more and more apparent. He completely outlived the prejudices which, in the minds of certain members of his college, had once operated to his disadvantage, and died in the possession of their hearty esteem and reverence.

The other manuscript already mentioned in evidence of Dr. Milner's laborious habits, is a very able and dispassionate "Statement of Facts relative to the Election of Fellows by Dispensation, and of the Arguments respecting the General Question of Dispensations and Second Dispensations."

Such a treatise, admirably as it may be drawn up, cannot be supposed likely to excite much general interest. It contains, however, one passage which immediately bears upon a question which has lately been agitated with considerable earnestness;

and upon every such question, the deliberate opinion of such a man as Dr. Milner, must be valuable.

“In the discussion of the point before us,” writes Dr. Milner, “much depends on not mistaking the true nature of the general question, and also of some other questions closely connected with it.

“Thus, in considering the effects of second, and even of first dispensations, it is scarcely possible not to make some comparison in our minds between the advantages of open colleges, and such as are confined and restricted by their foundation. Queen’s College, for example, is, by statute, a confined or a close college; but we open it, in a measure, by dispensations. Now I beg leave to remark, that the question before us is not whether a close or an open college be better, that is, whether a close or an open college be more likely to promote the pious purposes of the founders in assisting the poor, and in advancing religion and learning, but whether, as we have now the college founded already to our hands, and closed by statute, and as dispensations, with all the circumstances of procuring them, &c. &c. are the only means we have of opening them, we ought to open them in this way as much as we can, or, on the contrary, to use great reserve in the use of these means. Or the real question may be put still more accurately thus. Always keeping in view that we are, by statute, compelled to be a close college, to what degree is it advisable to open the fellowships, by dispensations, subject to the inconveniences of petitions, &c. &c.?”

“In the solution of this question, my own mind has been much assisted by carefully contemplating and comparing the advantages and disadvantages of close and open colleges in general. And here, I do not scruple to own, that experience, and not mere reasoning, has taught me to pronounce differently, accordingly as the college is small or large in its foundation.

“If the fellowships be numerous, by all means let the college be open. It is next to impossible, that county connexions should much predominate in a very large college. In a small college the reverse is the truth. We find it so by experience, though it may be invidious to point out instances. In a small college, when several fellows are, at one time, of the same, or even

of neighbouring counties, we find that they are apt to continue so to the exclusion of other counties; and this, not, perhaps, from any particular affection for a person's own county, but because admissions of pupils are generally owing to the existing master and fellows and their connexions, and these pupils are the materials for making future fellows.

“For these reasons I think, that the framers of the statutes of Queen's College did wisely in endeavouring (as they express themselves in the statute *de Partialitate*) to extirpate all partial regards to counties and county connexions. Still,” adds Dr. Milner, “I neither quarrel with any man who thinks otherwise, nor ought I to be at all surprised at such a difference of opinion on this point, because I once thought otherwise myself. I once supposed (before I had seen so much of men's motives in the election of fellows), that merit might be the sole or the principal reason which guided the elector's mind, but it is impossible that I should offend any one by asserting a general truth which nobody who knows anything of the history of colleges will deny, viz., that the thing is by no means always so.”

The following extracts are taken from a letter written under a great pressure of affliction :—

“*Queen's Lodge,*

January 31, 1803.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“Is it true that you accuse me of not answering your letters? I have heard this of late from more quarters than one; but indeed, my dear friend, I am not aware, that according to the rules of epistolary correspondence, I owe you a letter. On other grounds I owe you more than I can ever discharge.

“Nevertheless, I may be wrong; and be it as it may, we will not be nice. Forgive me, and be assured, that you are deeply and often in my mind, as one of the choice ones of the earth, and as one to whom I feel particularly bound.

“At present I am in a good deal of distress. I know not whether you have heard of the imminent danger in which my poor niece has lately been. * * * I consider her state as very critical indeed. May God preserve her. The sight of the little one, Mary, now with me, almost breaks my heart, and I

am sure, that if her mother dies, I cannot live with her at present.

“In such a state of mind, we like to write to those who will sympathize with us. For which reason I write this night to you.

“How does — go on? I hope God is with him. Farewell, dear friend, and believe me,

“Yours very affectionately, I. M.”

Having gone up to London during the month of March in this year, for the purpose of attending the meeting of the Board of Longitude, Dean Milner was induced to remain somewhat longer than usual in Palace Yard, on account of the illness of his friend, Mr. Wilberforce, who was suffering under a recent attack of a disease, at that time so prevalent, that it acquired the name of “the Influenza.” On this occasion he conversed much both on religious topics and on the two great political subjects which naturally occupied the mind of his host,—the abolition of the Slave Trade, and the prospect of peace or war. With reference to this latter subject, the Dean, whose sentiments in the main agreed with those of his friend, thus wrote to him after his return to Cambridge, and while the negotiations on this great question were still in progress: “It may be necessary to make peace, in order that the nation may be convinced that peace cannot be had. This is just what happened when you brought on the negociations at Lisle by your motion in 1795. The eyes of England were opened, and they bore the war better afterwards.”

The following letter to another friend deserves to be given at somewhat greater length.

“TO THE REV. WILLIAM RICHARDSON.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“*Carlisle, July 5th, 1803.*

“I suppose if I do not fire at you again I shall never more hear from you.

“I have been ill; but am much recovered; blessed be God for it. I have ventured to preach twice at Carlisle; and these sermons are the very first attempts which I have dared to make of that sort, since my late attack.

“Last Sunday morning, I was so ill with severe headache, that I was obliged, at ten o’clock, to send for Mr. Sheepshanks, to request him to do the duty for me at the Cathedral; but it pleased God, that before twelve o’clock, I was able to go and mount the rostrum myself. Great crowds were waiting.

“This is all I shall say of myself, at present; except, that I fear my inward-man flourishes as little as my outward-man. Oh! I have much to say to you! but, I suppose, you would only say the same things, which you have kindly said to me before. Only do so, then, I say. I allude to the precious truths which you inculcated and impressed upon me; and I wish I could profit more by them. I, really, sometimes wonder how I can have the face to preach to others, when I feel so little myself. They are, however,—these truths, I mean—precious truths, still: and I don’t suppose that you could say, to me, anything better than what you have said. May a kind and gracious God preserve me and guide my steps!

“N.B. I send you, for yourself, a copy of Volume IV. Part 1, of the *Ecclesiastical History*. I have no fear as to your liking the book; it is a most instructive part of the history. I wish I may live to finish the other part.

“I am, yours affectionately,

“I. MILNER.”

In elucidation of the last paragraph of the above letter, it should be observed, that Dr. Milner was in the habit of designating by the names of Parts 1 and 2 of Volume IV. that portion of the *Ecclesiastical History* which is now published under the titles of Volumes IV. and V.

Before his departure from Carlisle, Dean Milner wrote again to Mr. Richardson, as follows.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“As you have not yet seen the book, perhaps, you may alter your way of thinking, in some respects, when you have seen and read it. You may, perhaps, cease to think me over-serupulous. At least I now fancy, that I see some misapprehension on your part. * * *

“Now when you reflect upon the time during which I have been able to resume my work, in this matter, at all,—when you consider, that I have, daily, many interruptions, from college affairs, and, about Christmas, a great deal of actual business,—that I am obliged to attend meetings at the Board of Longitude three times in the year, in London,—that, lately, on one of these occasions, I was detained five weeks in London, by illness; you will not be apt to think, that I can have been over nice about this said book; particularly, when I assure you, that by far the greater part of it has been printed since I saw you last—in fact, since last September. If all this do not convince you, I fear the reading of it may. You will find me not ‘over nice.’

“However, to be serious and sincere, I have no great apprehensions on that head; for though I have no pretensions to very minute accuracy, I trust the book will be found sufficiently accurate in the main.

“To strengthen all this, let me tell you, that the manuscript for this volume, left by my brother, is by far the most incorrect of all which he wrote. No wonder. It was never looked over by him—it was written in his weak state—and is imperfect in every way; though it contains very fine things.

“Then the subject grows more and more important; and I have access to books which he had not: and I have thought it right to new-model a great deal, and to add a great deal, also.

“Further, it is impossible for me not to feel myself accountable for the work, in a way that I never felt before, in correcting any of the former volumes.

“To have published it as it stood in the manuscript, I assure you, would not have done. As it is, I trust, that the work will be found highly instructive and important. I have brought to light a vast deal that never before appeared in English.

“It is my sincere wish, that my life may be prolonged to finish this volume*, if it be, indeed, the will of God. I hope I am not ill-employed; and I trust, that when you have con-

* Viz., the Second Part of Vol. IV., subsequently published by the Dean as Vol. V.

sidered these things, and read the book, you will cease to think me over scrupulous.”

The foregoing letter, exhibiting, as it does, Dean Milner’s private feelings respecting the responsibility which attached to himself with regard to the volume in question, has high claims to the attention of the reader; and it is more especially interesting, as bearing, in some measure, upon the question of the accuracy of this part of the history; a question which, in some quarters, has been acrimoniously debated.

Nothing can be more candid than the whole of Dr. Milner’s statement. The manuscript for the fourth volume, as left by his brother, never having been revised, was, he admits, very “incorrect” and “imperfect;” although containing “very fine things.”

“Then the subject” was becoming “more and more important;” and he, having, “access to books which” the original author “had not,” had “thought it right to new-model a great deal, and to add a great deal, also.”

It can be no matter of wonder if, in a book thus new-modelled and enlarged, some trifling inconsistencies, or some slight mistakes, in references, or dates, may be detected. It is sufficient, that, after the various attacks which have been made upon it, on the score of inaccuracy, that part of the *History of the Church of Christ* of which Dr. Milner was either entirely, or in a great measure, the author, is now generally allowed to be, with regard to all such matters, “sufficiently accurate in the main.”

As to the correctness of the views entertained and communicated by Dean Milner, of the characters and tenets of Luther and other illustrious men, who were instruments in the hand of the Almighty, for the bringing about of the great work of the Reformation, this is not the place, nor the occasion, for the discussion of so comprehensive a subject.

I may, however, be permitted to observe, that the readers of even this very imperfect and inadequate memoir of the life and character of Dr. Milner, can scarcely fail to be convinced, that he was deficient in neither of two qualifications, essential to

an ecclesiastical historian—industry and piety. He was, moreover, very deeply read in religious subjects, and of the force and vigour of his reasoning powers, it is needless to speak. The deliberate statements of a writer, thus qualified, may surely claim attention and some deference from the generality of readers.

Dean Milner's season of residence at Carlisle, notwithstanding the preparation necessary for his frequent addresses from the pulpit, and other avocations incident to his station, was comparatively, and upon the whole, a season of leisure; and when at leisure, his mind habitually turned to the consideration of theological subjects. It was his custom to think with a pen in his hand; and many valuable hints may, consequently, be found interspersed among his remaining manuscripts. Sometimes, indeed, his thoughts are expressed too briefly to be intelligible to general readers, and occasionally, when the words used are sufficiently explicit, the particular point or passage of a book to which they refer, is left doubtful. More frequently, however, the subject upon which his mind is employed is indicated with sufficient clearness, either by express words or by the obvious tendency and bearing of his observations. Thus the following detached remarks, written during the summer of 1803, manifestly refer to Dr. Kipling's then recent publication upon the Articles of the Church of England.

“The meaning of the Church better ascertained by the Articles than by the Liturgy.”

“Can words be contrived clearer than the Seventeenth Article? The last part is in Calvin's *Institutes*.”

“See Calvin about the will not being destroyed. Faculty of the will not destroyed.”

“Opinions should not be insisted upon as held when disavowed.”

“Kipling says, Calvin denies men to be accountable. Not true. He always represents men as accountable.”

“Dr. K——'s opinion is, I suppose, opposed to Calvin's. He therefore thinks, that we have some power of thinking good thoughts, &c. But our Liturgy says no.”

The following observations, suggested by the consideration of some passages in the Articles, are expressed at somewhat

greater length ; and, like every thing else written or spoken by Dean Milner, upon subjects which he had studied, they bear the impress of a great mind.

After quoting the IXth, Xth, and XIIIth Articles,—“Original sin is the corruption of the nature of every man, whereby man is very far gone (*quam longissime*) from original righteousness, &c. &c. ;” “The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, &c. &c. ;” “Works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit, &c. &c.”—the Dean thus writes :—

“The doctrine of original sin is a most important article in the Christian scheme. All the other doctrines of Christianity are closely connected with it ; and, in order to preserve consistency, must be modified according to the view that is taken of original sin. If our ideas of original sin be not previously settled with some degree of accuracy, we are in perpetual danger of falling into contradictions in the treatment of all the important doctrines of Revelation.

“It would be easy to furnish numerous examples of this. Not that it is always necessary for a writer to give a formal statement of his notions of original sin for the purpose of making his meaning understood upon other religious topics ; but this I take to be constantly true, that a perspicuous and consistent writer, whatever important subject in religion he may handle, cannot possibly conceal his ideas on original sin ; the links of the chain are in a decided and even necessary connexion.

“How extremely important, then, must it be to form clear, decisive, and intelligible views of this doctrine ; a doctrine which, like a tree, ever bears its own peculiar branches ; a doctrine, too, where the branches infallibly indicate the nature of the tree on which they grow !

“In books of religious controversy, there are endless varieties of the opinions which have been held on this subject.

“The three extracts above quoted, express the sentiments of the Church of England ; and one would think, that whoever carefully reads them, without prejudice, can scarcely give two senses to the words, especially as they are descriptive of facts.”

“N.B.—In order to form a right judgment of original sin,

the real tendency of sin is to be considered; *e. g.*, What would sin produce, if grace did not interpose? All that grace does—that is, all that is to be ascribed to grace—proves sin the greater.”

“It is not fair to define a Calvinist, ‘one who holds every thing that Calvin held.’ It misleads, to represent men as holding the whole of Calvinism, who hold only a part. The same may be said respecting the followers of Arminius.—See Owen’s *Display of Arminianism*, ch. viii.; and Fuller’s *Gospel of Christ*.”

“The danger of Antinomianism, though dreadful, is not extensive. I have rarely, if ever, met with a single instance of the kind; whereas I meet with thousands of Pharisees. The reason is obvious. The Antinomian idea of living in sin, and yet being saved, is so absurd, and so contrary to common sense, as well as to the stream of Scripture, that it never can be very extensive in its ravages; whereas Pharisaism is congenial to man, and is taking fast hold and striking root everywhere. Nay, it is natural to man, whereas salvation by grace is not natural.”

In the following admirable letter, which may now be made public without impropriety, Dean Milner’s sentiments concerning Dr. Kipling’s performance are stated without disguise or reservation:—

“DEAR ———,

“I have lately been informed that you are meditating a reply to Dr. Kipling’s publication on the Articles of the Church of England. The intelligence gives me much satisfaction, yet not without some doubt as to the complete discretion of writing any public answer to such a pamphlet. I am so fortunate as to know, that you have given much attention, for many years past, to the controverted points in question, and, therefore, I may well take it for granted, that whatever you write upon the subject will be to the purpose; yet still I am far from feeling assured that this is a favourable opportunity for you to give your sentiments to the public. If, indeed, you were to enter fully into the difficult subjects of Calvinism and

Arminianism, and furnish the public with those thoughts which you have long digested, the world would have to thank Dr. Kipling for having been the occasion of bringing to light the fruit of your labours; but if you intend to confine your plan to observations on his publication, several unpleasant circumstances appear to me to be in your way.

“1. Dr. Kipling’s side of the question is by far the most popular in our country. I suppose the proportion of those who embrace that side, to those who are of a contrary opinion, is very great. When I say this, I would by no means be understood to speak of such as have studied the question, and made up their minds after much reading and reflection. If we confine ourselves to persons of this class, I believe the reverse to be, and to have always been, the truth in all ages and countries. But I speak of Englishmen in general of the present age. The times, you will agree with me, are very much in favour of Arminian sentiments.

“2. And this is remarkably the case with the clergy of our Establishment. Formerly the majority of them were calvinistical; but at present I believe very few of them are such, except those who (you know) are improperly denominated Methodists.

“3. The thing I speak of is not a mere prevalence of sentiment. The tide sets very strongly against Calvinism, considered as a principle of religion and morality. Calvinistic tenets are not only thought absurd, weak, and enthusiastic, but they are also deemed odious, and even blasphemous. With many persons a man is thought a worse man, for being a Calvinist.

“4. All this, it is true, is merely the effect of custom or education; nevertheless, a writer on the Calvinistic side will have these prejudices to contend with. I own they are not worth mentioning as objections, provided you mean, as I have said, to enter thoroughly into the question: for in that case you will write to the few, and they will listen.

“5. I have not often seen a pamphlet more calculated, in my judgment, to suit the many of the present day, than this of Dr. Kipling. Though it is impossible that such a work should

convert a single Calvinist from his opinion it will tend very much to strengthen the sentiments of those who are already disposed against Calvinism merely from prejudice, without understanding the nature of the question.

“6. These difficulties you will certainly have to encounter: but still, if you can put students of divinity upon their guard against the partial representations of this author, I acknowledge that you will do a great service to the Church and to the public.

“You see I write without any sort of ceremony; and as I am just fresh from reading Dr. K——’s work, I will briefly put down a few remarks in the very order in which they have occurred to me.

“1. The author, in his very first page, sets out with a position that surprised me exceedingly.

“After acknowledging that it had been a question for more than a century, whether some of the Articles of the Church of England should be interpreted in a Calvinistic sense, he tells us, that this controversy was at length reduced to a single point, and was therefore in a fair way of being soon brought to a conclusion.

“I have been so often deceived by the magnificent promises and professions of authors, that, I confess, my expectations were not much raised by this information. My astonishment was rather excited, on observing a disposition to be so peremptory on a question so difficult and intricate, and in a case where the writer, from his age and profession, must be supposed conversant in inquiries of this nature; and, from his situation in the University, accustomed to investigate theological difficulties, and to place them in different lights.

“2. But however improbable I might think the author’s success to be, in the point which he attempted, it became me to listen attentively to so respectable a character.

“But, alas! he utterly fails us, *in limine*. His reasoning is this: He produces two authors who, he says, have at least tacitly granted, that if the Liturgy of our Church be not in correspondence with Calvinism, neither are its Articles. By so doing, he adds, they have tacitly consented to rest the termina-

tion of the question in dispute, entirely upon the event of this one inquiry, 'Is our established Liturgy in correspondence with Calvinism?' And then the Doctor joins issue with these Calvinistic writers, and says he shall confine himself to this one inquiry, 'Is our Established Church in perfect unison and correspondence with Calvin's doctrine of predestination?'

"3. My observations on such a procedure are these.

"Supposing this to be ever so fair a statement of the question between Dr. K. and the two authors whom he opposes, I ask, who has consented to rest the determination of the points in dispute in the way that Dr. K. supposes, except Dr. K. himself? Possibly the Doctor's two opponents may consent also. And he tells us, that they have actually made a tacit grant, which implies such a consent. It would be presumption in me to pretend to determine what either of those writers would consent to in a contest of this nature, and where the issue is joined with so confident a spirit by their adversary; but I think it very easy to collect, from what they have already written, that in whatever manner Dr. K. may think proper to join issue with them, or in whatever manner he may choose to confine himself, they would hardly submit to be confined at his will or pleasure: or, in one word, I think that they would consider themselves justly entitled to use not only that one species of argument pointed out by Dr. K., but any kind of argument which they thought fairly bore upon the question, and was likely to produce conviction in a sober and cultivated understanding. The grand principle upon which they would proceed would, I think, be this: Whenever a doctrine was perfectly clear and explicit, whether that doctrine were found among the Articles, or the Homilies, or in the Liturgy, they would rest satisfied with it, and would apply it to the explanation, or clearing up, of any doubtful passages, whether such doubtful passages were found in the Articles, the Homilies, or the Liturgy. And as it is undoubtedly in the Articles that we have reason to expect doctrinal precision, they would chiefly look there for accurate statements of controverted points. In the Homilies they would expect to find more diffuse explanations and illustrations of what was expressed

concisely and abstractedly in the Articles; because, in fact, the Articles themselves do make that use of the Homilies by reference; but least of all would they look for nice distinctions and definitions of doctrinal matters in the Liturgy, the use of which belongs, in a great measure, to the affections of the heart, rather than to the speculations of the head; and the language of which is wisely made popular, and adapted to the understandings of persons of the lowest attainments.

“ You are not to infer from anything which I now say, that I think the Liturgy of no use in the controversy before us. The reverse is my decided opinion: only I think it ought not by any means to stand foremost in an inquiry of this kind. The use of the Liturgy in this inquiry is subsidiary, and in that light very powerful. I even admit that some of the most conclusive arguments, on the most important points, may be drawn from it,—arguments by no means less conclusive, because they depend upon statements which seem to have been formed in an undesigned manner. In one word, I should say, let the Articles speak for themselves on all occasions, if possible. If there be some obscurity on any point, or if any point require particular and diffuse illustration, consult the Homilies, where that point, or some other point closely connected with it, is expressly treated. And, lastly, if doubt still remain concerning the meaning of any article of faith, listen attentively to the prayers of the Church. Thus, if any man doubt whether, according to the principles of the Church of England, Jesus Christ, the Second Person in the Trinity, be God, let him consider the leading clauses of the Litany.

“ But I should be very cautious how I indulged myself in inverting this method of studying the doctrines of our Church; that is, I would not recommend a person to begin an inquiry of that sort by studying the Liturgy. Least of all would I advise him to note down certain parts of the Liturgy,—to draw inferences from them,—and then to say, these inferences must be the doctrines of the Church of England, these inferences must be contained in the Articles of our faith,—whatever those Articles may say, this must be their meaning.

“Now Dr. K. appears to me to have used this last method of argumentation; which method I think a very dangerous one; and thereby to have imposed upon his own understanding. He has not sufficiently looked into the Articles themselves: he has not, I think, submitted to their plain and obvious meaning; on the contrary, he has aimed to make the Articles speak through the medium of the Liturgy, and this in the following method: He has adverted to several passages of the Liturgy which admit of two, or perhaps of three, interpretations, and which, in fact, have been so diversely interpreted. He has considered those passages as incapable of bearing any meaning but that which he has given to them. He has thought that several expressions could not possibly be used by any Calvinist; when, in fact, they are daily used by the most rigid and sincere Calvinists. He does not produce from the Liturgy, in any one instance, a direct confutation of the Calvinistic doctrines which he opposes: but he produces some prayer, or some expression, which he thinks inconsistent with Calvinistic doctrine; and he never stops to inquire whether the Calvinist himself draws from it the same conclusion; but he peremptorily decides that such or such a doctrine cannot be contained in the Articles; and this, I think, he does in more than one instance, where the express words of the Article are most incontrovertibly against him. Let it be admitted that the Articles and the Liturgy are in perfect correspondence with each other; it then undoubtedly follows, that if any clause in the Liturgy directly affirms an anti-Calvinistic doctrine, the contrary Calvinistic doctrine cannot be the doctrine of the Church of England. But it should be remembered that this same conclusion will by no means take place, because Dr. K. *thinks* that he has found some passages in the Liturgy inconsistent with Calvinistic principles. If, indeed, the inconsistency of the passage in the Liturgy be demonstrable, and, consequently, undeniable, such inconsistency, although only an inference, will amount to a direct affirmation and establishment of the contrary doctrine; but it is well known, that in controversies, inferences of this nature, drawn by adversaries for the purpose of confuting their opponents, are seldom to be relied on. In

the present instances, the inferences upon which Dr. K. lays so much stress, so far from being undeniable, have been, in all ages, denied by reasonable men; and are at this moment denied not only by Calvinists, but by many who, in general, by no means accede to Calvinistic tenets.

“If Mr. Overton and Presbyter should think proper to defend themselves by appeals to the public, it will then be seen whether they will admit Dr. K’s way of managing the questions in dispute, or whether they will not rather pursue a plan somewhat like what I have here supposed, in regard to the Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy of the Church of England.

“Dr. Kipling appears to me throughout, to be fighting with a phantom of his own creation. He would prove the Church of England not Calvinistic, that is, according to him, not in exact harmony with Calvin: and he also maintains that every one of Calvin’s peculiarities may be comprised under his single doctrine of predestination.

“Now I much question whether any one person ever affirmed the Church of England to be Calvinistic in that sense. Dr. K. himself tells us, (p. 6, note) that of all the writers who have lately attempted to demonstrate the Church of England to be Calvinistic, no one has ever once quoted Calvin for this purpose. He, very uncandidly, considers their silence as the effect of design. Surely a candid inquirer after truth would rather have supposed this silence to be the natural effect of their using the word Calvinism in a sense somewhat different from that in which the Doctor himself uses it. It would be to little purpose here to reply, that Calvinism *must* mean the opinions of Calvin; because there are, perhaps, few words in any language that have not undergone material alterations in the progress of time: and I will not here stop to inquire whether those who use the word in its ordinary acceptation, or Dr. K., who alone uses it strictly according to its derivation, be the more accurate observers of propriety of language. It is sufficient to say, that in this mode of proceeding, the controversy, so far from being nearly brought to a termination, as Dr. K. says it is, would never be terminated at all. Dr. K. might, in this way, go on claiming imaginary victories for ever.

“Most persons, I fancy, will think that Mr. O. uses the terms Calvinism, Calvinistic, &c., in a sense much more agreeable to the received usage of language, and the established laws of composition, than Dr. K. does by adhering rigidly to the etymology of the word; but if, for the sake of argument, we were to grant that the Doctor is more correct than his opponents in the use of those terms, I don’t see that, in the balance of sound reasoning, he would gain a feather’s weight. From this concession it would not follow, as Dr. K. says it would, that Mr. O. uses ‘the signs of ideas, without any ideas annexed to them.’ It would only follow, that Mr. O. has not proved the Church of England to be Calvinistic in the sense in which Dr. K. understands that word; and very few persons indeed, as I believe, have ever thought, or undertaken to show, the Church of England to be strictly Calvinistic in that sense. Every reasonable person will endeavour to collect Mr. O.’s opinion from the sense in which he himself tells us he uses his words, and not from the sense in which Dr. K. thinks those words ought to be used. If Mr. O. have not used the term Calvinistic in the sense in which Dr. K. uses it, then he has not pronounced the Church of England to be Calvinistic in that sense; and it is to no purpose that Dr. K. endeavours to prove that Church not to be thus Calvinistic. If any other person has affirmed the Church of England to harmonize with Calvin’s *Institutes*, Dr. K. may possibly have confuted that person; but he cannot have confuted Mr. O., who expressly says that the Articles do not harmonize with the *Institutes* of Calvin. Further: since Mr. O. has explained himself on this subject with particular exactness, why are not his own express declarations to be believed? Can any good reason be given why Mr. O. is not to be considered as sincere on his side of this question, as Dr. K. is on the opposite side?

“But not only Mr. O., but all the writers who have lately taken up their pens to show that the Church of England is Calvinistic, are branded by Dr. K. as knowingly and designedly endeavouring to impose upon the public, for some mischievous purpose. There is in this, something so unbecoming a Christian, that I choose to make no remark upon it. I am sorry

that it has fallen from the pen of Dr. K.; and I cannot but contrast it with the declarations of Mr. Adam, a very strong Anti-Calvinist, upon the same subject.

“5. Dr. K. affirms that all the peculiar doctrines which are connected with this inquiry, may be comprised under the single doctrine of predestination.

“If the reader of Dr. K.’s work should be of opinion that the author has demonstrated his positions, in all the cases in which he tells us that he has done so; and also, if, whenever one proposition may have a connexion, sometimes a greater and sometimes a less, with several other truths, all such truths may properly be said to be comprised in that one; then he may allow Dr. K.’s statement to be defensible.

“But I would observe, first, that Dr. K., however excellent a demonstrator he may conceive himself to be, will scarcely think that he has exceeded Euelid in neatness and accuracy; yet I never heard any one maintain that all the elements of that fine author are comprised in his first proposition. Secondly, if we consult experience, we shall find that numbers of very excellent men and very judicious writers, have held some of the acknowledged Calvinistic doctrines, and have rejected others: and these writers were never charged with want of perspicuity, or with abuse of language.

“But Dr. Kipling affirms that all the Calvinistic doctrines are so connected together as to form one chain, of which not a link can be spared. As often as this principle is maintained, I must contend as above, that each writer must be allowed to determine for himself what propositions he thinks necessarily connected, or not connected together; that no writer ought to be charged with holding doctrines which he himself disavows, because another person thinks several doctrines comprised in one. And lastly, that Dr. K. will not be considered as decisive authority in questions of this kind, till he furnishes us with much better specimens of demonstration, than any which are to be found in his late pamphlet.”

On his return from Carlisle to Cambridge, after keeping his residence at the former place, Dean Milner paid a short visit

to his suffering niece at Hull. Other than a short visit he never could prevail upon himself to pay at that place, subsequent to the time of his brother's decease.

While at Hull, he wrote to a valued friend, to the kindness of whose surviving relatives I am indebted for various other interesting communications, a letter containing the following practical hints, concerning the proper time and manner of learning languages.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“*Hull, August 1, 1803.*

“I had unfortunately left Carlisle when your kind letter arrived thither.

“Permit me to imitate the medical gentlemen, who, upon farther reflection, and a more distinct view of a case, frequently alter or modify their first thoughts.

“I knew that your son was a good scholar; or, at least, I had good reason for so thinking. But I had no notion that his attainments were so great as I now believe them to be. On the supposition, therefore, that he is intended for the ministry, I see no objection (in his circumstances) to his getting through, as soon as possible, the *drudgery* part of learning Hebrew. I mean that part which consists chiefly in exertions of the memory.

“These exertions are absolutely necessary in learning a language, and never more than in the attainment of Hebrew. Every word is new; besides the queerness of the conjugations, of the suffixes and prefixes, and the points.

“For all this, I repeat it, youth is the time. The older we grow the less we like exertions of memory, and the less capable we are of making them.

“If you ever wish Mr. P—— to be a good Hebraist, there is no time to be lost. He will be above getting off words by heart by and by; his understanding will make him despise the employment; and though he may see the future advantage, he will with difficulty be brought to buckle to.

“Still, he must not be permitted to meddle with the niceties of the language at present; nor should he spend a deal of time about Hebrew yet.”

Dr. Milner's mind was, at this time, very seriously occupied by the state and prospects of the country. "Literally and verily," he wrote to Mr. Wilberforce, from Hull, during this visit, "there seems not to be the smallest concern here about the war. I never saw a place so involved in worldly affairs. It is shocking! It is affecting beyond measure."

Later in the year, when invasion had been so long expected that persons, in general, were becoming callous to the threatened danger, and were beginning to look upon the affairs of the country with indifference, he thus wrote from Cambridge to the same friend: "The Ministry are everywhere, but particularly here, thought weak, on the whole; but exceedingly well-intentioned. I do not hear a mouth opened against their principles. I am sure nothing would give us so much general satisfaction as a junction between Pitt and Addington; Pitt's vigour, and Addington's discretion, would please exceedingly."

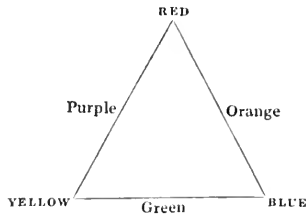
It may here be mentioned, that Mr. Wilberforce's health was, at this time, so weak, that "the duty of withdrawing altogether from public life," was "repeatedly and urgently" pressed upon him*. With reference to these solicitations he thus wrote to Mr. Babington, early in the month of November: "On this head I will consult my friend the Dean (of Carlisle), on whom I can entirely rely for all the qualities requisite for enabling him to form a satisfactory judgment in the case."

It may have been gathered from the foregoing portion of this work, that, on occasion of such appeals to his judgment, Dr. Milner, while he constantly exhorted his friend to the use of great care and caution in his exertions, never advised him to quit the important post which Providence had assigned to him.

Personal recollections, when their genuineness and correctness can be relied on, are highly valuable as affording variety of interest to a memoir of this nature. Different peculiarities strike different minds; and consequently, an accumulation even of slight anecdotes or recollections, supplied by various persons, greatly tends to the production of a faithful representation of the character delineated.

* See *Life of Wilberforce*, vol. iii.

A clergyman, formerly a member of Queen's College, permits me to enrich this volume with the following very lively account of a visit to Dean Milner, paid in the autumn of this year, by himself, and a young companion. "My first acquaintance with the Dean," writes this gentleman, "was when Mr. Sergeant S—— and I were invited to the Lodge, at a time when we were pupils to Mr. Thomason of Shelford. The Dean was wonderfully kind to us; sat up till two in the morning for two or three successive nights, giving us practical philosophical illustrations of the nature of light and colours, &c., &c., and amusing us with anecdotes. Amongst his other illustrations was that of the cause of the colour of shadows, with this



scheme, with which you are, no doubt, very familiar; and which he said that he himself had first discovered.

"On the second or third day of our visit, he placed us in a bed-chamber, and said that he had a curiosity to know how we should translate certain passages from some classic authors, and do a problem or two in mathematics; that we should oblige him.

"We got into a state of extravagant laughter while closeted together, and had not the slightest suspicion that we were undergoing an examination. We found afterwards, that each of us was admitted to his College on the ground of what we then did.

"Apparently for a moral end only, he affected to be slightly offended with the laughter; and alluding to it indirectly, said, 'Men's weakest time is in their laughter: it exposes them as much as wine:' and he gave me an instance of this, by mentioning some characteristic trait in myself, which he had discovered in my laughter."

Some further "recollections" of a different and more im-

portant nature, communicated by the same friend, respecting Dr. Milner, belong to a somewhat later period.

In the month of October, in this year, there appeared, in the *Christian Observer*, a critique, (continued in the November and December numbers,) on Milner's *Ecclesiastical History*.

Of this critique Dean Milner took no public notice. His sentiments respecting it are, however, sufficiently laid open in the following letter; a letter which, although it certainly manifests the warmth and quickness of his feelings with regard to whatever concerned his brother, or his brother's memory, must be felt to breathe much of the purest spirit of Christian charity. The Dean's observations on the plan and execution of that part of the *Church History* which records the life of Wickliffe, are especially valuable.

“ *Queen's College,*

“ MY DEAR SIR,

16th December, 1803.

1st. “ You yourself examined, (while I was last in London,) into the *Fatalism* ascribed by the *Christian Observer*, to Wickliffe. The evidences to the contrary are in the early pages of appendix to Vol. IV. of Milner's *Church History*.

“ Is not a man, is not Wickliffe to be believed, when he speaks out? He says, the liberty of the Divine power is *summè libera*. A single expression of this sort ought to stand against a thousand metaphysical niceties. The late Mr. Toplady had misunderstood Wickliffe; having, most clearly, never read the passage in question in Wickliffe's writings. I was tender of Toplady's memory, and only quoted from him, so much as I thought defensible: the *Christian Observer* has quoted the rest, from Middleton's *Biographia Evangelica*, and has made himself a party along with Toplady, in accusing Wickliffe of fatalism. See *Christian Observer*, November, 1803, page 679.

“ If the *Christian Observer* had but given the evidence, he would have been at perfect liberty to conclude as he pleased.

“ 2ndly. The *Christian Observer* (page 676,) is not satisfied that more is not said about the Great Western Schism; and says, that it was attended with very important consequences.

“ He forgets that the author of this History writes only a *History of the Church of Christ*.

“The author is very pointed, (over and over) in making the reader understand his plan. If the *Observer* had said, ‘Mr. Milner, agreeably to his plan, has twice briefly adverted, very particularly, to the important consequences of this schism,’ the remark would have been true, pertinent, and instructive.

“The remark, as it now stands, is a disagreeable slur on the author.

“3rdly. The *Observer* expected a fuller account of the Lollards.

“Turn to Mosheim, cent. 14., Internal History, chap. ii., sect. 36, and you will find a very long and learned note on the History of Lollardism, by a man who had deeply studied the point: and you will also see, that the Historian of the Church of Christ had nothing to do with such details. I wish that either Mosheim or the *Christian Observer* could have pointed out any eminent servants of God who have been omitted. I would have thanked them in earnest.

“While Mosheim is in your hand, turn to sect. 15 of the same chapter; there you will see, in italics, *The Great Western Schism*.

“How soon a man may become sufficiently learned to censure others! and how easy it is to say, ‘We look in vain for a luminous view of the Ecclesiastical History of the Fourteenth Century!’ (See *Christian Observer*, November, p. 677.) Once more I answer, it was not the author’s plan to write the History of the Fourteenth Century; what he undertook to write was the History of the Church of Christ. He was most uncommonly versed in history of all sorts, particularly in ecclesiastical history; and, in general, was well qualified to retain and to dismiss matters, according to their value, when estimated by his plan. Among the sects omitted, (see *Christian Observer*, p. 677,) there probably were good men; but who knows it?

“4thly. The *Observer* next says, that ‘lavish encomiums’ are bestowed on Bradwardine’s book against the Pelagians.

“I have only to say that most persons, I may say all, of my acquaintance, have expressed both delight and astonishment on reading the extracts given.

“5thly. The *Observer* (p. 678), intimates that there is neither ‘perspicuity of style,’ nor ‘felicity of arrangement,’ in the account of Wickliffe. This is very hard. A very learned friend of mine came in the other day and said, ‘What can they mean? Perspicuity of style is the peculiar characteristic of Mr. Milner.’ So far as authority goes, this evidence is decisive.

“The fact is, that the *Christian Observer* was not aware of the difficulty of writing the life of Wickliffe.

“Mr. Milner says, ‘There is no person of ecclesiastical eminence, whose life and character have cost me more thought and care than Wickliffe’s.’

“One would have thought that such a declaration might have led to more candour in the remarker. But do read the *Life* again, and see whether it be like ‘a common-place book,’ as the *Observer* says it is.

“If the *Observer* had read any one of Wickliffe’s biographers, he must have known that there are prodigious obscurities and even inconsistencies in the accounts of Wickliffe, and that Mr. Milner has cleared up many things respecting him, without mentioning the faults of the authors who had gone before him, except quite generally. His plan is this. First he collects the large facts in order. Then he gives an account of Wickliffe’s works. Next he makes critical observations on Wickliffe’s character, and answers the insinuations and calumnies of Hume, &c. Lastly, he makes interesting and explanatory reflections, most of them entirely new.

“I know, that the *Life* of Wickliffe is thought, by those who are very well versed in these matters, to be one of the most capital productions of the author. The language of the most learned and able in these subjects, is to this effect: ‘This history surprises and delights everybody:’ ‘All are eager for the sequel. The author’s powers appear eminent in this part of the work. His patience and sagacity in managing the few fragments that remain respecting Wickliffe, are truly admirable. All that we had before was either romance, or a mere bundle of inconsistent fragments. Mr. Milner has produced an intelligible whole, and has interspersed his account with very instructive observations.’

“ In p. 610 of the *Christian Observer* for October last, there are again some slurs upon the want of *lucidus ordo*.

“ Still, I say, I never saw a sentence of my brother’s, which was not clear as to its meaning: but suppose there were some such, a good critic is always governed by Horace’s rule, *Ubi plura nitent, &c.*

“ Be that as it may, I am ready to own that the first volume was not so correct as it should have been, and as it would have been, but for some particular circumstances. In a word, the author trusted the review of that volume to one who was far from being careful. But should not the *Observer* have known, that there was a second edition of the first volume published in 1800? I am not willing to own that that is very incorrect, because I revised it myself.

“ Now to be very plain. Upon reading such a critique as this, it would be the height of affectation in me to say, that I was not considerably displeased with the *Christian Observer*.

“ However, I believe I shall take your advice as to answering, at present, certainly,—and if ever I do answer, I shall endeavour to avoid everything that looks like the unchristian spirit of returning evil for evil. You know what I think the great defect of the *Christian Observer*, and I am now glad that I expressed that to you in private long ago, long before their remarks on this work came out. Their treatment of my brother’s book will make me in future say, not more, but less, on that subject. As to the book itself, it must stand, and will stand, on its own merits. Of this I feel fully assured. I do most sincerely assure you, that by far the most disagreeable part of this business is, that as I have a very numerous religious acquaintance, and a considerable correspondence of the same sort, there will be no end of the questions I shall be asked about the *Christian Observer*’s critique. The learned who will or can judge for themselves are few; and those of my friends who are partial to me, and who think that I know better than the *Christian Observer*, will be eager to show their dislike of the *Observer*’s critique, as least to as high a degree as they can collect that my dislike, or vexation, arises. Others who are merely curious, and who like to talk, will want to know

what is the reply which I have to make. Nay, I have already been strongly solicited to reply ‘with a vengeance.’ Literally, I am every day asked questions on this subject, either *virâ voce*, or by letter.

“After all, I believe that the *Christian Observer* is the best of the religious monthly publications; and so long as I think so, I shall never treat him so uncivilly, not to say unkindly, as he has treated me. Even if the *Observer* fall into errors, I would be tender of his public reputation. The managers of this publication ought not to trust the reviewing of works of consequence to persons who do not understand the subjects treated of.

“In the critique in question I perceive abundance of self-sufficiency, and vain pretensions to learning, all of which would have been bridled a good deal by real knowledge, but most effectually by a truly humble and godly spirit. The editors should mind whom they employ.”

With respect to the general observations concerning the *Christian Observer*, which occur towards the end of the foregoing letter, it can scarcely be necessary to remark, that having been written in the year 1803, their publication now can carry along with it nothing offensive to the feelings of the present conductors of that very valuable and useful work.

CHAPTER XVI.

Correspondence.—Religious Experience.—Professor Carlyle.—Letter to his Sister on his Death.—Domestic Affairs.—Religious Memoranda.—Hints for Sermons.—Private Thoughts.—Helps to Self-Examination.—Religious Correspondence.—Library at Lambeth.—Affairs of the Board of Longitude.—*History of the Church*.—Perseverance.—Investigation of the Sawston Mystery.—Letter to John Pearson, Esq., on the Death of his Daughter.—Kindness of Heart.—Visit to London.

A.D. 1804. ÆTAT. 54.

IN the month of January Dr. Milner was necessarily much occupied by the duties which devolved upon him as President of Queen's College, and as Professor of Mathematics. He always, however, found time for the service of his friends; and, in particular, never neglected applications for advice.

On the 3rd of January, 1804, he thus wrote to a gentleman who had consulted him respecting a suitable tutor for his son, a youth of excellent abilities and acquirements:—" * * * If even you could find a person ever so well qualified as to learning, yet if he were deficient in the religious part of his character, I should think it most hazardous to trust to him a youth of your son's years; and that you would very dearly purchase the little good that can be expected—dearly—very dearly—at the hazard of a deterioration of his religious principles, in consequence of irreligious association."

The following letter contains, beside the tender expression of the writer's affectionate feelings on the occasion which called it forth, much that will be deeply interesting to religious readers in general, and to the surviving religious friends of Dean Milner in particular.

"TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

"MY DEAR FRIEND, "*Queen's College, Epiphany, 1804.*

"I cannot help giving you a line upon having received yours this morning.

“Alas! alas! this poor dear little one! that looks so like your deceased mother! May I really hope that the worst is over? It is the most affecting thing in the world to see a child one loves, ill; and I find it impossible not to love these little ones if I live with them and see their pretty ways of going on.

“Yet what a deal of art, and sometimes not of amiable art, do they show! But then they overpower one absolutely by their thousand little affectionate tricks and looks. Depend upon it there is a superintending Providence that peculiarly guards them.

“Edwards* is indeed a deep hand. There is a world of thinking, sometimes, in a few pages. I studied his book long ago, with very great care, and wrote a few notes on some passages where I thought him not so clear as usual, or, perhaps, where I do not quite agree with him†, which, in general, I do very much.

“To live the life of faith is the thing after all: and a hard matter it is.

“My poor heart is fuller than anybody knows on earth. I am sadly dissatisfied, and sadly hampered; I know not where to turn, or what to say; but it is not from want, but from abundance of matter.

“I have been trying plans that are, in some respects, new to me. I mean practical plans. What will be the result I know not. I am not without hope, but this is all I can say.

“One thing I can add. I have the fullest conviction of the Way; I see it as if marked with a sun-beam, blessed be God!

“Moreover I find, that whenever I can act, for even a short time, in any measure, up to the principles which I know to be right, I succeed so far.

“There is, indeed, a secret in religion, and this secret is ‘with them that fear Him.’

* The Rev. Jonathan Edwards.

† See Chapter XI.

“Every doubt about knotty points vanishes in proportion as I have a disposition to be active, and as I support a real, practical life of faith.

“I preached on Christmas-day in our chapel, and got a good deal of cold.

“Yours affectionately,

“ISAAC MILNER.”

Professor Carlyle, more than once incidentally mentioned in the foregoing pages, as an old and much esteemed friend of Dean Milner, died, after a long illness, during the spring of this year. The following letter addressed to his surviving sister, since deceased, bears upon it the impress of the exquisitely affectionate disposition which characterized the writer.

“*Queen’s College Lodge,*

“DEAR MISS D. CARLYLE,

May 21, 1804.

“I was going to write to you at large, though I know not whether I should have had heart to get through, when a correspondence took place between your friends at Newcastle and myself.

“You will, no doubt, have heard of that correspondence, and may consider everything which I said to them as said to yourself.

“People talk of time wearing off the effect of these blows, but I have never found much of that.

“At any moment I can weep as sincerely and as freely as ever, for the loss of my true friends; and I have long declared, that the world would never more look like itself to me. Happy will it be for us if our hearts are but made to submit to God’s dispensations, and to see real kindness in them, by having, through their means, our affections weaned from the world, and set on things above. This is the lesson that will do us good.

“This is a melancholy sort of strain, I own, to use to a person in affliction, nevertheless, it is the only view of the thing which affords any relief to my own mind, as I trust it may to yours, because I point to the true medicine for this and every other evil.

“To be sure I frequently reflect on the afflicting history of my few years’ connexion with Carlisle.

“Your dear brother made the observation himself, and alas! how much more reason is there now to make it, than there was at the time when he said to me, with tears in his eyes, ‘What ravages have a few years made in the little circle that met at the Deanery, rejoicing with one another, only so lately as the year 1793 or 1794.’”

“I perfectly well remember the meetings which he then alluded to. Himself and his wife and mother, his two sisters, Mr. and Mrs. L., and Mrs. B., and dearest George*; Ellen was not then born: add myself, his old friend —, and my brother, a new friend whom he took to very warmly. Old Mr. Farish and Dr. Paley, though not exactly of the same class, were yet fine additions to the parties.

“What a change! So it was to be! It was hardly possible for the heart of man to devise a situation that to myself should promise more comfort, of every sort, than my appointment to this deanery. I thank God it has had its uses, I trust; but by no means so much in the way that I had reckoned upon, as is agreeable to flesh and blood.

“Were I to give way fully to my feelings, I should not leave a tear in my constitution.

“You may think it odd enough, but I am really so little master of myself, that every day, without exception, many times in a day, and very often in the night when I cannot sleep, that picture, that very great likeness of my friend, which hangs in your sitting-room, comes into my mind, and crowds upon me so fresh, and with so much force, as sometimes to gratify me exceedingly, and at other times to produce the most grievous affliction. In fact, I can have his features expressed before my eyes, in the most lively manner, at any time I please.

“There is, perhaps, a weakness in mentioning these things, but I would not talk in this way to any body.

“I sincerely pray that this loss coming upon you, in so severe a way just after your recovery from a bad illness, may not have hurt your health, and proved too much for your enfeebled frame.

* George Carlyle, only son of Professor Carlyle. See Chap. X.

“Your sister’s spirits and strength and ability to go through difficulties, are really surprising. It is a great blessing to the family.

“You will be sorry, dear lady, to hear, that besides the troubles which you know of, I have also private afflictions to struggle with of considerable weight.

“My little great-niece Mary, who, by degrees, has stolen more of my affection than I was aware of, is very ill, though I do not quite give her up, and I know not whether her mother be not in still greater danger, and she is the nearest relation I have in the world, so that the world indeed turns but a dark side to me.” * * * After communicating his purpose of bringing his niece, with her family, to Carlisle during the ensuing summer, also “an old quiet friend, seventy years old, of the name of Tillotson*, who would only desire to smoke his pipe, and be no trouble to any creature,” the Dean, with his habitual considerate kindness, adds a request that matters should be so arranged as to render it feasible, that his house-keeper might “have little Mary with her,” as she had been “used to have.”

Having been myself the “little Mary,” here mentioned, I may, perhaps, be permitted to step out of my way for an instant, to acknowledge the debt of gratitude which I owe to this good “housekeeper,” who lived with Dr. Milner, till his death. She watched, like a mother, over my childhood, and felt for me, I verily believe, something not very unlike a mother’s love.

The Dean, with Mr. Tillotson and “little Mary,” arrived at Carlisle, about the middle of June; and, in pursuance of the plan intimated in the above letter, was, soon afterwards, joined by his niece, her husband, and her two younger children.

To Dr. Milner, thus again surrounded by his relatives, and preaching in the Cathedral, with unabated zeal and energy, as often as his health, recently shaken by a severe illness, would permit, this summer’s residence at Carlisle proved a period of considerable enjoyment.

The following private religious memoranda, written during

* See Chapter VIII.

this quiet summer, will, doubtless, be highly valued by serious readers.

These memoranda consist, partly, of hints for sermons; and partly, of private thoughts, intended, probably, as helps to self-examination.

In elucidation of the first class of these private notes—the hints for sermons—it should be observed, that Dr. Milner was in the habit of keeping, and turning over in his mind, during a considerable period, any subject upon which he intended to write; and of putting down, with reference to it, sometimes upon any scrap of paper that might be at hand, and sometimes in a small blank paper book, such thoughts as, from time to time, occurred to him.

The following *reflections* are here given without any alteration, and in the order in which they stand in Dean Milner's hand-writing—not in a book, but on a detached and tattered piece of paper. His abbreviations and his customary note of observation $\&\&$ are likewise retained.

“EXAM. YRSELVES WHETHER YE BE IN THE F*.”

“More reason for exam. now than even in the prim. times.

“Confessing X^t does not consist in common morality, but in the peculiar of X^{ty}.

“We are not X^{ns} unless the *peculiar*s are kept up and adhered to—(See Sermon on Fruits,) that in which X^{ty} differs from other schemes.

“ $\&\&$ In the primitive times Gosp^l doctrine, and Gosp practice, were distinct from everything else—marked—


“But now, in a Xⁿ country—the danger is lest, 1st being baptized, we take it for granted all is right.

“2^d. If we are of a *party*, as the Church—and profess right—*then* all is right.

“3^d. Still more, if we are of a purer portion of the Church: then we are apt to be satisfied with our faith, and to substitute f. for practice.

* This is the text of one of Dr. Milner's printed Sermons.

“ But this is not the only danger. We may put practice for f. That is, a regular pharisaical life, though useful, in the place of spiritual religⁿ.

“  We may be very pharisa^l in this way.

“ Symptms of the former, that is of f. for practice ;--when we are very contracted in our acquaintances, and think quite well of them if they think as we do of doctrines.

“ Symptom of the latter, when good conduct quite satisfies us—and yet we are worldly minded and court the great.

“ 1. We ought to be spirit^l in thoughts } Owen,
in affections } Page
and a complacency } 11.

“ Owing the truth is not enough. There should be a power over the conscience.

“ DECEPTION. When men think they are right because they *believe* the truths; tho’ they forget them *in practice*.

“ Earthly mindedness, in a degree, is consistent with a good state. O. 14.

“ ——— Dangerous work—it ruins men to run the matter of earthly-mindedness near.

“ Men say it is a fine thing to be spirit^ly minded—but they have not leisure.

“ Q^y., if such are not carnally minded.

“  THOUGHTS; there must be *some* blossoms or *no* fruit.

“ Voluntary thoughts, in easy circumstances, the best indication of the mind, gracious or not.

“ A minister may be *forced* by his business to think on spirit^l things—that proves nothing.

“ Should be *natural* thoughts.

“ Consider what our affections aim at.

“ *Little Grace*, if only spiritual when in a fright.

“Even prayers may excite thoughts, from habit.

TRUE SIGNS.

“When the soul finds a pleasure—

“Prays not merely as a duty—but from delight.

“The thoughts should lead to watchfulness daily—They must abound. The saints *abounded*.

“Should grieve when they are interrupted.

“In general those who serve God let their light shine before men, that they may see their good works: and also those who serve divers lusts and imaginations, usually conduct themselves in such a manner, that their sins are open, going beforehand to judgment; tho’ there may be many exceptions in both sorts of characters; some recluse and modest spirits, who scarcely suffer their religious attainments to appear, as well as some hypocrites who endeavour to conceal and cover their vices: yet even to these exceptions, the rule of judging by the fruits equally applies itself. The difference is only, that a little more care is called for in investigating what the fruits really are. The rule itself is universal and never fails. The difficulty arises not from a defect in the rule—but from the nature of the fruits to be examined.”

The following observations, most of them bearing the impress of deep thought, and pregnant with instruction, are written in a minute but distinct hand, upon a very small piece of paper, doubled so as to form four pages, and apparently intended to fit into a pocket-book, or perhaps, a small Testament.”

They are printed precisely as they were written by Dean Milner.

“Math. 16. 17. Blessed—Simon B.

“Some Elias—Jerem. BLESSED Peter! flesh and b. not revealed: but God.

“Scribes, Phar., Rulers, were misled: f. and b. could not reveal it.

“f. and b. does reveal a deal—arts: sciences: spi^t of wisdom: but not saving Spi^t Light.

“There is Spi^l Light by God.

“Spi^l L^t is *not* ordinary conviction—It is *not* an action on the Imagⁿ—*not* an Impressⁿ—*not new truths*—*not* affecting views—*not* stories about heaven, &c.

“Divine L^t is a convictⁿ of the excell. of God’s truth: The Sp^t of G. *unites* himself—does not act occasionally. A Xⁿ does not merely *believe*, that X^t and his doct^{ne} are glorious—but *feels* it—*sees* it—has a sense of its beauty—Honey—Beauty, &c. The Differ^{ncc}. Devils *believe*, &c.

“This sense of the excellence, convinces of the *reality*.

“Prejudices }
“Enmities } are removed.

“The Phar. *saw*, but the Disciples *believed*.

“In giving it, God uses the Word, and our faculties—still it is his Gift. Men are *active* in receiv^g it—God deals with man accord^g to his nature—as a rational creature, &c. Thus the eyes are not the cause of light—but the Sun: but the eyes when there is sun, can discover objects.

“The Gospel is the means. But no means necessarily operate the effect—The Word does not produce *the effect*.

“*Truth of it.*

“The Scrip. full of it. St. John. ‘know God.’

“God makes the L^t to shine. Open mine eyes that I may see—David not blind. X^t *manifested* himself.

“RATIONAL—to suppose an Excellence in Divine things—This will stop every mouth at the last day.

“It may be seen—but not by wicked men. Given by God—RATIONAL.

“This Light proves the truth of religⁿ to the *unlearned*; and is superior to any other way.

“USE. Have we got this Light of the Gos.: Has it shined into our hearts: Have we had a sight of X^t? A Glimpse of HIM ennobles the soul: gives immense pleasure—supports under afflict^{ns}. It changes—it converts—it makes us see the Glory of God as in a glass. It makes us give up ourselves to X^t—and it produces univers^l holiness.

“1. Always in Prayer remember conditⁿ by nature—poor and *blind*.

“The Charact^r of Alm. G.

“How humble we should be—

“How grateful that there is Light.

“2. Teach us to see the wond^rs things of thy Law—

“May we not rest without this Light—

“May we seek for the Sp^t—and for *Union* with him—and not Quench him.

“May we relish the things of G.

“3. Let us not be content with superfic^l views of X^t.

“We are persua^d he came from G. but is his Sp^t in us?—
Are we His?”

Of the foregoing spiritual meditations there is one which can scarcely fail to remind the reader of a passage in Joseph Milner's letter, on the subject of Christian Resignation*. “When once,” says the dying Christian to his almost heart-broken brother, “you can stedfastly rely on the Divine promises through Christ, so sure as ‘faith worketh by love,’ you will find yourself enabled to love God.” * * * “A union and fellowship with Christ will take place; and it is the sweetest and the pleasantest sensation which the human mind can know.” Surely the surviving brother, however conversant with conflict and temptation, had experienced this “sensation,” when he wrote “A glimpse of Him ennobles the soul,” and “gives immense pleasure!”

The private thoughts which remain to be here inserted, appear, for the most part, to have been designed as aids to self-examination. Of this, with regard to many of them, there is sufficient internal evidence. It should also be observed that the paper upon which they are written is headed

“EX— FRUITS

“People fancy themselves good, by living in good habits, and with good people.”

“Practical utility of a conviction of *two classes* and no more. It leads to self-examination.

* See Chapter IX.

“ It leads to Prayer for help—but

“ ~~It~~ Flesh and Spirit do not mix.

“ Errors about Co-operatⁿ.

“ It does not follow, that men may instantly know to which of the two classes they belong: nor is it necessary:

“ But it is essential, that they should believe in only two classes.

“ The practical difference is immense.

“ ~~It~~ There is danger even in truly religious persons, of thinking they have a *stock* of grace, &c., &c.

“ Besides it may gratify the flesh at a certain time of life to support religⁿ. and may flatter pride as much as other things.”

The concluding remarks seem rather to have been written with a view to an intended sermon: probably, to a sermon on “ Being ashamed of Christ,” since published in the second volume of Dean Milner’s *Posthumous Sermons*.

“ It is a great proof of God’s goodness, that he does not merely *state* the consequences of Religion—but makes use of our passions to persuade, &c.,—hope—fear—*contempt*.”

“ Of him will the Son of Man be ASHAMED.”

“ Both X^t and good men will *despise* the wicked for the choice they have made; preferring such shameful, worthless things, to the enjoyment of God, and holiness.

“ X^{ts} judgment is infallible—his dignity and authority not to be questioned.

“ How little we can bear contempt!

“ ~~It~~ ‘ Suffer with fortitude ’—‘ many are in the same condition ’—and such like—

“ Nothing of this kind will be heard; but all will be *embittered by contempt*.

“ What will become of those who have been used to adulation? the poor, ignorant disciple of X^t *owned*—and by one who *cannot mistake*!!

“I don’t here introduce real positive sufferings of the wicked—as by Fire.

“This of *contempt*, will be felt by all, and be, *to all intelligible*.

“State this punishment First—then the second head is, What it is to be ashamed of X^t.

“I have guarded the modest, and excited to self-exam. the Pharisee and the careless.

“Ridiculous to talk of Antinomianism, when matters *are stated thus*.”

While Dr. Milner thus passed this summer at Carlisle, his excellent friends the Rev. Dr. Jowett and the Rev. Charles Simeon were occupied, at Cambridge, in superintending the re-printing of the second volume of the *Ecclesiastical History*. Dr. Jowett undertook the labour of reading this volume with a view to the making of any needful alterations—of course consulting the Dean when such alterations were otherwise than merely verbal—and to Mr. Simeon was committed the correction of the proof sheets. With both these friends Dean Milner kept up an epistolary correspondence. The letters of Dr. Jowett are remarkable for their simple piety.

“You have frequent intimations,” wrote Dr. Jowett to the Dean, during this summer, “of the uncertainty of life, in your own person. I have many in the persons of others, though my own health, moderate as it is, suffers few interruptions. May we both be prepared for our Lord’s coming!

“Yours affectionately,

“July 22nd, 1804.”

“J. JOWETT.

After his return to Cambridge, in the month of September, the Dean of Carlisle wrote to Mr. Wilberforce, at that time at Lyme, in Dorsetshire, the following deeply interesting letter:—

“TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

“*Queen’s College,*

“MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

24th September, 1804.

“Here I am again, after receiving many mercies, and pretty much in my usual plight—troubled a good deal.

“You are in a sweet place. I am sorry you find yourself always so much in a hurry, and always so oppressed with business.

“Without great care, I find myself getting into that way, so as to be always in a bustle; and, with me, when this is given way to, nothing serious can thrive. I believe you have more command of yourself; but take care, and do not encroach on the time which ought to be allotted to quiet meditation. Of how very little moment will the world and all its concerns appear to be, by and by, and how bitterly shall we lament that we did not squeeze out more time for religious improvement!

“Take notice, there is such a thing as giving way repeatedly, and for a long time, to a bad habit, till we become, in a measure, satisfied that resistance and amendment are impossible. If we don’t mind, we are apt to mistake the struggles of conscience, and the pain which it costs us to stifle a sense of duty, for a laudable striving to acquit ourselves well in the race we have to run. But God is not mocked! He watches whether some sort of secret selfishness is not the motive at the bottom.

“Thus it is easy to talk, and even in the pulpit. This summer, in spite of infirmities, and a fortnight’s illness, I have been enabled to preach ten times, in great churches, in Carlisle and its neighbourhood; and, I may add, with very great apparent success. I mention my being enabled to get through these things, though with great bodily inconvenience, as something surprising and even paradoxical, when the state of my mind is considered. I know not how it is—in one word, I have no confidence towards God, and, of late, have been very much beset with lamentable temptations. God knows, I have, for a long time, taken considerable pains in self-examination, to find out where it is that I particularly offend; as I feel assured, this must be the case, or I should not experience what I do: or

is it, that I have been so long and grievous an offender against light and knowledge, that it is not fit for such a rebel to be treated like a good subject ?

“I remember telling my poor brother, once, when I was in considerable affliction of mind, ‘that, notwithstanding my many sins and obdurate state, still I was well convinced that there did not exist any one earthly, improper, object that I was secretly and knowingly wishing for, which might be displeasing to a gracious God, and prevent his smiles ;’ and most truly, after years of examination, I can honestly say the same. But still, I fear, the case is bad ; and I suspect it to be in this way ; I do not give myself up wholly to God—with every power and every nerve, thought, word, and deed—to be his servant here and hereafter, to eternity, having no pleasure but in doing his will. Say nothing of this*. I could not help pouring out my spirit a little to you. You know not what I suffer. My private prayers are most unaccountably flat and unfeeling, even on the very days that I exhort others with vehemence and with tears. Still, still, I cannot be persuaded that I am to be given up, while I have so much steady love to Christ.

“What an awful text I preached on the other day, ‘Know ye not that Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates ?’

“If I live, I think I shall contrive to be more at Carlisle than I have been hitherto.

“N.B. The resurrection of the dead bodies will not be half so surprising as the resurrection of characters.

“Yours, affectionately,

“I. MILNER.”

The Rev. John Newton, I think it is, who somewhere says, “I cannot doubt of the safe state of a man, who, supposing our Lord’s question to Peter, ‘Lovest thou me?’ to be addressed to him, can honestly answer, ‘Yes.’”

On a similar ground, the above letter, although exceedingly affecting, cannot, surely, be otherwise than satisfactory, to the surviving religious friends of Dean Milner.

* This letter is already published in the Wilberforce Correspondence.

Mr. Wilberforce being still at Lyme, Dr. Milner, towards the end of November, was kindly requested by John Pearson, Esq., to take up his abode in Golden Square, during the approaching meeting of the Board of Longitude.

This friendly invitation, he, with a promise of spending "as much time" as he "possibly" could, with Mr. Pearson, "particularly in the evenings," declined; alleging, that considering his infirmities, he was disposed to believe, that upon the whole, it would be most convenient, that he should fix his "head-quarters in the old place."

Dean Milner's assiduity in searching for such books as he needed for the prosecution of the *Ecclesiastical History*, has been already mentioned.

During this visit to town, he seems to have applied to Mr. Pearson, to assist him in procuring certain scarce volumes which he particularly wished to consult. Mr. Pearson, after much research, ascertained that the books in question, which, as well as I remember, were two scarce volumes of Luther's Letters, were to be found in the Library at Lambeth. They were, subsequently, sent to Cambridge, with a kind offer from the Archbishop, of any assistance of a similar kind, which it might, in future, be in his power to render.

The History, however, was now, for a while, of necessity, laid aside; the approaching January bringing with it the usual college and university business.

A further interruption was occasioned by a new attempt to alter the constitution of the Board of Longitude*. Concerning this affair it is sufficient to say, that Dr. Milner exerted himself with the energy and effect which he had formerly displayed on a similar occasion. Some memoranda which remain, shew that he turned his mind seriously to the subject, and took considerable pains to arrange his thoughts concerning it, in the most effective manner.

Still, whatever might be the obstacles which interrupted his progress, Dean Milner always considered the *History of the Church of Christ* as the great work which he had on hand; and

* See Chapter III.

he possessed a faculty, far from universal, of returning, with unabated spirit, to his work, after every interruption, long or short. His spirit was, doubtless, refreshed and invigorated by the expression of good-will and affection from various Christian friends, who, from time to time, communicated to him their hopes and desires that his "life might be prolonged to carry forward the great work which he had in hand;" but, independently of all such motives to exertion, he possessed a power and a habit of perseverance, invaluable in themselves, and, perhaps, rarely equalled.

Indications of this habit appear continually in his confidential letters to his friends.

To the Rev. William Mandell*, whose election to a Fellowship at Queen's College, he had by letter announced to him, on the 6th of April, in this year, adding his earnest wishes "that the event" might "tend to increase his happiness and usefulness," he thus writes towards the end of his summer's residence at Carlisle.

"MY DEAR SIR, "Deanery, September 16, 1805.

"Many thanks for your kind inquiries and kind expressions about my health. I am as well as usual. All my vacant hours shall be employed on the *Ecclesiastical History*, which is, certainly, a valuable work. But I have too many concerns to attend to it here. At Queen's, I hope to set sail again.

"May Almighty God continue to preserve you in warmth and zeal, for the best things; labouring in these, will be found the truest wisdom.

"Adieu, dear Sir, and believe me,

"Yours, most truly and sincerely, and affectionately,

"ISAAC MILNER.

"To the Rev. William Mandell."

It may be allowable, here, to mention some circumstances which, about this time, excited great interest at Cambridge.

* To the kindness of this gentleman, one of Dr. Milner's most intimate and most esteemed friends, I am indebted for many valuable additions to this volume.

It was during the early part of the autumn of this year, that the haunted house, or rather the house reputed to be bewitched, at Sawston, a village near Cambridge, allured from the University crowds of wondering and awe-struck visitors. According to popular rumour, no person could enter, or, more correctly speaking, could leave this cottage,—for it was but a cottage—without finding his garments, however strong in texture, or however vigilant the wearer, torn or cut into shreds and tatters.

Much excitement prevailed: for not only weak women, but grave and learned doctors repaired to the scene of witchcraft; and though they went sceptics, returned believing sufferers.

Such matters Dr. Milner delighted to investigate; he collected evidence upon the subject, and visited in person the enchanted cottage. The following extract from a letter gives a detail of some of his proceedings respecting the affair in question.

“I just recollect, that I have but room for a word respecting the Sawston wonder.

“A very respectable tanner called on me, with a gown in his pocket, all in tatters. His wife had put on five gowns in three days, and they all fell to pieces on her back, rent into a hundred strips. The same thing happened to the maid-servant’s gowns, and to the gowns of the woman’s niece, and to the man’s great coat; and to the gowns of many of the inhabitants of the village where he lives; also to the clothes of several who went from Cambridge. The man fully believes, that a witch, who lives about a mile from them, does it all. I told him not to sleep in his chair in the day-time; and, at night, to place the coat he had taken off, which was a sound and very good one, under his pillow; and to come to me, the next day, if it should happen, after all, to be torn.

“Next day he appeared with his coat rent. He said it had happened before bed-time, and before dark; and that nobody had come near him. He was now ten times more confirmed in his belief of witches. ‘Is it possible,’ said he, ‘that any one should come and tear my coat while I am awake, and I not feel nor see them?’

“Upon his saying this, I continued talking to him, and while looking him in the face, tore his coat smartly; and neither he, nor his friend who was close by me, saw what I had done.

“I then showed him the rent; and he was much surprised and pleased, being convinced that the thing might be done.

“Afterwards Mr. T. and myself, and little Mary, went to the house, and I talked to them; but nothing happened while I was there: nor has anything happened since.

“I assure you it was high time to quiet the country all around. Such a tumult and report has not happened since the Cock-lane Ghost of 1760.

“The thing was done by hands, and in some places by scissars. I have no doubt the man’s wife did it. She is a weak, silly woman, who believes that she herself was bewitched, when a child, and was made to tear her clothes.

“She will not own it; and I did not like to make mischief between the man and his wife, or else I doubt not but I could soon have frightened her into an honest confession.

“Still, I own, she must have been most excessively dexterous in some of the instances which are mentioned.

“I examined several of the sufferers; but there is reason to believe that some persons tore their friends’ clothes in joke, and so helped the humbug.

“The gowns were not corroded by any acids or fumes.

“Yours most truly,

“I. MILNER.”

I well remember the visit to the bewitched cottage, recorded in the above letter; I remember also the wild and half crazy look of the woman who doubtless was the perpetrator of all the mischief; but above all, I have a vivid recollection of the tearing of the tanner’s coat. Child as I was, I had the fullest enjoyment of that scene, which took place in Dr. Milner’s study at Queen’s Lodge.

He was seated, as usual, upon rather a high chair, behind his large desk: a desk which, by the bye, was fixed to his library table by one immense screw of his own making, and could, upon

this pivot, be turned aside at pleasure. Before him stood the bewildered "tanner" and "his friend," a man at that time well known at Cambridge, and esteemed rather an acute person, being in fact no other than the late John Taylor, then Vice-Chancellor's man. The tanner asseverated, that it was impossible his coat could be torn upon his back by human hands, without his perceiving it. John Taylor argued that, alive as his attention was, and had been from the first (for, for his part, he was no believer in witchcraft), it was in vain to attempt to impose upon *him*. Dr. Milner listened to them both; and while listening, gave the broad cloth of the tanner's coat so audible a tear, that nothing but the extreme eagerness of the pre-occupied speakers could have prevented them from hearing it, and detecting the trick. It passed however, upon both; and its effect, when acknowledged, was, as Dr. Milner had intended and anticipated, highly satisfactory to the mind of the poor frightened tanner, relieving him as it did, from his vague fears of supernatural agency.

A transition from the Sawston mystery to a letter of condolence on the death of a friend's daughter, may appear abrupt: in real biography, however, as in real life, abrupt transitions must occur; and it was peculiarly true of Dr. Milner, that his mind, even in its lightest moods, was always open to serious impressions.

In the letter in question, which is dated "Queen's College Lodge, October 4th, 1805," the Dean alludes to the recent death of his friend Mr. Pearson's eldest daughter, a young lady of decided piety, and most tenderly beloved by her family*, in the following terms:—

" 'Friends never part long,' (said good old Newton) but when they meet again, they have to enumerate one or more now dead, that were among the living."

"One may very sincerely congratulate yourself and Mrs. Pearson, on such a change as lately took place in your family; because, though it is impossible that flesh and blood should not feel, yet there appears to have been everything in the instance I

* For a Memoir of this lady, see *Christian Observer*, vol. iv., p. 514.

allude to, which could mitigate the melancholy awfulness of such an event, and convert it into a kind and merciful dispensation.

“May you and I so finish our course !

“With kind respects to Mrs. P. and the younger branches,

“I am, dear Sir, yours truly,

“*To John Pearson, Esq., Golden Square.*”

“I. M.

Such expressions of friendly condolence were, with Dean Milner, by no means matters of course. No man living ever more cordially complied with the apostolic exhortation, “Weep with them that weep.”

The meeting of the Board of Longitude in December afforded to Dr. Milner the usual opportunity of spending a few days with his friend Mr. Wilberforce ; and thus the year concluded.

CHAPTER XVII.

Gradual alteration in the nature of the Examinations for Fellowships at Queen's College.—Letter to the present Archbishop of York (then Bishop of Carlisle) on the Death of his Son.—Contested Election for the University of Cambridge.—Lord Palmerston.—Lord Henry Petty (the present Lord Lansdowne).—Correspondence with Mr. Wilberforce.—Dr. Milner's want of ear for Music.—Experiment on the Subject tried by Himself and his Brother.—Dr. Milner's knowledge of the Science of Music.—Recollections of Him by Dr. Crotch.—Mr. La Trobe.—Dr. Jowett.—Dr. Hague.—Mr. Aspland.—Dr. Milner's want of eye for Perspective Drawing.—Management of the Affairs of the University Press.—Personal Exertions.—Sir Samuel Romilly.—Hobby-Horses.—Short-hand.—Arbitration.—Habits of Life at Carlisle.—Rose Castle.—Lowther Castle.—Anecdotes.—Serious Occupations.—Visits to a Person under Sentence of Death.—Judicious Treatment of the Sick and Dying.—Treatment of a Man who had attempted Suicide.

A.D. 1806. ÆTAT. 56.

An important subject which deeply concerned the welfare of the College which he governed, occupied Dr. Milner's mind in the beginning of the year 1806.

He had for some years entertained the opinion, that the examination to which Bachelors of Arts who were candidates for Fellowships at Queen's College, were subjected, was not conducted on the best, or the most equitable principles: and, according to a practice already mentioned as habitual with him, he, during the January of this year, drew up for his own use, a paper, containing his deliberate thoughts upon the whole subject.

Although at this distance of time, there would be no impropriety in making public this elaborate performance, which displays penetrating judgment, great candour, and much industry, it may suffice in this place to observe, that Dr. Milner gradually carried into execution the views which are laid open in the treatise in question; and thus, without any sudden or dangerous innovations, so modified the style of examination for Fellowships at Queen's College, as to secure, in each case, strict justice to the several candidates, and a due regard to the general interests of learning and science.

To the claims of private friendship Dean Milner was ever feelingly alive. The following pious and affectionate letter, which has been kindly placed at my disposal by the present Archbishop of York, was written on occasion of the recent death of one, and the dangerous illness of another of his Grace's sons.

Queen's College Lodge,

“MY DEAR BISHOP*,

February 4, 1806.

“You seek for your comfort in the right place. You are a Christian, and therefore you know that ‘all things work together for good to them that love God.’ This single promise, when we are enabled to apply it to our case, never fails to be rich in consolation. Lay hold of it, my dear Lord; grasp it firmly,—it will not deceive you.

“I have had a deal of affliction, and experience has taught me, neither to follow nor to give, the usual worldly advice; namely, to divert the attention from melancholy thoughts by engaging in business and company. No! I say on the contrary, Weep,—weep freely, my Lord, for the dear youth: he deserved it well; and tears will relieve your tender heart better than anything else. I have shut my door, and weep heartily with you while I write this. The Christian is no where forbidden to shed tears: only let us not sorrow as ‘without hope,’ and let us take care that our tears be those of submission and resignation, and the mind will soon arrive at even an enviable state of patient tranquillity, with the eye fixed steadily on the prospect of a glorious immortality.

“I dare not, however, dwell on the subject any longer at present. I admit that your loss, in being deprived of this excellent youth, is incalculable; and the dispensation itself is mysterious,—yet not so mysterious as not to afford many lessons.

“You have been blessed, my Lord, beyond example,—have been! you are yet surrounded with blessings that are the lot of few. But here the pen drops from my hand when I reflect on

* The present Archbishop of York was at this time Bishop of Carlisle.

what may be the situation of Mr. Vernon still. I have been, however, a good deal relieved by the accounts which Sir James Graham and others have sent me respecting the melioration of his situation.

“I humbly and earnestly entreat the Father of mercies to spare him, (if so be His blessed will) to his afflicted parents, relatives, and friends.

“With the most sincere sympathy for my Lady Anne’s distressed situation, and fervent prayers for her support, I am, my dearest Bishop,

“Your very affectionate and obliged friend,

“ISAAC MILNER.”

A contested election of a Member of Parliament for the University of Cambridge in the room of Mr. Pitt, rendered the month of February a period of much excitement. An unusual degree of interest was aroused.

Lord Henry Petty,—the present Lord Lansdowne,—having gained the good-will of many persons who differed from him on general politics, by pledging himself in behalf of the abolition of the Slave Trade, the suffrages of those who were, in the main, agreed in principle, were divided. Dr. Milner’s opinions, and the reasons upon which they were founded, are laid open in the two following very characteristic letters.

These letters, which discover great shrewdness and sagacity, are especially interesting and entertaining, as containing a highly graphic account of an electioneering visit, paid by the late Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and as describing, without the smallest disguise, the impression produced upon Dr. Milner’s mind, both by him and by his late colleague, Lord Lansdowne.

“TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

“*Queen’s College, Cambridge, February 6, 1806,*

“MY DEAR SIR,

Thursday morning.

“The election is fixed for to-morrow in the forenoon; and such a number of old acquaintance keep dropping in upon me, that I think it best to take up my pen and answer yours of this morning, immediately upon the receipt of it.

“Independently of your several letters to me, the warmth with which we hear from all quarters that you espouse the cause of Lord Henry Petty, creates considerable difficulties in the minds of several of us, who have been accustomed to look up to you with entire confidence, both as an upright and wise pilot in the most tempestuous seasons.

“The effect of this present active warmth of yours has, to my certain knowledge, secured to his Lordship some voters, who are now far from being easy on account of the promises they have given. In regard to myself, you have also effectually stopped all my activity in opposition to Lord H. Petty. I have not influenced, much less brought up from the country, a single vote against him, though from my long residence and number of pupils, public and private, you must be sure I have had a number of applications to know my wishes on this occasion.

“But why not vote for him myself?

“In one word, because I fear he is likely to be hostile to some of those great constitutional principles which brought about the Revolution in this country, and which, in my judgment, cannot be departed from without ENDANGERING THE WHOLE FABRIC OF BRITISH LIBERTY IN CHURCH AND STATE.

“I must say, however, that Lord H. Petty conversed with me very fairly and candidly on the subject of Catholic Emancipation; and I like him much better for openly avowing the bias of his mind to be towards acceding to the Emancipation, than if he had shuffled and evaded the question, as many canvassers in his situation would have done. But still I cannot bring myself to be aiding and abetting, either directly or indirectly, what I think so replete with danger: and therefore, as I know you too well to suppose you would wish me to act in any respect contrary to my deliberate judgment, I have only to lament (as I do, most poignantly) what, a few weeks ago, I should have pronounced almost impossible, viz., that a case should happen, in politics, where you and I should differ materially in practice.

“But, remember, it is quite as repugnant to the principles which I have long avowed, to vote for an enemy of the abolition

of the Slave Trade, as it is that I should throw a single grain into the scale of those who favour either the repeal of the Test Act, or the emancipation of the Catholics: and as Lord Palmerston has not been quite so explicit on the head of the abolition as I could wish, or as perhaps he, or his friends, may be in the course of this day, I remain, even yet, in doubt, (near as the election is) whether I can conscientiously vote for him. He has, I understand, spoken decidedly as to the Test Act and the emancipation business; and if I could, to my satisfaction, make out that he will also be for the abolition of the Slave Trade, I might, in my present state of mind, bring myself to give him my individual vote; but even that will cost me a severe pang, when I reflect, that in so doing I go directly contrary to your earnest wishes and application.

“On this point, of voting or not voting, I, at this moment, really do not feel competent to decide; but be assured, that no other application, nor anything else on earth, but the merits of the question, as they appear to my judgment, will determine me, after I have got all the information I can; and moreover, whatever I do, I shall take most particular care to remain unpledged for the general election, which may happen very soon.

“I do not think the real principles of the Roman Catholics are in general, understood by persons of rank and distinction; and so I took the liberty of saying to Lord H. Petty. This is the first time that I was ever not quite on your side, and I think you will forgive me, as

“I am, dear Sir, yours most truly,

“ISAAC MILNER.”

The affection for his friend, exhibited by Dr. Milner in the above letter, could not, of course, influence him to act against his judgment and conscience; but it could, and did, render the performance of his duty exceedingly painful.

“TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

“*Queen’s College, Cambridge,*

February 7, 1806.

Friday Evening.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“You will hate to see my letters; I am the messenger of such a number of disagreeable things. After all, I know not whether you will rejoice in the prevalence of whatever it is that brings in Lord H. Petty. Prevalent it is, to a prodigious degree. I know not indeed, whether the poll be actually closed; but from appearances, about two hours ago, I was told that he had more votes than the other two put together.

“Last night, when I had expected to spend a comfortable evening at my own house, with La Trobe and Dr. Jowett, and a young man or two, (all being engaged to come at eight o’clock, and play the organ, sing, &c.) I was obliged to leave them all to attend to visitors and electioneers. There came in

“1st. Harrison of our College, and two more whom you don’t know, all Lord H. Petty’s men, and all Foxites.

“2ndly. Then came the two Westerns, both of this College. One is a member of the House of Commons, also a Foxite.

“3rdly. Robert Grant came in, and was precisely in my own situation; that is, determined against Lord H. Petty, but not convinced that Lord Palmerston would be sound as to the Slave Trade. But he had been talking a deal with him and his friends, and the result was, that he thought him quite sincere, and sufficiently decided to act upon.

“4thly. By and by, in came Lord Palmerston. We conversed a full hour on the subject of the Slave Trade, and, I can assure you, a more ingenuous appearance I never saw. The young man’s conscience seemed hard at work, for fear, not of saying too little, but of saying too much; viz., of saying more than he could justify to his own mind, from the little consideration which he had given to the subject. He is but a lad, but I could not discover the most latent hostility, or ground for suspecting hostility; and he must be a deceiver indeed, of a very deep cast, if he deceives at all, in this instance.

“In a word, all things considered and weighed over and over,

and not brought to a crisis till between nine and ten this morning, I declared for him.

“About an hour after this, came Christian, who said he had just met Lord Clive, who had told him, that my declaration had already got Lord Palmerston thirty-four votes. That, no doubt, is sadly overstated; and be it as it may, we are all in a woful minority. But as minorities usually support themselves and keep themselves in heart, by dwelling on their virtuous and disinterested motives, and by getting a little together, and talking against the motives of the majorities, so do we.

“5thly. I fervently wish you may find Lord H. Petty and Fox, &c., as true friends to the Abolition as you have reason to suppose them. Their having been so long pledged, (at least Fox,) may do something; inclination may also do something; but where there is a want of sound and substantial principle, men will act right no longer than they conceive that it suits their interests on the whole.

“You will have Socinians everywhere in the Church if not Deists; and in the state, you will have the same, with an inundation of low, profligate morals. Things were bad enough before, but the bowl will, I think, roll faster down the hill.

“Smith, the Fellow-Commoner, is astonished to find that they are drinking Fox every day in Trinity College Combination Room, when, a fortnight ago, they were drinking Pitt.

“Yours ever, ISAAC MILNER.”

Such were the Dean's prophetic fears; fears which surely no person will now pronounce to have been altogether visionary!

In his Diary, now partly published, Mr. Wilberforce thus wrote, in reference to this election: “My suddenly promising Lord Henry Petty, (which done too hastily, partly from not thinking I had any interest, partly from being found in a state of wishing to show Lord Henry how much both I and the cause felt indebted to him,) has produced a sad degree of ruffling. Dear Dean (Milner) much hurt about it.” * * * * * “I received letters from Dean, volumes; Simeon, *cum multis aliis.*”

A few words should be said concerning the passage in which

Dr. Milner speaks of his expectation of spending "a comfortable evening with Latrobe, Dr. Jowett, and a young man or two," who were "engaged to come at eight o'clock, to play upon the organ, and to sing, &c."

It is well known that Dean Milner possessed little or no ear for music. In this respect, he resembled his brother Joseph, in whom, indeed, the same deficiency seems to have been even more absolute. I have heard the Dean relate, with much glee, that his brother and himself, being well aware that a defect of musical ear was imputed to them, and being at the same time very sensible that they certainly never had received any such pleasure from listening to melody or harmony, as many of their acquaintance professed to experience, nevertheless flattered themselves, that the peculiarity might be explained by the fact, that they really had never heard any truly good music. While in this mood of mind, chance threw into their way an advertisement setting forth, that *The Messiah*, the greatest work of the immortal Handel, &c., &c., was about to be performed, in an unusually efficient manner, at Beverley, a town about nine miles from Hull. To Beverley, therefore, they resolved to repair; determined to put the matter to the test.

They arrived, and took their seats in the Minster; the confused clangour of tuning was hushed, the conductor, an important-looking person, with a large roll of paper in his hand, gave the authoritative signal, and the overture to the *Messiah* commenced. "It was no place," continued Dr. Milner, "for talking, but we turned round and looked at one another and shook our heads; we were satisfied. This, as we were given to understand, was first-rate music; alas! alas! to us, it was all alike. We staid but a little while."

This matter, however, deserves to be treated a little more seriously.

Deficient as Dean Milner unquestionably was in the sixth sense called ear, so deficient, that in a conversation which he once held with his friend Sir William Wynne, both the interlocutors gravely expressed their doubts whether any singer could be quite certain of repeating the same melody twice; he

was, nevertheless, by no means insensible to the exciting power of music. The anecdote which I have just quoted, as related by himself, may seem, perhaps, to prove the contrary; yet the truth was, certainly, as I have stated it: and if, on that unfortunate occasion, the performance had opened with "For unto us a child is born," or "Hallelujah," he would, beyond all doubt, have felt much more than many a pretender to musical enthusiasm. I have myself seen him most powerfully affected by the singing of the late Mr. Bartleman; and I have heard him speak with intense admiration of the performance of Mara. He used to say that when she sang the sublime solo "Sing ye to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously, &c.," which introduces the chorus of "The Lord shall reign," she wanted but the timbrel in her hand to be Miriam herself.

All this indeed, scarcely accounts either for his occasionally inviting, to his Lodge, music-loving friends, or for his frequently attending the musical parties on a somewhat larger scale, given by his friend Dr. Jowett, in the Combination Room at Trinity Hall.

His principal motive, on such occasions, besides the benevolent pleasure which he always felt in seeing his friends entertained to their satisfaction, was, doubtless, kindness to the "little Mary" who lived with him, whose presence at these little *réunions*, he justly considered highly conducive to her advantage.

I well remember the method which, sensible of his inability to judge for himself, he adopted in order to determine whether I possessed such a natural ear for music as to render it worth while that I should be instructed in it. With his characteristic good sense, he took a plain road to his object. He invited to Queen's Lodge one evening, certain gentlemen, concerning whose musical talents no doubt could exist. Among them were Mr. Latrobe, Dr. Jowett, Dr. Hague, at that time Professor of Music in the University, and, I think, Mr. Aspland of Pembroke. These gentlemen were to play and sing; and I, a child between six and seven years of age, was to listen. It had been previously concerted that the performers were to make certain false concords, which, if I heard without exhi-

biting any uneasiness, I was to be pronounced incapable of profiting by musical instruction. If, on the other hand, I detected the voluntary errors which were to be committed, I was to be considered capable of improvement, and to be treated accordingly.

I remember, as if it were but yesterday, Dr. Milner's evident satisfaction at the result of my trial.

The scientific part of music was, about this period of Dr. Milner's life, one of his favourite studies. He collected all the most valuable, as well as many scarce books upon the science, in French as well as in English, and certainly made himself thoroughly master of the theoretical part of the subject, in fact, of all that could be mastered without a natural capability of accurately distinguishing sounds.

The following extract from a letter lately written by a highly esteemed friend of Dr. Milner, may here be properly inserted. "I should have been most happy," writes Dr. Crotch, "to have furnished you with any letters of your beloved uncle, had I been fortunate enough to possess any. But it may not be amiss generally to assert, that he used frequently to ask the opinions of Dr. Jowett, and of Hague and myself when we were boys, concerning harmonies and other phenomena of sounds—that he tried experiments with humming tops; and that, though not possessed of musical ear, he was very curious to inquire how different basses might be put to the same treble, or the reverse."

It may appear surprising that Dr. Milner should have selected, for voluntary study, a science, in the pursuit of which nature had placed in his way an impassable barrier; but it is possible that the consciousness of such an obstacle had the effect of stimulating his exertions. Certain it is, that he often persecuted his musical friends to supply him with reasons for particular laws of composition, which, in fact, depended upon the natural faculty in which he was deficient. "Why," he would say to Mr. Latrobe, or to Dr. Hague, "is the use of consecutive fifths forbidden?" The answer would be, "Because they grate against my soul;" the reply was, of course, far from satisfactory; and, on one occasion, I well recollect that Mr.

Latrobe appended to it an assertion which furnished the querist with a handle for some good-humoured triumph. Having said ‘They grate against my soul,’ Mr. Latrobe unwarily added, “and octaves are as bad.” Dr. Hague, who was present, rather imprudently “rose to explain,” stating that there were cases in which, as every musician knows, octaves are not bad at all. The seeming discrepance of opinion delighted Dr. Milner, and often did he afterwards allude to this proof, as he professed to consider it, of the uncertainty of the musical code.

It may here be observed, that as Dean Milner was deficient in an ear for sounds, so was he likewise, to a certain degree, and in a corresponding manner, in an eye for form. I have seen him shed tears while contemplating a head of Christ, crowned with thorns, by one of the great masters—yet a perspective view, for instance, of a cube, conveyed to him no idea whatever of the solid intended to be represented.

Perhaps an eye for form is seldom found disunited from an ear for musical sounds.

This spring was, with Dr. Milner, an unusually busy season. As one of three persons who were appointed to examine and arrange the complex affairs of the University Press, he had paid particular attention to the duties which devolved upon him. His brother syndics, well aware, like all who knew him, of his vigilance and energy in such matters, actually left to him the chief part of the business; and the Senate would willingly have avowedly so left the whole management and direction of it. This, however, he was far from desiring; but not from indolence, or an indisposition to vigorous exertion. To the Vice-Chancellor for the year 1805-6 (Dr. Turner), he addressed a written communication in which, not only his opinions concerning the proper management of the affairs of the University Press are fully developed, but the various documents upon which those opinions were founded, are arranged in detail, and in order, and an index made for convenience of reference. This manuscript is, in fact, a folio volume, and must always remain a monument of the acuteness, candour, industry, and energy of the writer.

To the trouble and inconvenience which Dr. Milner under-

went, with the view of making himself thoroughly master of the invention of stereotype printing, I can bear witness. He used to spend hours together in the printing-office, which was near his own Lodge; and, like Peter the Great in the ship-builder's yard at Amsterdam, actually put his own hand to the work, making attempt after attempt, till he succeeded in producing a perfect stereotype plate of his own individual manufacture. It may be said, and perhaps with truth, that his personal exertions of this kind were sufficiently accounted for by his love of practical mechanics; no such cause, however, can explain his regular attendance, during a considerable period of time, at the meetings of the syndics of the press,—an attendance which, as the meetings in question took place, for the most part, in the winter evenings, required a species of effort quite foreign to his habits.

Dr. Milner was also engaged during this spring in a correspondence with the Solicitor-General, the late amiable and unhappy Sir Samuel Romilly.

Up to this time he had enjoyed no further personal acquaintance with Sir Samuel, than what resulted from his “having,” as he says in one of his letters, “had the good fortune, many years ago, to be introduced to” him, “at a dinner at Mr. Wilberforce’s, when Lord Eldon was one of the company,” and when he, (Dr. Milner,) “passed a most agreeable and instructive afternoon.”

So high, however, was his estimate of Sir S. Romilly’s “talents and knowledge,” that he declares himself to “have felt a most pressing desire to have” his “opinion respecting the construction of certain passages in the statutes” of Queen’s College, “in preference to that of any other counsel whatever.”

In the midst of his multifarious occupations, Dr. Milner found time to indulge himself in “hobby-horses,” new as well as old. A new one, this spring, was the study of short-hand, which he certainly learned to write, though not, I think, to read, with considerable facility. The misfortune was, that having made himself tolerably well acquainted with one system, “Annett’s,” I believe it was, he happened to hear of another.

which was said to have superior claims to attention and adoption, and the confusion thus arising prevented him from becoming an adept in the use of either. He acquired, however, short-hand enough to be serviceable, as a sort of cipher, when he wished to make a private memorandum, or a note in the margin of a book.

Other matters there were, of comparatively little moment, concerning which Dr. Milner, when the fancy struck him, occupied himself *con amore*; but some readers may, perhaps, think that enough has been already said here and in other parts of this work, upon what are confessedly, comparatively, trifling subjects. It may, however, be fairly suggested, in mitigation of censure, that a character can scarcely be allowed to be faithfully delineated, if all the little oddities and peculiarities which distinguish it, be either sedulously kept out of sight, or materially curtailed of their due proportion on the canvas.

The arbitration of a disputed point in an agreement relative to the Lady Margaret's Professorship of Divinity, between the Rev. Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Marsh, and the Rev. James Fawcett of St. John's College, Dean Milner being fixed upon as umpire by both parties, and another journey to London, filled up the interval till the second week in June, the accustomed time of the summer chapter at Carlisle.

Notwithstanding the exertion of preaching almost every Sunday in the Cathedral, surely a very considerable effort, the precarious state of his health being taken into the account, the Dean always regarded his summer's residence at Carlisle, after the chapter business was concluded, as, to a certain degree, a period of relaxation; nor can it be doubted, that the partial cessation from laborious employment which he there annually allowed himself, tended to mitigate his constitutional complaints and to prolong his life. At Carlisle, also, he entered more freely into general society than he was accustomed to do at Cambridge, occasionally visiting, or, in his turn, entertaining at the Deanery, some of the neighbouring county families, among whom, as indeed among all who knew him, his rich conversational powers caused his society to be sought for with avidity.

Perhaps one of his greatest pleasures was to spend occasionally a few quiet days at Rose Castle, the beautiful residence of the Bishop of Carlisle, with his friend, the present Archbishop of York. The mode of living there was exactly such as suited his taste. There was no pomp, no oppressive style. He used to saunter about the meadows and the hay-fields while engaged in conversation with his host, and as he more than once told his friend after he became an archbishop, liked the simplicity of Rose Castle a great deal better than the splendour of Bishopthorpe.

Sometimes, though less frequently, he ventured upon an excursion somewhat more distant, and joined the splendid circle whom Lord Lonsdale's hospitality often collected around him at Lowther Castle. Ill-health, however, frequently obliged him to decline his Lordship's kind invitations, "since," as he writes from Rose Castle, in answer to one of them, on the 6th of August in this year, "like weak governments," he was "often obliged to regulate" his "plans by incidents rather than by system."

During one of his visits at Lowther, before the present magnificent castle was finished, and while the family occupied a smaller habitation, a circumstance occurred strongly characteristic of the persevering turn of Dean Milner's mind.

One evening some of the younger branches of the family were amusing themselves by playing at draughts: the Dean, always fond of the society of young persons, and disposed to interest himself in their pursuits, undertook to shew them how, by a certain method of play, they might generally be sure of victory.

On trial, however, it appeared, that his memory, for once, had failed him; he could not fulfil his promise, and shewed, in consequence, some slight marks of chagrin. In due time, all parties retired for the night, and no more was said, or, apparently, thought of the draught-board.

The next morning it happened that Lord Lonsdale had occasion to go out unusually early. He passed through the hall, from which a door opened into the apartment which had

been occupied on the preceding evening, which apartment the house-maids were still employed in arranging. What was his Lordship's surprise, on looking into the room, to discover Dean Milner, seated in a quiet corner, in his dressing-gown and black velvet cap, with the draught-board before him, solving, at his ease, the problem which had puzzled him the evening before! It is scarcely necessary to add, that he was ready, by breakfast time, to redeem the promise of the preceding night.

Other characteristic anecdotes connected with the Dean's visits at Lowther Castle might be related. For instance, he once met there the late Bishop of Llandaff, Dr. Watson, who, in his capacity of Professor of Divinity, had, many years before, presided in the Schools when Dr. Milner and Dr. Coulthurst kept the Act which the Bishop had distinguished by his signal approbation, pronouncing the disputants to be "Arcades ambo*." It so chanced, that one day after dinner, at Lord Lonsdale's table, Dr. Southey and other persons of note being present, this Act became the subject of conversation, and a discussion arose between the Bishop and the Dean, on some point connected with it. Dr. Milner, quite at his ease, and in perfect good humour, had the best of the argument; or, at least, carried the company along with him. Dr. Watson, on the other hand, who was in the habit of talking for effect, and who treated the matter with the utmost gravity, became annoyed at his own failure, and at length showed symptoms of being on the very point of losing his temper. At this juncture, the Dean, who had a strong sense of the ludicrous and very little compassion for vexations occasioned by want of temper, whoever might be the sufferer, completed the discomfiture of his solemn antagonist, by exclaiming jocosely, in his usual sonorous tones, "Now, Bishop, will you take the other side, and we'll argue it over again?" The whole scene was felt by all who witnessed it, and who understood and perceived the imposing character and manners of the stately Bishop of Llandaff, to be exquisitely comic; but like most other instances of real humour, it depended so much upon "time, place, and

* Vide Chapter III.

circumstance," that it is scarcely possible to convey, by description, an adequate idea of it.

In whatever company he might be, it is certainly true that Dr. Milner usually was what he was often emphatically declared to be, "the life of the party." Notwithstanding his frequent attacks of bodily suffering, he was constitutionally gay; in fact, so blithe and frolicsome were his spirits during the intervals in which he enjoyed a moderate share of health, and so entirely free was he, at all times, from the slightest shade of affected gravity, that, by persons of a more severe turn of mind, or of less natural cheerfulness, he was sometimes thought to be in danger of overstepping the line which separates innocent gaiety from culpable levity. Of this tendency to mirth he was himself as well aware as the most vigilant of those who might be disposed to censure his indulgence of it; but he had no artificial character to support. Consequently, while his genuine religious principle effectually and necessarily withheld him from excessive or indecorous merriment, he frequently and fearlessly gave the reins to the lively temperament with which he was undoubtedly gifted in the very "prodigality of nature."

These remarks may serve as apology, if any be deemed requisite, for Dean Milner's conduct on an occasion about to be mentioned. It should be premised that it was his settled habit to endeavour to glean from every person who fell in his way some portion of the particular knowledge, whatever it might be, which that person was supposed to possess. Therefore, being in company at Lowther with a nobleman who professed great skill as a boxer, he contrived to turn the conversation upon the art, or science, of self-defence. Lord A——— II—— strenuously maintained that a scientific pugilist could not, by any possibility, be struck by an uninstructed antagonist; that his skill would enable him to ward off any blow not dealt to him by a brother of the craft. The Dean disputed this position; the company became interested and the discussion animated; experiment only could decide the point. In order, therefore, to bring the matter to the test, Dr. Milner arose from his seat, and, walking into the middle of the apartment,

coolly said, "Now, my Lord, if you will only promise not to strike me, I think, that in spite of any guard you can keep, I can strike you." "Impossible," &c., &c., exclaimed Lord A—— H——. They stood up accordingly, and, "within less than thirty seconds," said Dean Milner, with great triumph, when he afterwards related the circumstance, "I gave him, with my open hand, such a slap on the face as rang again through the large room." The company, of course, laughed heartily, and Lord A—— H—— said no more on the subject of boxing; but so irresistible was the influence of the Dean's good humour, that it was impossible even for a man in his Lordship's circumstances to be angry with him.

On one occasion, while staying at Lowther Castle, Dr. Milner proved—what indeed stood in little need of proof—his extraordinary power of voice. He was walking on the terrace with several other persons, the Bishop of Llandaff, I think, amongst others, when a labourer being visible at a considerable distance in the fields below, it was determined that they should try who among them could speak loud enough to make him hear. They tried in turn, each addressing the unconscious agriculturist in the most sonorous words which presented themselves. Dean Milner spoke last; and on his exclaiming in his full and round tones, "Turn, charge, and conquer," the man instantly turned, and gave signs of attention. If the Dean felt any degree of self-complacency on the score of any of his personal advantages, it was with regard to his magnificent voice and his skill in using it; and he certainly sometimes told this anecdote with evident satisfaction.

The anecdote above related, respecting the game of draughts, may properly introduce some recollections with which I have been favoured by a surviving intimate friend of Dean Milner*, and which strikingly illustrate the same turn of mind. "I remember, as if it were yesterday," writes this gentleman, "being once engaged with your uncle in some mathematical process—the summation of a series, or possibly something connected with the Binomial Theorem—at any rate something

* Colonel T. P. Thompson.

which he was going to show me, and which ought to have come out neat. I was put on it first, and failed, through some mistake in a sign, or similar slight cause. He took it in hand next, and failed also. I recollect his sharp ‘Ha!’ two or three times, as he turned the thing impatiently over; and when at last he got to the right result he exclaimed, ‘There, you dog!’ giving me, at the same time, a wipe with the pen across the face, in the way of triumph at the conclusion—an action which I have often recollected as explanatory of a similar one said to have been performed by Cromwell at the moment when he signed the death-warrant of Charles Stuart.

“I recollect another circumstance with which this story of ‘the Cromwellian wipe’ would fit very well. Your uncle wanted the proportion of the diameter of a circle to the circumference, or at least one of the practical approximations to it, and I saw him writing figures and drawing a perpendicular line through them, with an appearance of impatience at the thing not answering at once; and at last he burst out, ‘There it is; one, one, three, three, five, five, and cut them in half, 113 | 355; there’s a bit of artificial memory for you, sir.’ You may depend upon it I never forgot the proportion of the diameter to the circumference from that day to this.”

It is superfluous to say, that Dean Milner’s summer habits of innocent and salutary relaxation were perfectly consistent with much useful occupation and serious study. During this particular summer, he collected, or at least ascertained where and how he might obtain, a vast mass of materials for the carrying forward of the *Ecclesiastical History*. This appears from numerous marginal notes, critical, historical, &c., in his handwriting, interspersed throughout a printed copy of the fourth volume of the *History*, and from other manuscripts, some of considerable length, and exhibiting much labour and research.

One other subject connected with this summer’s residence at Carlisle, remains to be mentioned.

A man had been tried at the assizes for forgery, then a capital crime; he was found guilty, condemned, and left for execution. Those persons who are but imperfectly acquainted

with the character of Dean Milner, may perhaps be surprised to hear, that the case of this poor man occasioned him so much concern, that he determined to visit him personally in his condemned cell. On more than one of those visits I accompanied him, and the impression left upon my mind has never been effaced.

I shall never forget the Dean's extreme tenderness and delicacy in his conversations with the unhappy culprit. He laid open to him, in the simplest manner, the great doctrines of revelation, the fall of man, the universal necessity of conversion and regeneration, the vicarious sacrifice of the Redeemer, and the power of the Holy Ghost to renew the heart of the believing and repentant sinner, and to render him fit for heaven; but all this without any especial reference to the particular crime for which his auditor was condemned to suffer. He spoke to him of his approaching *death*, not of his approaching *execution*; and, in short, endeavoured to humble him in his own sight, as a sinner before God, and to fix his thoughts upon that "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," without distracting his mind by earthly considerations.

What the effect was, I know not; for the forger was most unexpectedly reprieved: but if ever a condemned felon was judiciously treated by his spiritual adviser, that culprit was the man!

Dean Milner has probably seldom been even thought of in the character of a visitor of the sick and dying; yet the truth is, that he possessed, if the word may be permitted, extraordinary tact in that capacity.

A case which occurred at Cambridge during the spring of the year 1806, may be mentioned in support of this assertion.

A young man, whose connections were known to Dr. Milner, attempted suicide; in fact, cut his throat so effectually that his life was in the most imminent danger. This occurred during the night; no medical advice was immediately to be procured, and before daybreak the disconsolate family sent to request the attendance of Dean Milner, rather as a medical, than as a spiritual adviser. The Dean of course obeyed the call; and during that visit and some subsequent ones, attended

only to the physical condition of the sufferer. Afterwards, when the danger of death was past, he assumed his clerical character. Of the precise nature, or the ultimate consequences of his addresses to the unhappy man, I cannot speak. The immediate effect was notorious: the poor youth became so grateful, and so much attached to his spiritual instructor, that he would suffer no one else to minister even to his bodily wants; and it is a fact, that for a considerable time, his medicines were administered, and even the dressings upon his throat arranged, by Dr. Milner's own hand.

CHAPTER XVIII.

History of the Church.—Third Volume translated into German.—Translation of Joseph Milner's *Sermons* into German.—Letter to the Bishop of Meath.—Visit to Cambridge of the Chancellor of the University.—Professor Porson.—University Press.—Rev. T. Thomason.—Professor Smyth.—Dr. Milner's Sermon at St. Mary's against Catholic Emancipation.—Consistency of Character.—Address to the King.—General Election.—Busy Chapter at Carlisle.—Musical Festival.—Thoughts respecting Preaching.—Private Reflections.—Rev. Christian Ignatius Latrobe.—Musical Society at Cambridge.—Dr. Jowett's Musical Parties.—Discussion concerning certain disputed points of Chronology.—Correspondence.—Governorship of Sierra Leone.—Second Volume of Joseph Milner's *Sermons*.—Fifth Volume of *Ecclesiastical History*.—Board of Longitude.—Carlisle.—Correspondence.—Assize Sermon.—Dr. Buchanan.—Dean Milner's Sentiments respecting Races and Theatrical Representations.—Letter on the proposed erection of a Theatre.—Advice respecting College Lectures.—Reading Lamp.—Dr. Edward Daniel Clarke.—New Edition of Milner's *Works*.—Kensington Gore.—Rev. Thomas Kerrich.—Social Intercourse.—Evening Visits from Old Friends.

A.D. 1806. ÆTAT. 56.

ONCE again established in his Lodge, Dr. Milner's principal object was the continuation of the *History of the Church of Christ*.

A foreign clergyman, personally unknown to him, had sent him, with a copy of the third volume of that *History* translated into German, the following interesting letter.

“ TO THE REV. DR. MILNER, DEAN OF CARLISLE, AND
MASTER OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

“ REVEREND SIR,

“ *Herrnhut*, 1806.

“ Your kind letter of January 18th, I received with inexpressible satisfaction.

“ You may be assured that the translation is extensively read, not only in Germany, (even in some popish parts,) but also in Switzerland, Prussia, Livonia, Holland, Denmark, and Sweden; and, very likely, the German translation will be followed by a Swedish one. I have had to answer several queries from Stockholm, respecting the work and its author. His Life

will be prefixed to the fourth volume, according to a desire intimated to me from many quarters.

“Indeed, this eminent servant of God, ‘though dead, yet speaketh.’ I have spoken with two persons who had read the first volume in Greenland, and with another who had perused it upon the banks of the Wolga. I wish you may find, in this information, an additional spur to go on with diligence.

“Now I beg leave to lay some particulars before you.

• “1. I have had some obscure information of the second and third volumes having gone through a second edition, with considerable amendments. If so, please to favour me with a copy for the benefit of my translations. The amendments may be introduced by way of Appendix.

“2. I wish likewise to have the other printed writings of your late brother. I shall peruse them with an eye towards a translation.

“3. The sermons of your late brother gave me so much satisfaction, that I have already finished a translation of them, and have offered them to be printed. But my bookseller is doubtful; the sale of sermons being, in Germany, generally a very heavy thing. Now if any bookseller, or a number of booksellers in England, could be prevailed upon to subscribe 50*l.* for two hundred copies, or 70*l.* for three hundred copies, or 80*l.* for four hundred, the difficulty would be removed, and much good might be done. There are many Germans in London who might be inclined to purchase the book. Besides, there are societies who distribute good books, gratis, and perhaps they have little or no store for the many Germans in their neighbourhood. If any of those societies, or any rich individuals, should be inclined, particularly for the benefit of the many German soldiers now in England, to subscribe for a considerable number, I would, for that purpose, contrive to get the printing so done, that every sermon should be a sheet of itself; so that they might give away the whole, or the parts, just as they pleased. Methinks, this would be a plan of very extensive usefulness. May I beg you to propose it to those societies? As soon as I receive a favourable answer, (which I wish may be as soon as possible) the printing will immediately begin.

“4. As you are writing the history of the Reformation, I cannot help mentioning a circumstance which strikingly marks the spirit of those times, though very little known. I live in a province where there are many Vandals, who speak a language as different from the German as Welsh is from English. It is a dialect of the Slavonian. Mr. Latrobe has often heard their jargon. These people have, wherever they meet one another, a certain salutation, which they only use on Sundays and holidays. If they meet before sermon, they say ‘Welcome to God’s word;’ if after sermon, ‘Welcome from God’s word.’ This custom, which is universal throughout the whole nation, dates from the time of the Reformation. Before that period they never had any preaching in their language; their priests being all Germans, and their whole religion consisting in ceremonies and processions. About the year 1521, evangelical preaching took place in their language, and was received so eagerly, that it gave rise to that singular custom. Indeed, it is now only a matter of form, but methinks it is evident, that it was then something more. There was, at that time, a remarkable work of God among that nation, of which I could give you some more particulars, if you desire it.

“I am, Reverend Sir,

“Your most obedient humble servant,

“PETER MORTIMER.”

To this letter Dr. Milner, who was always much gratified by the notice of strangers whom he had reason to think men of piety, returned the following warm-hearted answer.

“*Queen’s College, Cambridge,*

“REV. AND DEAR SIR,

October 24, 1806.

“I cannot express the satisfaction which your kind and valuable letter has afforded me. My very numerous avocations would not have prevented me from noticing the contents of it as they deserve, much sooner; but I am frequently so much out of health as to be compelled to relax from my studies, in a degree, or else I should soon be unable to attend to them at all.

“1. This circumstance is to account for my not having yet finished Volume V.

“2. The same circumstance will account for the second and third volumes being not yet republished with corrections.

“The republication of them has been promised to the public, but the promise is not yet fulfilled. The new edition, as well as Volume V., will be out as soon as ever I can finish them. If my health were at all to be depended on, I should say in the course of next spring; but I have often been admonished to be cautious in promises.

“I have, however, now great hopes of getting fast forward.

“I will not fail to send you the books all together, along with such other of the author’s writings as I judge you would wish to have, and as I can pick up.

“Volume V. will be as rich in matter, or richer, than any of the foregoing parts.

“3. I have been in the north of England for four months, and have seen so few people, that I have yet had no opportunity to try what can be done with any of those societies you speak of, respecting the publication of the sermons of my brother in German, which you have been so good as to translate. But lest that important matter should be delayed any longer, (and I am very sorry it has been delayed at all,) I will answer to you, through Mr. Latrobe, for fifty pounds, to be paid, as you mention, for two hundred copies; and I will also try whether we cannot get the order increased. However, so far I answer for, be it as it may.

“4. I have to return you my most sincere thanks for the very handsome copy of your German edition of the third volume of the *Church History*. I can hardly mention any event which would have given greater satisfaction to the author had he been alive. The propagation of the true Gospel of Christ, and its efficacy in reclaiming sinners to the service of God and making them fit for heaven, were objects which had been, for many years, close to his heart.

“5. The anecdote of ‘Welcome to God’s word,’ is a very striking one, and I will not neglect to mention it in its proper place. Moreover, I would be very much obliged to you for more particulars, with which you say you can furnish me, and the sooner the better.

“Don’t pay any regard to the expense of postage; I shall think myself well repaid by your communications, be they ever so slight.

“Little matters often prove a great deal. The instance you have given me is a very decisive one of that sort. ‘Welcome to God’s word,’ had a meaning of a very significant kind, I doubt not, when it came from the heart. It is my prayer, that there may be a revival of practical Christianity throughout Europe; as I verily believe, that nothing short of *that* will cure our present dreadful evils, as well as those still more dreadful, which appear to hang over us.

“6. I have understood, that there is likely to be soon, in Germany, a new edition of all Luther’s works. Is this so?

“If there be a Latin translation of these, more full than the Wittenberg, or the Jene edition, which I have, I would thank you to purchase a copy for me.

“7. I would also, if I am not too troublesome, give you a commission to send me any of the valuable writers on Religion, the history of it—Histories of the Reformation, &c., &c., in Latin, or French; I do not read German.

“You need not be afraid as to the price, if you meet with real good stuff.

“May Almighty God be pleased to bless your useful labours, and to prosper you in all things, to his glory.

“Your affectionate servant, dear Sir,

“*To the Rev. Mr. Mortimer.*”

“I. MILNER.”

Laborious as Dean Milner actually was, he was apt, like his deceased brother, and like all persons of very active mind, to accuse himself of indolence. With reference to this subject, he makes the following remarks, in a letter dated during this month of October, 1806.

“In the midst of my own concerns, which are sufficiently numerous, and often far from being pleasant, I can assure you, that I very often think of you, and run over, in my mind, a variety of scenes that have passed between us: and, to own the truth, it generally happens, that in reviewing many of the old scenes to which I allude, I see reason to be mortified with

having neglected to perform many things which I had projected as things to be done, and which I could scarcely have believed would have been so long left undone, had any body pretended to predict the event. All this is, I suppose, what happens to a very great part of mankind, as well as to myself, and, perhaps, to you. The misfortune is, we are constantly supposing, that there is something or other peculiar in our own cases, which has prevented us from putting into execution the good plans we had devised; and so we fabricate excuses, from day to day. In my own case, very indifferent health has certainly clipped my wings, and laid a cold hand on many of my schemes. Nor is this, by any means, an imaginary excuse: but, of late years, I have learned, I think, to see further into this matter, and to be convinced, that even infirmities, when properly managed, may become a source of industry and exertion. For, I believe, we fail, much more, through an erroneous or indolent application of our faculties, than we do through a real want of powers, or opportunities.”

The observations upon the peculiar dangers attendant upon the academical career of young men, and upon the importance of judicious home education, in early life, contained in the following letter to the late Bishop of Meath, will be read with much interest.

“TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND THE
LORD BISHOP OF MEATH.

“*Queen’s Lodge, Cambridge,*

“MY LORD,

November 13, 1806.

“Your Lordship’s observations in the obliging letter with which you have favoured me, are judicious and truly Christian; neither does there appear in them any more anxiety than what strictly belongs to so interesting a case. A very fine youth indeed, in all respects, just launching into the world, at a critical period of life, and among numerous examples of dissipation and extravagance—add to this, an only son—assuredly here is enough to excite apprehension; as there always is, where there is much to lose, and also much to expect.

“As I would prove myself grateful for the favourable judg-

ment which you have formed of Queen's College, and its regulations, I shall feel bound in duty to endeavour, as much as possible, to answer your expectations.

“After what your Lordship has seen of Mr. S., it must be unnecessary for me to repeat (what I expressed pretty confidently to Dr. R.) how fortunate your Lordship has been in meeting with a gentleman so excellently qualified as he is, to superintend the education of your son.

“I have almost always found, that the greatest danger attends the commencement of the academical life, when generous and open-hearted youths are apt to form both too many connexions, and too hastily. However, Mr. S. and myself are so perfectly awake to this circumstance, that we shall not fail to suggest the necessary cautions.

“I venture to predict, that, in regard to discipline, we shall have no difficulties whatever; for these very seldom arise except where previous defects at home, have laid a foundation for future irregularities.

“That the blessing of God may attend your truly laudable exertions as a bishop, and your pious and Christian views as a parent, is the hope and prayer of your Lordship's faithful servant,

“ISAAC MILNER.”

In the course of the month of December, in this year, the Duke of Grafton, Chancellor of the University, paid a visit to Cambridge, taking up his abode at Trinity Lodge. During his Grace's stay, Mr. Tomline, son of the Bishop of Lincoln, pronounced a eulogy on Mr. Pitt, in the Chapel of Trinity College, before a large concourse of auditors. The following complimentary communication must have been highly gratifying to the youthful speaker.

“DEAR SIR,

“*Queen's Lodge, December 19, 1806.*

“Though much used to suffer mortification through indisposition, my disappointment has not often been greater than it was the other day, on not being able to be present at the very interesting scene in Trinity Chapel. I caught a very severe

cold during last week, in London*, which cold was still further increased by my journey thence, last Monday, insomuch that I have been completely confined since that time.

“The Duke of Grafton and Dr. Mansel were so good as to call upon me yesterday; and from them, as well as from many others, I learnt how much I had lost, (I will not say by being absent from the splendid dinners and company, on Tuesday and Wednesday, at Trinity College; but) by not hearing you deliver your eulogium.

“I am very much obliged to you for the copy of it with which you have been so good as to favour me; though, I own, it brings afresh to my mind the observation of Æschines to the admirers of the famous oration of Demosthenes, ‘What would you have said if you had heard him deliver it?’

“May everything attend you that is great and good!

“I am, dear Sir,

“Yours faithfully,

“To Mr. Tomline.”

“ISAAC MILNER.

I have never yet mentioned Dr. Milner’s intimacy with Professor Porson. I recollect no appearances of this intimacy subsequent to the year 1806; but during the two or three previous years, I well remember the frequent evening visits of Porson to Dr. Milner’s study. He used to sit in the right-hand corner of the well-curtained sofa, by the fire; and his habits being but too well known, he was always, without any order given to that effect, accommodated, by the servant in attendance, with a jug of malt liquor, that being the beverage which he was understood to prefer.

The conversation, on these occasions, often turned upon Greek literature, but not exactly in the way that might naturally be supposed.

To his brother’s *Observations on Sir Isaac Newton’s Chronology*, Dean Milner has prefixed a note, stating, that he had, “at various times, but in vain, desired, and even earnestly entreated Professor Porson to undertake the examination of the grand

* Whither he had gone to attend the meeting of the Board of Longitude.

chronological questions" which form the subject of Sir Isaac's treatise; "urging it as an attempt worthy of his great talents and great attainments."

He did, indeed, frequently, so urge it; for the very respect in which he held the Professor, made him regret, that such transcendent abilities as his, should be employed in any but the highest departments of learning. This was a subject often discussed between them. "Learning, such as yours," the Dean would say, "should be occupied on more important matters than the settling of a disputed reading, which, perhaps, after all, but slightly affects the meaning of the passage under consideration. Such a mind as yours, should be brought to bear upon some great question."

It was not, of course, that Dean Milner did not admit the possession of the most varied and extensive classical learning to be essentially requisite to the successful prosecution of such investigations as those in which the Greek Professor delighted; neither did he undervalue the importance of those investigations; but believing Porson, besides his surpassing excellence as a scholar, to possess a reach of mind capable of applying that excellence to the highest purposes, he earnestly desired to see him grapple with some subject requiring and deserving the whole of his intellectual powers. Such a subject, in the opinion of Dr. Milner, was Sir Isaac Newton's system of Chronology.

To the examination of Newton's most ingenious arguments,—the one astronomical, the other drawn from observations upon the ordinary duration of human life,—the Dean had himself, at various times, given a good deal of attention; and in the conclusion following alike from both of these perfectly independent arguments, he was, himself, well satisfied to acquiesce; in fact, it would, I believe, have been exceedingly difficult to shake his faith in the chronological scheme of one whom he used to call "that great master of reason." Still, the question was one concerning which the opinions of the learned were divided, and one which Porson, by his eminent classical learning, and extensive historical knowledge, was peculiarly qualified to determine. Often, therefore, and strenuously, did Dr. Milner exhort him to "try his strength" upon this subject.

The very words which I have heard him use recur to my mind as I write: "Settle the Chronology, decide between Newton and his opponents. Set the question at rest for ever; that would be an effort worthy of you."

How strange and apparently capricious a thing is memory! These words, heard in early childhood, ring upon my ear, as if but lately uttered. Thus the events and incidents of youth, although apparently obliterated from the mind, frequently start into new life, awakened from their trance by some allusion, or some association of ideas, which, perhaps, after all, we can scarcely trace! In fact, it is impossible to say, that anything is absolutely forgotten; we may have lost for years all recollection of an event; and yet the whole train of circumstances belonging to it, may be safely stored up in that mysterious faculty, the memory, and need but the spark which is to fire it, and bring the whole to light!

The month of January brought with it, as usual, much college business. The affairs of the University Press, likewise, continued to engross a considerable portion of Dr. Milner's time. His indifferent health, however, together with his anxiety to devote as many hours as possible to the continuation of the *Church History*, now induced him, to free himself, in some measure, from this occupation. In a letter to Dr. Pearee, the successor of Dr. Turner, in the office of Vice Chancellor, he states, at length, some of the reasons which led him to this determination; adding, respecting the future conduct of the press, various suggestions, which, as he had now been conversant with the subject, during more than three years, and had, in fact, in the year 1804, usually presided at the meetings of the Syndics of the Press, in the place of the Vice Chancellor, Dr. Torkington, who was infirm in health, could not be otherwise than valuable.

A testimonial given by Dr. Milner in January, 1807, in favour of a gentleman, since well-known for his services in the cause of Christianity in India, contains a passage which exemplifies his constant practice of choosing the very best men who could be obtained, to fill offices of trust and authority in the college which he governed.

* * * * “Some time ago, Queen’s College, of which I have the honour to be Master, was in want of a Tutor; and, there not being a person of my own College whom I judged proper for this truly important situation, I fixed upon Mr. Thomason*, after looking very diligently through the whole University; and I was certainly induced to appoint him Tutor of Queen’s College, entirely on account of his high reputation for learning, good principles, and exemplary conduct.”

Professor Smyth, in a letter containing various notices of Dean Milner, which, like all those received from the same source, are well worthy of preservation, observes that about this period he “frequently urged the Dean to draw up a *Life of Calvin*, for which, he said, he had some materials, and for which he was eminently fitted, but no work of the kind ever appeared.” Professor Smyth adds, “I remember that Dr. B., the last principal of the E. I. Coll., was very much struck with a sermon that the Dean delivered at St. Mary’s, against the emancipation of the Roman Catholics.”

The sermon alluded to†, which produced, at the time of its delivery‡, a great sensation in the University, has, doubtless, in one point of view, lost a part of its interest—the claims which Dean Milner opposed having been since conceded, and the question settled by the Legislature. Still however, as a masterly historical sketch, admirably adapted to the purpose which its author had in view, this composition must ever retain its value. The following extract treats especially of the great Christian doctrine which Dr. Milner regarded as “the very jewel of the Reformation.”

“Modern historians and political writers have been copious and loud in their praises of the Reformation from Popery; but it is very plain, that the thing these writers are chiefly in love with, is merely the civil liberty of the Reformation, which was indeed one blessed effect, but by no means the most important effect of our emancipation from Papal despotism. The revival

* He was fifth Wrangler.

† See Dean MILNER’S *Sermons*, Vol. I., Ser. I.

‡ January 30th, 1807.

of pure Christianity which took place at the Reformation, is that which forms the boast of that glorious æra; and I am deeply and awfully convinced, that unless something like another revival of the same spirit should again manifest itself among us, we shall, in no great length of time, be found to have let go the substance, and retained only the shadow of Protestantism.

“I can have no fear of incurring a charge either of ignorance or temerity, when I only repeat what, in substance, has, of late years, been frequently much more than intimated from the first Episcopal authority*, (if learning, wisdom, and knowledge in the Scriptures and in the history of the Church, be any foundation for authority,) that in too many instances even the clergy of the Establishment have materially deviated from the natural, unsophisticated meaning of the Articles and Homilies of the Church of England; that they have, in fact, preached too much from Socrates and Seneca, and too little from Christ and his everlasting Gospel; that the reading-desk and the pulpit have often been at variance; and that, instead of pressing upon the conscience with energy, the great and peculiar doctrines of the Gospel,—such as the doctrines of original sin, justification by faith, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit,—there has been, in many cases, substituted in their place little more than a vain system of frigid ethics, accommodated to the pride and blindness of human reason. My own little experience entirely accords with the admonitions of this learned prelate: and, with him, I further believe, that the doctrine of Justification by Faith, as stated in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth Articles of our Church, is the very corner-stone of the whole system of the first Reformers. It was the doctrine of Luther and Calvin, and Philip Melancthon; and it was the doctrine of the whole college of Apostles.

“How far, in the distant periods of the Puritanical excesses, this fundamental doctrine was, by some hypocrites, perverted to wicked purposes, (as the very best things are ever liable to abuse,) or how far, in modern times, some fanatical and illiterate

* Bishop Horsley.

itinerant teachers have given just occasion to Antinomian interpretations of the same doctrine, I will not take upon me to decide: but I have no doubt, that in the anxiety to resist and expose the dangers of Antinomianism, many, of late years, actuated by more zeal than knowledge, have mutilated the whole Gospel system, totally destroyed the analogy of Faith, and expressed themselves in such a way as scarcely to have kept clear of the grossest errors of the Pelagian heresy. The remedies for this mischievous practice, in cases where it originates from mere error of judgment, will consist in a better acquaintance with the interior of ecclesiastical history, a closer and more diligent study of the evangelical system, and, lastly, a more serious and habitual application of the doctrines of the Gospel to men's own individual circumstances, for the express purpose of spiritual improvement, and the formation of Christian dispositions. The using of these remedies, by persons who sincerely wish to be set right, will be crowned with success." * * * * * "But the dangerous sort of instruction above alluded to, does not always arise from mere ignorance, but from something besides, something worse than any mere ignorance whatever. In many instances, besides a complete unacquaintance with the marrow of the Protestant confessions of faith, and the specific difference between these and the Roman Catholic tenets in doctrinal articles; besides also, the total misapprehension of the meaning of our own Articles and Liturgy; there is super-added a lamentable opposition of the human heart to the very doctrines themselves of salvation by Christ and renovation by the Holy Spirit.

"Men do not thoroughly believe these doctrines: the pride of corrupt nature is not humbled into a thorough acquiescence in the Revealed Word, much less into a grateful acceptance of the terms of Revelation. Hence, the true interpretation of the Scriptures, and of our own Articles, is often condemned as irrational; and it is found in vain to insist upon the plain, literal, and grammatical meaning of the most unequivocal expressions, when it has been pre-determined, that all such notions are absurd, and incapable of being seriously held by men of learning and capacity.

“Thus it happens, that men may be baptized, profess Christianity all their lives, and join in the common acts of established Christian communion, and yet constantly withstand, with all their might, what I call the interior, the essentials, the marrow of the Christian system.

“Such persons would do well to scrutinize those parts of the history of the blessed Reformation which are scarcely touched upon by our most elegant and approved historians; those scattered, but very authentic and precious memoirs which lay open the real views of our first Reformers concerning repentance, faith, and sanctification—in short, concerning the everlasting salvation of the soul. Such a laudable industry might, by the blessing of God, help to remove the veil from men’s eyes; might make them suspect, that they had hitherto misunderstood the most material article of the Reformation; and by thus abating prejudices, might pave the way for true conversion of heart, and true spiritual discernment.

“No one, I conceive, can understand me to be here alluding to the Roman Catholic tenets of the Pope’s supremacy, transubstantiation, the invocation of saints, and such like. In rejecting these absurdities and superstitions, we are all perfectly agreed. It is the doctrines of grace, which teach the way of acceptance with God, and of the formation of the true Christian character, on which I have my eye. These doctrines are the immediate and pressing concern of every individual, because his eternal happiness depends upon them; and, therefore, if these be not both distinctly stated and sedulously enforced by the clergy, it is in vain to expect any effective or abiding improvement among the people, either in Christian faith, or Christian morals.

“It is on this account, that I would to God the true nature of the Protestant Reformation were better understood, and, particularly, in the grand article respecting faith and works: for then the doctrinal articles of our own Church, which are in perfect harmony with the sentiments of the best and wisest Reformers, would soon be, likewise, better understood; controversies concerning their meaning, would vanish apace; the well-disposed would be delivered from darkness into a marvellous

light, and would receive the truth with a godly joy and thankfulness. This would be the cure of every departure from the Protestant faith—this would be the revival of Christian principles—this would put an end to unlearned and injudicious declamation against Methodism, for Methodism would scarcely exist. It would soon be found, that neither illiterate enthusiasts who, by coarse allusions and intemperate language, often, with the very best meanings, burlesque the most momentous doctrines; nor conceited philosophers of modern times, who, like their ancient brethren, can never relieve the horrors of a guilty conscience, nor make the wicked man turn away from his wickedness, by their insipid harangues on candour and humanity—it would soon be found, that neither open enemies, nor false friends, nor deluded brethren, could make much stand against the glorious and salutary truths of the Gospel, delivered, by those properly commissioned to deliver them, with wisdom, animation, and affection. Then would our prayers be offered up, not merely with the lips, in the name of Jesus, but from the heart delivered up to its Redeemer and sanctifier.”

Consistency was a prominent feature in Dr. Milner's character. It is, therefore, not surprising, that, with his views of the fatal errors of popery, he should about this time, have drawn up the following address.

“We your Majesty's, &c. &c.

“Humbly present to your Majesty our unfeigned thanks for the signal proof which we have recently witnessed of your Majesty's firm and conscientious determination to maintain the barriers of our happy Constitution, erected by the wisdom of our ancestors, for the security of the Protestant religion.

“As ecclesiastical persons, we feel ourselves more particularly interested in every measure which tends to preserve inviolate our most excellent and venerable Establishment; and as teachers of the pure doctrines of Christianity, we rejoice to see your Majesty's undoubted authority exercised in guarding those doctrines from all dangerous and anti-christian admixtures.

“The mild and tolerant principles by which your Majesty

has been actuated throughout your auspicious reign, have convinced all descriptions of your Majesty's loyal subjects, that your Majesty never wishes to interpose restraints, but from a sense of duty and of those sacred obligations under which the royal prerogatives are held; and they reflect with admiration and gratitude, that a steady course of inflexible constancy, thus tempered with the benevolent spirit of liberality and indulgence, entirely becomes the defender of the faith, and the father of his people.

“Fully persuaded of the rectitude of the motives which dictated the wise resolutions of your Majesty, at this critical juncture, we pledge ourselves, in conjunction with all your Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, to exert our utmost efforts, to support the royal authority, to cherish among the people a sense of the liberties which they enjoy under our admirable Constitution, and to cultivate a spirit of obedience to the laws, and of union, harmony, and universal good-will.

“We humbly pray, that Almighty God, who, under your Majesty's Government and protection, has bestowed upon us so many blessings, may long continue to preserve your Majesty's life, and to pour out his favours upon your Majesty and your people.”

On the dissolution of Parliament, which took place soon afterwards, Dr. Milner, thus wrote.

“TO THE REV. WILLIAM MANDELL.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“*Queen's College, May 3, 1807.*

“The election is fixed for Friday next, and, I suppose, it will begin at ten o'clock, in the morning.

“We are all in a flame for Church and King, and I hope you will join us.

“Most seriously, I do think, that the greatest constitutional question, by far, that has happened in my time, is now at issue: and if the outs were to get the better, I think, that the royal prerogative would be in imminent danger, if not actually extremely lowered and reduced.

“If I judge right, you will be of the same opinion, and will make us happy, by allowing us to number you among the

friends of Sir V. Gibbs and Lord Palmerston, who, at present, represent the constitutional side, against Lord Euston and Lord Henry Petty, the friends of the Ex-Ministers.

I am, dear Sir,

“Yours most truly,

“I. MILNER.”

It is scarcely necessary to state, that the successful candidates, on this occasion, were Lord Euston and Sir V. Gibbs.

One circumstance which, at this time, occasioned to Dr. Milner some extra occupation, was his being appointed by the University, in conjunction with Dr. Jowett and Dr. Outram, to read the compositions sent in by the numerous competitors for the munificent prize of five hundred pounds, offered by Dr. Buchanan, for the best “Essay on the probable Design of Divine Providence, in subjecting so large a portion of India to the British Empire,” and to decide upon their respective merits.

Dr. Milner, who, on former occasions, had been selected by Dr. Buchanan as the dispenser of his liberality, was very anxious concerning the adjudging of this noble prize. Of the number of compositions that were sent in within the appointed time, not one was thought worthy of acceptance. Another essay, afterwards ascertained to be from the pen of the Rev. J. W. Cunningham, and to which the prize would have been unanimously adjudged, was presented a few days too late. This composition Dr. Buchanan offered to print, at his own expense.

The meetings of the Board of Longitude called Dr. Milner to London, at the ordinary periods, during the early part of this year, and in the third week in June, he entered upon his annual journey to Carlisle, where much business awaited him. A lawsuit between the Chapter and the Duke of Devonshire, occupied much of his time. The necessary repairs of the Cathedral, likewise demanded his attention; and, moreover, a new organ was to be built.

Concerning the latter subject, the Dean was exceedingly solicitous; and, being most anxious that the Cathedral should

possess a really fine organ, he wisely applied to his friend Dr. Crotch, for advice respecting the builder to be selected.

The new organ finished, it was desired that a musical festival, for the furtherance of some charitable object, should take place at Carlisle.

Dean Milner did not disapprove of such performances of oratorios, or selections of sacred music. He willingly consented to the use of the Cathedral, on the occasion of this festival, which lasted, as I recollect, three days; and privileged by his station, he attended the rehearsals, as well as the public performances. Mr. Yaniewicz, a violin player of uncommon excellence, was the leader; and Mrs. Dickons, a singer of considerable reputation in her day, sang the principal treble songs. Vaughan, (unequaled to this day in his peculiar style,) and, I think, Harrison, assisted.

But Carlisle, albeit graced by a cathedral, was nevertheless, at that time, a most unmusical city. The Bishop patronized the festival, and many of the neighbouring county families attended; still, however, the affair proved a failure; and, so far as I know, no second attempt, of a similar kind, has been made.

Various, however, as might be Dean Milner's avocations at Carlisle, his great object, while there, was, always, to exert himself to the utmost in the pulpit.

Some observations with regard to preaching, written during this summer, and apparently suggested by the perusal of certain parts of the works of Dr. Blair, will be read with interest.

“Object of preaching.

“1. To persuade men to be good; and therefore *convince* first.

“2. GRAVITY and WARMTH are the requisites.

“3. The grand *general* rules are,—

“1. Unity,—*one main point*.

“2. Unity more easily preserved in *particular* subjects, than in *general* ones.

“3. Never aim at saying *all* that can be said; a great mistake this. Select *well*.

“4. Let the preacher *suppose* HIMSELF *addressed*; and consider what would most affect himself.

“5. Avoid dryness—make it interesting: bring it to the heart. Carry it on in the strain of address.

“Make every one think, that you are addressing *him*. Therefore, remember ages, characters, &c.

“6. Style. Perspicuous.

“AN INTRODUCTION should have one or more of the following objects—

“1. To conciliate.

“2. To excite attention in consequence of the novelty or importance of the subject.

“3. To make hearers docile.

“☞ *Omit Introduction* when none of these three things are wanted.

“Good Introductions difficult; should be planned after digesting the subject.

“The expression in the introduction should be correct and good. The hearers *attend most to language*, THEN.

“Modest, simple, and opposite to ostentation. Except in very particular cases.

“☞ *Not vehement*; yet it should sow the seeds of what is to be expected. However, *don't anticipate*.

“Let it be well proportioned.

“Division of a Discourse.

“1. Begin with the simplest points.

“2. Not one word more should be used than is necessary.”

Among some private thoughts of about this date, the following reflections occur.

“It is frequently a matter of serious concern to truly evangelical persons, that they are, in many instances, compelled to own, that the practice of those who profess to believe sound principles, does not correspond, as it ought to do, with their faith; and this concern is not a little increased by observing, that, frequently, the practice of those who are unsound in Gospel doctrines, is, nevertheless, much more to be commended than that of the former sort of persons, so far as the external is concerned.

“This I take to be a consideration of very great importance.

“It becomes a trial of the faith of truly conscientious persons, especially if they happen to be reproached by ill-disposed people, who are apt to triumph over those who are really godly, and to object to them the excellent conduct of those whom godly persons cannot allow to be true believers, even though they exhibit a great deal of what is amiable and praiseworthy among men.”

Soon after the 10th of October, Dean Milner, having passed a few days with his relatives at Hull, and with his friend Mr. Richardson, at York, was again at his post in the University. Later in the year he was gladdened by a visit from the late Christian Ignatius Latrobe, a person in whose society, in common with all who knew him, he always took much delight. Mr. Latrobe's character, his extensive information, his extraordinary conversational powers, his benevolent and lively temperament, and “though last, not least,” his transcendent musical talents, rendered him, to the circle of his intimate friends at Cambridge, a most welcome visitor. His arrival always infused new vigour into the musical coteries within the range of his acquaintance; and notwithstanding Dr. Milner's want of ear, no one entered with more hearty goodwill than he, into the small, but very excellent musical parties collected, particularly by his friend Dr. Jowett, on such occasions.

Many, though not all, of those who assisted at those very pleasant parties, are no longer living. Some remain to bear witness to the truth of my assertion, that by the band of friends then in the habit of performing together, the best compositions, both vocal and instrumental, of the great German and Italian masters, were often executed with more precision and better taste than are generally exhibited in public, by professional artists.

The December meeting of the Board of Longitude called Dr. Milner, as usual, to London, early in the month; and he had but just returned to Cambridge when he was recalled to town by the sudden and dangerous illness of his friend Mr. Wilberforce.

“My dear kind friend the Dean,” writes Mr. Wilberforce, in his Journal, “came up to us;” and Hannah More, congratulating him, by letter, on his recovery, observes, that she was “happy that the incomparable Dean” had been with him during his illness*.

Most justly has it been remarked, concerning Dean Milner, that “there never, perhaps, existed a man more richly endowed” than he, “with the milk of human kindness; or one whose affectionate concern for every creature about him, was more remarkable;” and this disposition was, doubtless, especially manifested throughout the whole of his intercourse with Mr. Wilberforce and his family.

He was detained in London by the indisposition of his friend till the first day of the New Year.

In the midst of the College and University business which pressed upon him, on his return to Cambridge, Dr. Milner found time for an animated discussion, with a very able and learned correspondent, concerning certain disputed points of chronology: so true it is, that, as he himself used to say, “those who choose to do so, may find time enough for everything!” The correctness of the account given by Thucydides of a certain eclipse of the sun, visible at Athens, in his time, by means of which account (apparently, however, invalidated by more recent astronomical calculations) the dates of some important events were sought to be ascertained—was the matter under discussion.

This correspondence would be neither interesting nor intelligible to a great mass of readers; it is mentioned only as affording evidence, in addition to much which has been already adduced, of the active turn of Dean Milner’s mind.

The following characteristic passage respecting a young nobleman, to whom the Rev. William Mandell had agreed to become private tutor, occurs in a letter, dated, “February 21st,” from Dr. Milner, to that much esteemed friend.

* See *Life of Wilberforce*.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Don’t accuse me of being a troublesome correspondent, if I say again, that I am anxious to receive from you, an account, when you are likely to come; for this Lord —— is expecting to hear every day.

“I do not mean, nor ever did, to press you: but a young hand like him, will, perhaps, be anxious to know when he is to begin; more anxious, perhaps, than actually to begin, when it comes to it; and, probably, more anxious than to go on briskly.

“You may remember my story of the young man who got ready so many different Greek Testaments, some interleaved, &c. &c.—and, I forgot to mention, that he was never for beginning at the middle or end, but always on the Monday of a week.

“Yours always affectionately, I. M.”

Two days afterwards, Dr. Milner, anxious to bring this negociation to a conclusion, thus wrote again to the same gentleman.

“*Queen’s College Lodge,*

February 23, 1808.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“From my several letters, particularly from the last, which you had not received when you wrote yours, of this morning, you may, perhaps, have discerned, that I certainly rather wished no time to be lost—and this, not so much from anything that Lord —— had said, as from the knowledge which I seem to myself to have acquired, from experience, of the state of mind of persons in his situation. They intend to do a deal; there is an ardour about them at the moment; they would not lose an hour; they are sorry for the past; they mean to repair; and, of course, they grudge any delay.

“Too often, all this ends in vanity; and sometimes, in vexation too!

“Yours, dear Sir, always affectionately,

“ISAAC MILNER.

“P.S. As to * * * * * , you are

perfectly right in appearing to take no notice of the unpleasant disingenuousness of which you speak.

“There are a thousand things of this sort, in this present fragment of life, which it is far better to pass by, than to attempt to set right or mend.

“*To the Rev. William Mandell.*”

The following letter written on the occasion of the present Colonel T. P. Thompson’s going out, as Governor, to Sierra Leone, will be read with interest.

“TO THE REV. C. I. LATROBE.

“*Queen’s College Lodge,*

“*February 26, 1808.*

“DEAR SIR,

“The reason of my troubling you with a letter, is this.

“A very good friend of mine, and also, of our common excellent friend, Mr. Wilberforce, wishes to be introduced to you, and to have a little conversation with you, that might possibly lead to something of importance.

“To be brief, Mr. Thomas Thompson,—son of a gentleman of the same name, who is a banker at Hull, and partner with Messrs. Smith, Payne, and Smith, and who is also an M.P.—is likely to go out soon to Sierra Leone, and, as I suppose, in the capacity of Governor, upon Mr. Ludlam’s resignation.

“Mr. Thompson, the father, is a tried character, having been a truly religious man for many years. He is connected with the Methodists. The son has, of course, had a religious education, and either is, or will be, I trust, a religious character likewise, in due time; but religion, you know, is not hereditary. However, I believe, I do not go too far when I say, that Mr. Thompson, junior, will certainly favour all the rational attempts of religious people to spread Christianity, and to civilize barbarians. In this light, therefore, I venture to recommend Mr. Thompson to your notice, as a person on whom the Moravians might depend for help and support, and countenance, in all their laudable attempts, whether those attempts be on a small, or a larger scale. Even if one, or two, or three of your brethren, should have a mind to go with him

to explore those regions, I should think the opportunity a very favourable one.

“Mr. Wilberforce is Mr. Thompson’s warm friend, and does his utmost to forward his appointment; and I do assure you, that I shall feel greatly disappointed if Mr. Thompson, under the guidance and protection of a kind Providence, do not show himself both discreet and enterprising, and also very able in the execution of the plans which he has in view.

“A single word more.

“He thinks, and very justly too, that a few musical people, who would like an excursion of this sort, without requiring much pay, might prove very useful in promoting the general object of civilization among the Africans.

“I have desired Mr. Thompson to request you to fix a day and hour for his waiting upon you—or if you ever call on Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. T. is to be found at No. 9, Little College Street, Westminster: but the best way will be to fix, by writing, the time beforehand.

“I am, dear Sir, yours truly, and affectionately,

“I. MILNER.

“N. B. Mr. Thompson, in his note to me, in which he requests to be introduced to you, observes, very justly, ‘that the Moravian Missionaries have conducted themselves in a more rational, deliberate, and regular manner, than those of any other sect who have attempted Missions;’ and ‘their success’ he says, ‘has been answerable to their deserts.’”

About this time, Dr. Milner’s spirit, (to use an expression of his own,) was refreshed by a short visit from his friend Mr. Hey, of Leeds; a man of whom he was accustomed to say, that “conscientiousness and consistency,” were the “distinguishing features of his character.”

The Rev. William Richardson was now engaged in preparing for publication a second volume of the *Sermons* of Joseph Milner. Some of Mr. Richardson’s observations, with regard to these Sermons, are worthy of being preserved. A strain of shrewd humour, not very unlike that which appertained to his correspondent, characterizes the letters of this excellent man.

On the 25th of May, 1808, he thus writes to the Dean: "I wonder you should send me so many sermons that have been preached by F —— at * * * * , and so very lately. He will look queer, if he finds that any of his hearers remember that they have heard preached by him several of the sermons in the volume I am printing; but I could not help it.

"I have had a request from a Mr. G——, a Lincolnshire clergyman, known to your brother, for the loan of some of the manuscript sermons to preach to his congregation. He pleads bad health and nervous feelings of a miserable kind, which disqualify him from composing sermons, and begs hard to be indulged. I told him I would mention the matter to you and follow your direction, as the sermons were not mine to dispose of. I think you cannot do better with the residuum than to dispose of it among those parsons who want such helps. I did so with Mr. Adam's manuscripts, after I had selected as many as I thought it right to publish.

"I think the present volume will contain about thirty-three sermons; and as I have found it very difficult to select so many, so as to furnish the variety that the readers will expect, I am inclined to think that no more ought to be published.

"A person so zealous as your brother was, for the peculiar, distinguishing, doctrines of Christianity, must have them in every sermon, and thus, must make one sermon very like another. He took as large a range with his views as most men; and I know, supposed that he gave his congregation greater variety than many of his brethren; but certainly there is more of this variety in appearance than in reality; and so it must needs be with all of us that think as he did.

"You are very kind in your remembrance of me and mine. Perhaps you will think me altered for the worse, when you see me next. I hardly yet am able to walk upright, but hope that the warmth of summer will restore my perpendicularity.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your ever faithful and affectionate

"W. RICHARDSON.

"To the Rev. Dr. Milner, Dean of Carlisle."

On the 1st of June, Mr. Richardson writing again to the Dean, makes some excellent remarks on sermons in general, and on the second volume of Joseph Milner's *Sermons*, in particular.

"Those sermons," he writes, "that strike most at the time of delivery, are the least fit for publication, or general instruction; because that which gives them their peculiar interest and merit with the hearer, is some local or temporary circumstance which soon loses its importance, even with those that heard them.

"Some of your brother's courses of sermons, upon particular books of Scripture, I dare say, were useful; but I never have seen one of them that was complete and unbroken.

"There will be found in this volume, more of the characteristic blunt honesty and plainness of speech of the author, than in the first; for success has made me more audacious than I was, with the public, before I knew what it would bear.

"I am, certainly, very jealous of the literary reputation of my lamented friend, and afraid of hurting his honest fame. Besides, when one sits down to the task I have engaged in, it is to search for faults, and blemishes, and defects. I think a critic, by trade and profession, *must* be fastidious, and more apt to be displeased than pleased.

"I am sorry you get on so slowly with the *History*, and greatly fear that the excellent matter you have collected will not soon see the light.

"I wish you had more leisure and better health, to prosecute the task, as I think it of great importance.

"My wife unites with me in all manner of good wishes.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your ever faithful and affectionate

"W. RICHARDSON.

"P.S. Our new Archbishop is to make his public entry here on the 26th.

"*Rev. Dr. Milner.*"

The remarks made by Mr. Richardson in the foregoing letter, are in perfect accordance with the preface which he pre-

fixed to the second volume of the *Sermons* of the Rev. Joseph Milner: and the manner in which that volume was received by the religious public at large, as well as by Mr. Milner's surviving friends and hearers, completely justified the Dean's confident anticipations of its success.

With respect to the last point touched upon by the excellent writer of the above letter—the slowness of Dr. Milner's progress, in the continuation of the *Ecclesiastical History*—although there was indeed, abundant reason to apprehend, that in consequence of the Dean's precarious health, and many and various important avocations, his progress must be slow; yet so sedulously had he laboured, that the fifth volume of the *History* was at this time in the press; and the Dean was now occupied in preparing for publication the concluding volume of his brother's works*, containing his *Answer to Gibbon*, *Essays on Religious Subjects*, *Life of Howard*, *Observations on Sir Isaac Newton's Chronology*, &c., &c.

The time, however, had now arrived for his attendance at the June meeting of the Board of Longitude; and that meeting over, he set out upon his summer's journey to Carlisle, where his residence seems, this year, to have been less tranquil than usual.

He thus writes to Mr. Mandell.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“*Deanery, 1803.*

“What a bustle do I live in! One thing after another keeps rising day by day, to keep me at work; and yet, my account, when summed up, would be, I fear, but an indifferent one.

“I have been aiming to write to you a line from the day that I received yours; but some job or other contrives to defeat my purpose.

“It is now the Assizes here; and I am to preach to-morrow.

“Dining with our new Bishop—meeting and visiting the Judges—dining with them—also with the Grand Jury—visits from all the grandees of the county—hour after hour—most vain conversation!!!

* Now published as Volume VIII. of MILNER'S *Works*.

“I hope you have comfort in the discharge of your clerical duties.

“Whatever you do else, continue *them* faithfully, and you will be useful and happy. We must have some serious conversation when we meet.

“Yours ever affectionately, I. M.
“*To the Rev. Mr. Mandell.*”

It so happened that Dr. Buchanan, accompanied by his two daughters, paid a visit to the Dean just in time to hear the Assize Sermon, alluded to in the foregoing letter. He thus speaks of it in a letter, dated, “Glasgow, 28th of September, 1808*.” We arrived here on the 20th instant.” * * * * *
“We stopped on Sunday at Carlisle. The Dean of Carlisle, with whom we dined, lifted up his voice against the races for the first time. He had long been oppressed in spirit on the subject; and he devoted his last day of preaching this season to the consideration of it. The Cathedral was crowded, and he preached the word with great energy and eloquence.”

It was not Dean Milner’s habit to preach against particular practices, even though he thought them evil practices. To do so, he used to say, was “to act as injudiciously as a physician would do, who should attack the symptom instead of the disease. Let but the heart,” he would say, “be right with God, and no difficulty will be felt about a vast number of questions, concerning which much discussion is sometimes raised.”

There were, however, two public amusements, against which he did, occasionally, “lift up his voice.” These were races and theatrical entertainments.

It is perfectly needless to say, when speaking of the sentiments of such a man as Dean Milner, that he did not object either to the Race-course or the Play-house, upon the score of there being, necessarily, any sin in the simple act of witnessing either a trial of swiftness between different horses, or a theatrical representation. It was, in both cases, the attendant

* See *Memoirs of Dr. Buchanan.*

circumstances which he deprecated: and on this point, his mind was fully made up. He used to call the race-course a “sink of iniquity,” and was equally well convinced of the evils necessarily resulting from the whole system of theatrical entertainments.

His sentiments on this latter subject may be gathered from the following extract from a letter, which he wrote from Borough Bridge, on his return to Cambridge from Carlisle; at which place he had, during the preceding summer, taken occasion, on the last two Sundays of his residence there, to oppose, from the Cathedral pulpit, the erection of a theatre.

“And now, dear Sir, a single word respecting the proposed play-house.

“It is not my practice to deal much in compliments; and, therefore, without intending anything of that sort, I do sincerely assure you, that I look upon it as a proof of your candour, that you have put yourself in the way of listening, on two Sundays, to what I had to say on the subject of plays and play-houses. Indeed, the circumstance gave me much pleasure at the time, and I aimed to have shaken you by the hand, and told you so; but I know not how I lost you in the crowd on Sunday last. The pleasure which I then felt, and which I still feel on the recollection, would be not a little increased if I should find it to be true, as has been hinted, that, besides yourself, you brought some of your female near relatives to hear the same discourse.

“This openness of disposition appears so favourable, that I am encouraged to hope that you will forgive me, if I add, briefly, as follows:—My dear ——, you are now, as well as myself, past the middle of a very long life; and, therefore, we should neither of us be ashamed of correcting, by after-thought and reflection, any hasty steps which we may have taken. It may, possibly, give you infinite pleasure in the decline of your life, to reflect that you paused a little in this business. Therefore do so pause. No possible harm can arise from a little delay: and as you are said to be a leader in bringing forward the plan, your influence will, I doubt not, be effectual in

preventing haste and precipitation in others; provided only that you be inclined to think, that my arguments deserve some consideration. I know so much of the sentiments of our common friend, Dr. Jowett, on this head, that I am sure he will rejoice to hear, that any pupil of his rather opposed than forwarded the erection of play-houses. I hope to see him in two or three days.

“Not a creature knows of my having written a single line to you on this subject.

“I remain, dear Sir, &c., &c.

“*Borough Bridge, September 28.*”

Considerable censure has been in certain quarters, with much illiberality, cast upon the Dean, or his memory, in consequence of the interest which he avowedly took in private exhibitions of personal strength or activity, such as horsemanship, &c., or manual dexterity, such as sleight of hand. He made no secret of the fact, that he liked to witness such performances, and used to maintain, that the obvious tendency of feats of legerdemain to excite in the spectator a degree of distrust in the apparent evidence of his senses, was highly salutary; and more especially so in the case of young persons. I remember more than one occasion on which he collected a party of his friends to witness the feats of a juggler, whom he had engaged to exhibit his skill in the dining-room at Queen's Lodge: and I remember his joining a party who were to attend upon the private morning performance of a professor of the equestrian art.

It must be considered, however, that Dr. Milner was not a man likely, in these or any other matters, to shape his conduct by the opinions of others, or by any rule except his own conviction concerning right and wrong. *Buy-bears*, we have already seen, that he despised. As to the rest, every candid person must perceive a well-marked line of distinction between the amusements which he condemned and those of which, it is admitted, that he sometimes partook with undisguised satisfaction. But were this otherwise, the duty of a biographer would be to state the truth.

On his road from Carlisle, Dean Milner visited his friends both at York and at Hull, at which latter place he preached more than once at St. John's church.

Being detained at Hull somewhat longer than he had expected, he thus wrote from thence to the Tutor of Queen's College.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“*Hull, October 10, 1808.*

“My room has not been empty all the morning for any time at all. People began to call before I had eaten my breakfast, and I have, at this moment, four persons talking in my hearing. A pretty situation in which to give advice about lectures!

“The Greek books in which I used to lecture were these:—

“PROSE. Xenophon's Memorab., as an easy book for pupils who know any Greek at all; then Demosthen. Orations, as a harder; Longinus, as still harder, and affording, to the lecturer, a deal to say.

“VERSE. I used Euripides and Sophocles: in Latin, select parts of Livy, particularly the Second Punic War.

“IN MORALS, Locke's Essay is indispensable.

“In general, I always found it better to begin the term with the easier books, so as to sweep in as many of the pupils as possible. Nothing can be more disagreeable as to have one's youths sitting by one, and doing nothing.

“As I hope to see you so soon, I need not say more at present.

“Believe me yours affectionately, I. M.

“*To the Rev. W. Mandell.*”

Within another week Dr. Milner was again settled at Cambridge; and either his habits of evening study, or some other circumstances, directed his thoughts towards the various contrivances for supplying artificial light. Candles were, of course, out of the question; and among lamps, he had never met with one that entirely satisfied him; the light was never sufficiently shaded from the eyes of the student, and concen-

trated upon his book. The Dean, therefore, determined to invent a lamp for his own use, and did so. The first which was made proved defective in various points; but the inventor was thoroughly fond of mechanical pursuits, and he altered and improved his lamp until it seemed as perfect as such an implement could well be. The light was shaded from the reader's eyes; it was thrown strongly upon the paper before him; there was neither shadow nor smoke; and, finally, the trimming and adjusting gave no trouble worth mentioning. In fact, this lamp was a decided "hobby-horse."

It is not, however, to be supposed, that its excellencies existed only in the imagination of the inventor. It was really a clever lamp, and became a great favourite with reading men; insomuch that the Dean's servant, to whom he abandoned all the profits of the invention, carried on, during several years, a most profitable trade in the University and elsewhere; selling many scores of these reading lamps, which were made of various materials, and with various degrees of ornament, so as to suit the taste or the convenience of all classes of purchasers. Among the principal admirers and patrons of this invention, was the late Dr. Edward Daniel Clarke, the Professor of Mineralogy. With his characteristic enthusiasm,—a quality which, among many others, rendered his society delightful to all who knew him,—he declared in writing, that "Dr. Milner's lamp had added very materially to the comfort of his life."

Dr. Milner, during this winter, was engaged, when not occupied by College or other business, in putting the finishing touches to the eighth volume of the edition of *Milner's Works*, then in the press. In this edition, the volume of *Sermons* by Joseph Milner, prepared for publication by Mr. Richardson, and at this time in the course of printing, was included; as was also the fifth volume of the *History of the Church of Christ*, of which little, besides the preface, now remained unfinished.

The meeting of the Board of Longitude, calling Dean Milner to London in the first week of December, he, for the first time, took up his abode at Kensington Gore, where Mr.

Wilberforce had just established his family; and, ever disposed to view the ordinary occurrences of life on the sunny side, he suggested to his friend, who regretted his departure from his late residence, an incidental advantage arising from this removal. With honest and judicious friendship, he pointed out to him “a danger in living altogether at Clapham,—danger of conceit and spiritual pride, and a cold, critical spirit.” He considered his friend to be better guarded against these evils, than many other persons might be; but still he thought the “danger great.” The cordial manner in which this suggestion was received by Mr. Wilberforce proved, that these excellent friends were worthy of each other.

I have not yet mentioned a gentleman who possessed a large share of Dr. Milner’s regard,—the late Rev. Thomas Kerrich, of Magdalen College. With Mr. Kerrich, Dr. Milner, who was his junior by three years, had lived in habits of familiar intercourse during the whole of his residence in the University. Although dissimilar in character, these long-trying associates thoroughly enjoyed each other’s society. They each possessed a mass of various knowledge, and their points of difference in pursuits and in taste, rather tended to add a zest to their intercourse.

It is scarcely necessary to say, that as a painter, and especially a painter of portraits, Mr. Kerrich possessed very uncommon powers. His talent of producing a really strong and characteristic likeness has perhaps been seldom equalled: Witness his portraits of Dr. Glynn, Dr. Waring, Dr. Pearce, and Dr. Milner himself; all which have been engraved.

But besides his powers as an artist, this gentleman was exceedingly fond of whatever appertained to the philosophy of light and colours, or to the more abstruse and mathematical parts of the science of design; and these subjects furnished inexhaustible sources of conversation and discussion in his interviews with Dr. Milner; and if on some of these topics the superior knowledge were on the side of the Dean, there were others, such as anatomy, architecture, antiquities, &c. &c., concerning which his friend had decidedly the advantage. Mr. Kerrich was the “ingenious and philosophical friend,” who

could "paint very well," and who was "an excellent judge of colours," mentioned by Dr. Milner in a letter to Mr. Wilberforce "on the theory of colours and shadows*," afterwards published by Repton in his book on *Landscape Gardening*.

The following note, which, with others of a similar kind, and many of a more important character, has been kindly placed at my disposal by the Rev. Richard Edward Kerrich, may serve to indicate the nature of the easy and unceremonious intimacy which subsisted between these old friends.

" Queen's Lodge, December 31st, 1808,

"DEAR SIR,

Saturday night.

" Sir William Wynne, with Dr. Jowett, and five or six others, drink their tea with me to-morrow; and it has occurred to me, that you may like to meet the grave Knight, &c. &c.

" If so, I shall be glad to see you by about half-past six, or a quarter before seven at farthest.

" Respond.

" Yours, I. MILNER.

" *Rev. Mr. Kerrich.*"

Very pleasant were such tea-parties; but they were of rare occurrence. Dr. Milner, at least with his old and intimate friends, greatly preferred a quiet and perfectly unceremonious *tête-à-tête*. A *tête-à-tête* indeed, I ought not in strictness to call it, having been myself, from my childhood upwards, permitted to be present on such occasion. Dr. Jowett, as it has been already intimated, spent at Queen's Lodge every Thursday and Sunday evening, coming to supper at half-past nine,

* This letter was communicated by Mr. Wilberforce to Mr. Repton, with the following remark: "He" (the writer) "is a man unequalled for the store of knowledge he possesses, for the clearness with which he views, and the happy perspicuity with which he communicates his perceptions." It ought not, however, to have been published without the writer's privity; and Dr. Milner felt that he ought to have been allowed the opportunity of revising a private letter on a scientific subject, previously to that letter's being made public.

remaining till half-past eleven or twelve; Mr. Kerrieh generally came to tea, coming as early as half-past five, and going at nine or ten. There were no fixed days for his visits, but both parties enjoyed these evening conversations, which were always lively and interesting; and meeting with mutual pleasure, they met frequently. The dissolution of friendships, cemented like these by time and long habit, is one of the severest calamities incident to the decline of life.

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