

Entre Nous.

Recent Biography.

James Hutchison Stirling.

WITH commendable piety and with consummate ability Miss Amelia Hutchison Stirling has written the biography of her father—*James Hutchison Stirling* (Fisher Unwin; 10s. 6d. net). It is a current impression that Dr. Hutchison Stirling's talents never found opportunity for their exercise. That impression is not removed by the biography. But it is made very clear that only in the matter of public office was the opportunity denied him. And what he lost in that way was made up, and more than made up, by the recognition of his friends and home. To have gained and held the adoration of a daughter, herself so able and energetic, is recognition which many a man would esteem above all office or emolument.

The child was father of the man. 'A little anecdote which he was often heard to relate would seem to show that, even at nine or ten, the future philosopher had within him that spirit of faith, which, later, he regarded as part of his mission to endeavour to reawaken in the minds of thinkers who were still under the influence of the eighteenth-century sceptical enlightenment. It happened, one evening, that he was very anxious to accompany his brother David, who was some ten years older than himself, to some place of entertainment, and being refused permission, he determined to go without it. So when his brother set out from the house, James slipped out after him, shut the door, took the key with him, and eagerly followed. It was a dark evening, and the boy found it by no means easy to keep in sight the figure of his brother, whose longer strides bore him rapidly through the streets, which were no doubt but dimly lighted in those days of the infancy of gas-illumination. Absorbed in his one object, he forgot everything else, till, suddenly—he knew not how or why—the thought of the house-key flashed into his brain, and he found it was gone! The shock of this alarming discovery brought his steps, and even his heart, as it seemed, to a sudden stop. For a moment or two he stood paralyzed; then, with the spontaneity of instinct, he turned to the only power that could help—in the agony of his mind, he prayed to God to help

him to find the key. Retracing his steps for a few yards, he stopped, and his fingers, groping over the pavement in the dark, closed on something hard and cold. It was the lost key!

'How profound was the impression left on the mind of the philosopher by this incident is proved by the fact that he alludes to it in a letter written in 1904—seventy-four years after it took place!—remarking that the experience "acted as focus to what I say of prayer in the *Secret of Hegel*—Prayer must be believed, as it were, to stay the arm that sways the universe." It was no doubt present to him, too, when, in 1877, he concluded that strange poem which contains the summary of his philosophy (*I am that I am*) with these lines:—

Brute is the world in externality,
And blind, still stumbling in contingency;
But I, even I, am Lord: I will control
The monstrous masses, as they wheel, and
check
Them there, and smooth the pillow for thy
head—
Make thou thyself but mine—but me—in Prayer.'

That is a long quotation. It will make many more words superfluous. Let it be understood simply that while the life itself is recorded with generous fulness and with frank loyalty, the biographer has done us the further service of showing what were the grounds upon which so high an estimate was formed of Dr. Stirling's work, and especially of his great book *The Secret of Hegel*. The biography is never used for the discussion of philosophy. The chapter on *The Secret of Hegel* offers even to the uninitiated an entrance into the 'Secret,' but it does this while fulfilling part of the purpose of the biography.

Bishop Ernest Wilberforce.

The Life of the Right Rev. Ernest Roland Wilberforce, First Bishop of Newcastle-on-Tyne, and afterward Bishop of Chichester—such is the full title which Mr. J. B. Atlay has given to his life of Bishop Ernest Wilberforce (Smith, Elder, & Co.; 10s. 6d. net). Mr. Atlay is the author of a Memoir of Sir Henry Acland and other biographical books, so that he knows how to write biography, and he

has written this biography well. He maintains a steady level of excellence throughout. If he never rises to the very highest height of passionate devotion, he certainly never descends to any depth of bathos or bad taste. And his accomplishment is the more meritorious that it is manifest he had extremely little material to work upon. Bishop Ernest Wilberforce kept no diary; he was in far too great a hurry all his life to be a letter writer; and with the single exception of temperance there was no great public cause with which he was prominently identified. Nevertheless, the biography was worth writing, and it has been, as we said, thoroughly well written.

If Bishop Ernest Wilberforce had not the intellectual range of his father, Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, he had something of more consequence than that—concentration of will and transparency of motive. It was sometimes said that he lived to show that a Wilberforce could have another aim in life than to be ‘all things to all men,’ and that consequently he was not so careful to avoid the ‘entrance into a quarrel’ as he might have been. But if he had his enemies, and more of them than he need have had, he had friends not a few who ‘grappled him to their soul with hooks of steel.’

The home life of such a man is sure to be a beautiful one, and there is nothing finer in the book, or indeed in anything that we have seen in recent biography, than this letter which was written by one of his boys while at school in Winchester:

‘MY DARLING FATHER,—Thank you very much for your letter . . . I wish you hadn’t been so terribly busy last holidays, for I don’t seem to have seen anything of you all the time, but next holidays we will make up for it; and in the meanwhile I want *you* to take a little holiday. I couldn’t help noticing when I was at home, that you didn’t seem at all well and that you hadn’t got properly strong again from that horrid influenza; and I am sure that the only way to get properly well is to go away for a bit on a sea voyage or some other little trip. I know how every one is bothering you to do so, and how unpleasant the idea of it is to you, who don’t like giving in to anything, least of all, to doctors and suchlike. . . . I know what a strong will and what indomitable pluck you have, and how you love to stand up against anything, however strong it is, and that in the end you generally over-

come all difficulties; but influenza is no common kind of illness; it affects the strongest men most and leaves them weaker than those who are naturally weak.

‘Do forgive me writing in this fatherly way to you—but I do it out of my own love to you, my darling Father, and out of love for Mother, for I don’t think you can tell how sad she is at your being so unwell. I know this is all stale advice that I have written, for so many men, and all of them knowing so much more than I do, have told you just the same thing; but, as they have so far failed, I thought that I would try and persuade you, and I hope and pray I may not have written in vain. Don’t be angry with me for writing this letter, but do think it over seriously, and I pray God that you may think it right to take a good rest. And now good-bye, darling Father, with very much love.—Ever your devoted son, ROLAND.

‘P.S.—I put “private” at the beginning as I thought you would like to read it through by yourself first.’

John Wesley's Journal.

The third volume of the standard edition of *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* (Kelly), is not behind the previous two in human interest. And, again, not a little of the interest is found in the footnotes. There we read the story of Grace Murray, the impulsive interference of his brother Charles, who protested, ‘All our preachers would leave us, all our societies disperse,’ if John married ‘so mean a woman’; her marriage to Bennet; John Wesley’s distress when the news was brought to him, ‘but I could not shed a tear’; and then the reconciliation with Charles. ‘Too late,’ says the footnote, ‘Charles Wesley discovered that he had persuaded John Bennet to marry his brother’s betrothed fiancée and had led Grace to believe that “the important person” who had steadfastly loved her for ten years had actually expressed the wish that, for the sake of the work of God, she would marry another. It was indeed,’ continues the editor, ‘not a “Comedy,” but a “Tragedy of Errors.” The marriage of Grace Murray, either with Bennet or Wesley, was, *per se*, a matter of small moment compared with a breach between John and Charles Wesley, which must, at that critical period have either rent the Methodist Society in twain, or, more probably, scattered it to the winds. The disaster was averted by the

tact and tenderness of George Whitefield and John Nelson, and by John Wesley's extraordinary self-control and charity.'

The volume covers the period of activity from 1742 to 1751.

George Fox's Journal.

From the Cambridge Press has been issued a new edition of *The Journal of George Fox* (2 vols., 21s. net). It is a handsome book; a book which, outwardly at any rate, neither the University of Cambridge nor the Society of Friends need be ashamed of. But more than that, it is at last an edition of the Journal which has been called for by the modern demand for unprejudiced accuracy and which is worthy to be placed beside the great standard edition of Wesley's Journal. It is a satisfaction to know that editions of both these great works have been produced (or are being produced, for Wesley's Journal is not complete yet) in our day with the sole object of reaching the truth and setting down everything as it is known, without favour and without fear.

The editor of the Journal is Mr. Norman Penny, F.S.A., who is editor of the Journal of the Friends' Historical Society, and librarian of the Friends' Reference Library, Devonshire House. His position gives him quite unique opportunities for discovering the best text of the Journal and for writing the most useful notes on it, and he has used his opportunities with judgment and discrimination. Nor has he been reluctant to call to his assistance other historians of Quakerism, such as Mr. W. C. Braithwaite of Banbury. This edition of the Journal is accepted by the Society of Friends as the standard edition to which all writing on Quakerism must henceforth refer.

Booker T. Washington.

If ever a man had a mission Mr. Booker T. Washington has it, and if ever a man deserved to succeed in his mission it is the same man. His new book is a sort of biography; its title is *My Larger Education* (Hodder & Stoughton; 6s.). But like all the rest of his books it has been written for the purpose of healing the breach between Black and White, and it is written in so conciliatory and yet so manly a spirit that it surely cannot fail to make some impression in that direction. Mr. Washington is as earnest as the Apostle Paul, and just because of his earnestness

he is as ready to become all things to all men. He has a chapter entitled 'My Experience with Reporters and Newspapers,' in which, an enemy might say, he pats the reporter on the back for his own purposes. But the saying would be untrue. Every word in it is straightforward, truthful, and in good taste.

Hudson Taylor.

We have no right to say of any man that it would have been better if he had never been born. Only One had that right. But of many a man's biography we could say it would have been better if it had not been written. Shall we say this of the biography of Hudson Taylor? The man was so supremely great that only the greatest kind of biography could be satisfactory. And his greatness was of goodness, the highest and the most difficult to describe.

But Hudson Taylor left a son, able and willing. That son married a wife able and willing as himself. And the biography we have of Hudson Taylor, written by Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor, is one of the most lifelike and therefore greatest biographies that have been published for many a year. The whole life's history is not in it. Its title is *Hudson Taylor in Early Years* (Morgan & Scott; 7s. 6d.). The rest will follow. It was a good plan to give the biography in parts. Two or three great volumes coming out at once would have frightened half the readers who will read this book and wait anxiously for its successor.

We are receiving from the Bollandists every now and then a new volume of the 'Acta Sanctorum.' There is a larger Acts of the Saints being acted and described, and this is a volume of it. We sometimes wonder if Christ could countenance the deeds that are attributed to some 'saints'; this saint seems to our modern apprehension to be wholly after the mind of Christ. Even in his early years, do we not see that Christ was formed in him his hope of glory?

G. W. E. Russell.

The Right Hon. George W. E. Russell has been for some time—not in his dotage, no, by no means, but in his anecdote. His latest book he calls *Afterthoughts* (Grant Richards; 7s. 6d. net). It is a book to pick up as you might pick up some frivolous volume of fiction when the day's work is over. It is the easiest of easy reading—remini-

sciences that are restful, that require no effort to understand, and that furnish no untimely excitement. There is one rousing chapter, and fortunately it is found near the beginning. It is the chapter on Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe. At every stage of her struggle against the greatest of human abominations, says Mr. Russell, Mrs. Stowe was nobly backed by her brother, Henry Ward Beecher. In 1856 the great preacher gave in his church at Plymouth an object-lesson in Slavery, not soon forgotten by those who witnessed it.

'The solemn, impressive silence of that vast congregation was absolutely painful when a young woman slowly ascended the stairs leading to the pulpit. Instantly assuming the look and manner of a slave-auctioneer, the minister called for bids. "Look," he exclaimed, "at this marketable commodity—human flesh and blood like yourselves. You see the white blood of her father in her regular features and high, thoughtful brow. Who bids? Look at her trim figure and her wavy hair—how much do you bid for them? She is sound in wind and limb. I'll warrant her. Who bids? Her feet and hands are small and finely formed. What do you bid for her? She is a Christian woman—I mean 'a praying nigger'—and that makes her more valuable, because it ensures her docility and obedience to your wishes. 'Servants, obey your masters,' you know. Well, she believes in that doctrine. How much for her? Will you allow this praying woman to be sent back to Richmond to meet the fate for which her father sold her? If not, who bids? Who bids?'"

'The congregation was wrought to the highest pitch of excitement. Some one laid a bank-note at the preacher's feet. Then the collecting plates were passed round, and money and jewellery poured into them. Women took off their bracelets and rings, and men unfastened their watches. From time to time Beecher's voice rang out, "In the name of Christ, Christian men and women, how much do you bid?"

'The congregation was stirred beyond description, and a well-known merchant rose in his place and said that, whatever deficiency in the price demanded remained when the collection was counted up, it would be made good by himself and his friends. "Then you are free," said Beecher, turning to the girl beside him, and the pent-up emotion of the audience found vent in sobs.'

The Great Text Commentary.

The best illustrations this month have been found by the Rev. H. D. Waller, Flushing, N.Y., and the Rev. W. B. Hoult, M.A., B.D., Rawtenstall, Manchester.

Illustrations for the Great Text for May must be received by the 1st of April. The text is Is 40⁶⁻⁸.

The Great Text for June is Is 53¹⁻²—'Who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.' A copy of Agnew's *Life's Christ Places*, or any volume of the 'Scholar as Preacher' series, or of the 'Great Texts of the Bible,' will be given for the best illustration sent.

The Great Text for July is Ro 1³⁻⁴—'Concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord.' A copy of MacCulloch's *The Religion of the Ancient Celts*, or of Curtis's *A History of Creeds and Confessions*, will be given for the best illustration sent.

The Great Text for August is 2 Ch 25²—'He did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart'; along with 2 Ch 31²¹—'He did it with all his heart, and prospered.' A copy of Dykes' *The Christian Minister and his Duties*, or of Farnell's *Greece and Babylon*, will be given for the best illustration sent.

The Great Text for September is 1 Co 4⁶—'Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God.' A copy of Farnell's *Greece and Babylon*, or of any volume of the 'Scholar as Preacher' series, will be given for the best illustration sent.

Those who send illustrations should at the same time name the books they wish sent them if successful. Illustrations to be sent to the Editor, Kings Gate, Aberdeen, Scotland.