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ART. I.—HENRY COOKE, D. D., AND ARIANISM IN
THE IRISH CHURCH.*

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DR. HENRY COOKE, the greatest orator and controversialist, and, in many respects, the greatest man which the Irish Presbyterian Church has produced for the last two hundred years, was born in the year 1788, in the farm-house of Grillagh, near Maghera, in Londonderry County. His ancestors were men of true nobility, although of lowly birth. His father, John Cooke, was descended from an English Puritan family, which settled in the North of Ireland in the seventeenth century, and therefore from the same stock as the God-fearing, peace-loving men whose memory still survives in New England homes. His mother was of Scotch descent, and could point with pride to her Covenanting forefathers, who in defence of the truth faced danger and death on their native hills. Of John Cooke we know little. He was a plain, honest farmer, "with little learning and less pretence." Mrs. Cooke was a very superior woman, and those who assert that all remarkable men have had remarkable mothers might refer to her as illustrating the truth of their theory. She possessed intellectual powers of a high order, and had received an excellent education. She

* The Life and Times of Henry Cooke, D.D., LL.D., President of Assembly's College, Belfast. By his son-in-law, J. L. Porter, D.D., LL.D., Professor of Biblical Criticism, Assembly's College, Belfast. London: John Murray, 1871.

so far as the guardianship of the faith is concerned, in which such a measure can be passed without full preparation for it, without any representation of the churches elected with special reference to it, and without its being submitted to them in any regular and constitutional form for their approval or dissent?

ART. X.—MASSON'S LIFE OF JOHN MILTON.*

By E. H. GILLETT, D. D., Professor in the University of New York.

It is more than ten years since the first volume of Prof. Masson's *Life of Milton* was published, and it is not strange that the author should feel it incumbent upon him to state the reasons for the delay in the appearance of the second. They are, in substance, not only the amount of labor required in its preparation, but the somewhat limited patronage which was extended to the first.

This apparent lack of appreciation, however, is due, not to any want of diligence on the part of Prof. Masson, but rather, we presume, to the plan on which his work is constructed. He has overloaded it with matter which does not very directly connect itself with Milton's life, and the introduction of which, although often of great interest in itself, seems to break the continuity of that narrative of personal relations which is one of the charms of biography.

In this second volume he has repeated the mistakes—faults or merits, according to the stand-point of the critic—of the first. He gives us, at what many who are familiar with the political history of the times will consider an unnecessary length, the history of Laud's blundering attempt, in conjunction with his royal master, to impose the Prayer-book on Presbyterian Scotland. Somewhat more pertinently he sets forth quite minutely the successive phases of the Episcopal controversy in England, in which Milton, as the antagonist of Bishop Hall, and the vindicator of "Smectymnus," took such a prominent part. The historical material which is thus introduced is not without its value, but it renders the work cumbrous, and divides the interest which a skilful biographer aims to concentrate upon this subject.

As an offset to this, Prof. Masson has manifested a tireless if not enthusiastic zeal in gathering up all accessible materials for illustrating the successive phases of Milton's life. For instance, he has brought forward, as they have never been presented before, the incidents connected with Mil-

* *The Life of John Milton: Narrated in Connection with the Political, Ecclesiastical, and Literary History of his Times*, by David Masson, M.A., LL.D., Professor in the University of Edinburgh. Vol. II., 1638-1643. London and New York: Macmillan & Co., 1871.

ton's marriage, and the circumstances of his wife's family. On other points he has labored with patient investigation to settle doubts or clear up obscurities, and a marginal note on the style of penmanship of many of Milton's distinguished contemporaries, as this came under his eye in the voluminous correspondence he has perused, indicates the keen observation that would allow nothing even of incidental importance to escape his notice.

And yet on one point we confess that we have been disappointed. There are writings of Milton, still extant, which belong to the period covered by this volume, of which Prof. Masson has made no use or mention. We are more surprised at this from the fact that he has felt it incumbent upon himself to explain how Milton, who never entered the army, employed himself after the opening scenes of the civil war. He has some suggestions that would be very pertinent, as well as indicative of critical sagacity, if the simple facts of the case themselves did not obviate the necessity of such suggestions altogether.

For instance, Lowndes gives in his list of Milton's writings, the title of a pamphlet which bears on its title page, "By J. M.," published in 1642, and which is designated as "A Reply to the Answer (printed by his Majesty's command at Oxford) to a printed book Intituled Observations upon some of his Majesty's late Answers and Expresses." An examination of this closely printed 4to pamphlet, which contains the matter of a fair sized modern 12mo volume, will satisfy any competent judge that its authorship belongs to none other than Milton. The involved style, with frequent parentheses, the Latin idioms and phrases, the structure of the argument, corresponding exactly to that of Milton's pamphlet of the previous year, "Animadversions on the Remonstrant's Defence," etc., the views and principles maintained, as well as these occasional sublimities of thought and beauties of expression which betray the classic finish of Milton's pen—all compel the belief that Lowndes was right in supposing that in 1642 England had no other "J. M." but John Milton who could have given the world such a production as this.

Its title, moreover, suggests the query, whether the original work, of which this is the vindication, was not also Milton's production. True, he was the volunteer champion of "Smectymnuus," and of course the fact that he came forward in vindication of others is frankly avowed. But, in this case, there is no mention of any other author whom Milton designs to cover with his shield. Of course, if in the opening period of the civil war, he was busy with his pen producing such works as "Observations upon some of his Majesty's late Answers and Expresses," and "A Reply to the Answer," etc, there is no necessity of asking why Milton, as an accomplished swordsman, did not follow the example of Hampden, and seek on the battle-field the opportunity to maintain by arms the authority of the Parliament. He was training himself by the exercise of his controversial

and diplomatic skill for that part which a few years later he so illustriously occupied as Cromwell's Foreign Secretary.

We have seant room for extracts from the pamphlet above referred to, but we cannot withhold a passage which seems to illnstrate the spirit in which it is conceived. The author says :

"I confesse this is a point more fit to be decided by a Divine than a Lawyer, but tis not frequent for me to trespasse upon another man's profession; therefore give me leave a little, that our author may not pass unanswerd to speake my thoughts in this pertieular. Now with the favour of the Author (if my judgment fails me not) there is a wide differenee, as to our ease, betweene lay and Eeelesiastieal Counsells. For I take this for a certain and clear truth in divinity, that no Eeelesiastieal Counsell whatsoever (be it of never so great ability and emineny) can oblgie the conscience of a man by their decisions or determinations; for that the conscience of a mau is (if I may so speake) out of their jurisdiction; tis God alone that hath power over that. Besides, he that opposes the dietates of conscience sins against God." P. 35.

In the course of the next year (1643), another pamphlet appeared under the title: "A Sovereign Salve to Cure the Blind, or, a Vindication of the Power and Privileges claimed or executed by the Lords and Commons in Parliament, etc." This pamphlet bears indubitable marks of having proceeded from the same source with its predecessor, although it is not mentioned by Lowndes. We meet on its title page the already familiar initials, which are also found on several other of Milton's acknowledged pamphlets. Here, however, we have a hint of the growing fame of the author, and the increasing respect to which these initials were entitled, for this pamphlet is by "J. M., *Esquire*." In this the reader cannot mistake the manifest features of Milton's style, a style peculiar to himself, and which few in his day or since could, even if disposed, successfully counterfeit. For instance, take the following passages in which the antagonist of Bishop Hall, and the champion of the "Liberty of unlicensed printing," vindicates his identity. He opens his pamphlet with the following paragraph :

"So many excellent Treatises have been sent abroad to unblind the hood-winkt world, and all clearing this truth, (*that the Parliament is and ought to be Supreme Judge*) might make this seem needless, but as for a sturdy sore, many plaisters are but sufficient; so will it not be misspent time by the clear demonstrations of truth and right reason to beat down that wall of the too-much-loved-ignorance which hitherto hath kept the divine light of the truth from entering into the dark, and therefore miserable, souls of these deluded ones, who with so much earnestnesse lay out their estate, expose their families to a thousand miseries, nay, spend even their dearest blood to inslave themselves and posterity. Love and duty to religion and my country, now flaming with the fire these men have kindled, and yet give fuele to, yea, even pity to these men hath inforced a pen ever before still, to expose itself to public censure, and if by this poor labour of mine any of

these ignorantly erring men may be reduced, I have my end; as for those who enraged with malice willingly oppose the truth, God hath provided her another champion, even the sword, to vindicate herself from the violence of those men on whom the power of reason hath no effect."

The reader of "Paradise Lost," will be interested in the following passage :

"Doth the Parliament anything but disenable a prince, or rather those about him, from doing ill, or more properly from usurping such power; which to what end it is in a good Prince, which he will or can never reduce to act or use; but the false and pretended mother of the childe, who would have it divided (whom the wisdom of the king may discern) will whisper, there is no thanks or glory to do good. unless he might have done evil, and so did good freely; since free will only merits (I believe they hold merits) it seems these malignants fetched not this doctrine from heaven; for then we may fide that confirmation in the angels and blessed spirits of just men, whereby compleat free will, or the remains of it, which free will argues. but imperfection and mutabilitie; power to sin being but impotency, and the King of Kings, God himselfe, who is perfection itselfe, being above and without all power or possibilitie of doing any evil, yet (rather therefore I should say omnipotent in and for good) that confirmation in grace, I say, by which free will is transfigured and sublimed into a state divine; and *posse non peccare* into *non posse peccare*, is a transcendent blessing, if not the very essence of celestiale beatitude."

The peroration of Milton's Plea in vindication of the rights of Parliament, is in a strain for which no contemporary productions perhaps but his own furnish a parallel. Of this, characterized by a lofty indignation against England's "man-wolves," the malignants, we give the closing sentences :

"I conclude this discourse, wherein I have spoken my heart, which nothing but a lively and dear apprehension of the imminent and extreme danger of my country, forced from so unfit a man; raising so violent but natural and just a passion, as broke the strings of a tongue ever before tyed, (and perhaps ever fit to have been, you may say) like that son of *Cræsus*. who before, or born dumbe, yet seeing his father in the very point of being slain, so natural a passion supplying the place and power of nature. or rather stronger than it, forcing and clearing all impediments, turning dumbness itself into a strong vociferation, he cried out aloud, O man, kill not *Cræsus*. and so notifying him saved him. I need not fear you think so well of me, as that you would not remember that a similitude doth not hold throughout, and to the last, should I not put you in mind solemnly it doth not."

It may not be amiss to remark that of the numerous separate pamphlets of about this date, that are acknowledged to be Milton's, and which are contained in his collected works, there is no uniformity in the title page. Two of them, for instance, are simply anonymous. Two, or perhaps more, bear the initials of the author, as "J. M." While on others,

Milton's name is printed in full. The pamphlets, moreover, had diverse printers, now one, and again another being selected as the medium for giving them to the world.

It seems somewhat singular that among the tens of thousands of contemporary pamphlets preserved in the British Museum, Prof. Masson's indefatigable industry should not have discovered these we have mentioned, or that if they had been discovered, he should not have been led to notice them, and, if questioning their Miltonic origin, have given his reasons for his doubts. If they are Milton's, as we see no reason to question, they relieve Prof. Masson of any necessity of explaining Milton's apparent lack of employment in a busy and stirring time, and help us to estimate the political views and sympathies of the subject of this volume.

In this connection we would suggest that there may yet be other writings of Milton, buried in obscurity, which by due diligence may possibly be recovered. The restoration of Charles II. to the throne would be reason enough why, for the next quarter of a century, neither Milton nor his friends would be disposed to recover the memory of his half-forgotten pamphlets, and when the time came under William III. when it was safe to collect them, it would not be surprising if some of them should have passed beyond the reach of explorers, while others remained unidentified or unknown.

There is, for instance, a small volume which was published under the Protectorate of Richard Cromwell, in 1659, which has no author's name or initials on its title page, but which bears internal evidence of being from Milton's pen. It is entitled, "A Modest Plea for an equal Commonwealth against Monarchy," and, in the interest of the equal rights of the Commons of England, discusses the nature of a Free State, the evils of Primogeniture, Tythes, etc. The views herein presented are substantially the same with those contained in Milton's avowed pamphlet,—“The Ready and Easy Way to establish a Free Commonwealth,” etc., published but a few months later. And it is quite significant that the author states in his prefatory “Epistle to the Reader” that the substance of the work was written several years before. We can readily designate portions which obviously belong to an earlier date, probably to that period of Milton's life during which Mr. Masson is at a loss to discover how he was employed. From these the following will be read with interest in connection with Prof. Masson's work. Speaking of the conditions of monarchy being the best form of government, he says:

“I confess, could we have a prince to whom majesty might be attributed, without profane *hyperboles*, that were a true vicar or lieutenant of God, that was not subject to the passions and infirmities, much less the vices and monstrosities of human nature, that would neither be imposed on by deceit, nor abused by flattery, whom the passions. neither of fear nor affection, could warp to the least declivity, from what is right and honest; whose reason could never be biased by any private interest or bare respect,

to decline the paths of justice and equity, but would manage the reins of his power with a like constancy and steadiness, as by the hand of providence the helm of the universe is steered: I should then become an advocate of Monarchy, and acknowledge it to have the impress of Divinity, and bear the character and inscription of God upon it, to be the best and most absolute form of government, and a true copy of its divine original: but till security be given for such a righteous administration, I desire to be excused from being a pander to Ambition, or the advocate of Tyranny." P. 19.

In pleading for what might be called liberty of lay-preaching, or at least allowing magistrates the privileges that had been enjoyed by officers and soldiers of the army, Milton gives his views of the English clergy, views which may well have been confirmed by his collision with others than such as adhered to Episcopacy:

"It is not a small thing will satiate the ambition of the English clergy, who, many of them, though taken from the meanest of the people, usually so much forget their original, that they think the best preferments below their merits and capacities: Now what prudence it can be for the State to keep up a discontented and enraged Clergy, to be always pelting from the pulpit balls of wild-fire among the people, to kindle a second war and combustion, pretending they are the coals of God's altar, for warming the people's hearts with zeal for his glory; is a maxim of policy, that moves not within the sphere of my intelligence." P. 39.

Milton's notorious alienation from the Presbyterians, and sympathy for the Independents, at least after he had found that new "Presbyter" was only old "Priest" writ large, are reflected in the following paragraph:

"*Que.* Whether since the Presbyterians were selling their younger Brother Independency, like Joseph, unto the hands of an Egyptian tyranny, for fear he should (according to his dreams) have reigned over them; and that persecuted the Israel of God, that set their faces toward the promised land, the Canaan of our spiritual and civil liberties, to the very brinks of the Red-sea of a bloody prosecution, have not justly forfeited their tithes into the hands of the State, and may not justly account their lives a ransom of the Commonwealth's clemency?" P. 57.

The following passage would most pertinently date from a period anterior to the Puritan reformation of the universities, which placed John Owen at Oxford:

"Others have travelled to the paradise of the goodman's favor, or the fortunate Islands of their preferment, in the more common track'd road of Puritanical flattery, and meritorious obsequiousness, with other the like good works and courtly accomplishments that are held in esteem, and studied according to the humour, fancy and complexion of the good old *Hogen Mogen*, &c. And hence proceed those frequent storms that arise in College Basons, to the disturbance of that peace and tranquility, and over-casting with the black clouds of passion and discontent, that serenity of affection and unity that ought always appear in the firmaments of such so-

cieties. So that instead of being (as is pretended) the Schools of the Prophets, or Nurseries of Learning and Religion, they are become Schools of Fence, and the very Cock-pits of little petite Quarrels, and Bulrush-Contentions, the very abstracts and Epitomes of the more voluminous frauds, injuries, factions and trapanings, together with the other ingenious arts of knavery: viz. supplanting, undermining, slandering, backbiting, &c., that were at first hatched beneath, and now professed and studied in the Courts of Princes." P. 61.

Again, on the same topic, he adds:

"Certainly it is more than time, that the poisoned waters of those defiled and polluted fountains that intoxicate and make drunk with madness and folly the whole nation, were either dried up, that there may no more clouds of discontent and envy thence exhale to darken and overcast that sun of prosperity, that in the dawning of a free state and happy government, hath once more, after a long night of apostacy and tyranny, displayed its golden beams upon our British Islands; or, rather, that they were thoroughly purged from that leaven, venom, wormwood, and antipathy, that partly from the nature of their government, and partly the complexion of the persons in whose hands at present deposited, they have contracted against the nation's true interest and felicity, together with the noble patrons and advocates thereof."

In the following he seems to anticipate modern suggestions of university reform:

"Whether the way of traffic and merchandize, together with the arts of grafting, planting, improvement of all sorts of grounds, with all other good husbandry and agriculture, might not more profitably be taught in colleges, as parts of Oeconomicks, than those many jejune and trifling notions of *genus* and *species*, that are crowded into our Logicks, and commonly hang like dusty cobwebs in the windows of junior's intellects, darkening and sophisticating the light of their understanding, till the prudence of riper years sweep them away." P. 70.

No one who has read Milton's indignant account of the reasons for his declining to enter upon a clerical sphere will be at a loss to explain the grievance which led to the following suggestion:

"Whether the statutes and discipline of Colleges, being altogether of a monarchic, monkish and pedantic strain, were not fit to be repealed, especially as to oaths, and the injurious annexing fellowships to several counties, since thereby is often opened a door of preferment to unworthy and scandalous persons, while it is barred to them of better deserts and learning; and therefore whether some general rules might not be made and calculated for the use of the whole University, by which the Colleges might be better governed, than their Popish Statutes that impose so many unnecessary and profane oaths, and employments, contrary to the conscience or inclination of the Students." P. 72.

To carry out Milton's plan of a free and equal Commonwealth, the rights of Primogeniture were to be abolished. On this point he says:

“What madness is it, that on the account of primogeniture, the whole estate should be swept away by one who, perhaps, is fitter to wear long coats, and a fool’s cap, than manage an estate, or hath not a grain more wit than will just secure its being begged, or else perhaps will spend it on whores and sycophants, while his more ingenuous brethren are either roasted under the ruins of some smoky old cottage, or exposed as pensioners to be maintained by the old charity of a wretched, miserable world.” P. 88.

In dealing with the question what should be done with the Nobility, the natural props of monarchy, as well as with large land monopolies, Milton’s pamphlet contains passages the applicability of which the England of to-day has not outgrown. For instance :

“But if these pyramids of greatness were at first erected by the hands of monarchy, only for the better support and ornament of the thrones of princes, and are (if well understood) no other than golden trophies made of the spoils and ruins of the people’s liberties; that not only in fair characters preserve the memories of their oppressors, but also upbraid them with their former (if not present) servitude and slavery; I cannot but think it might much conduce to the security of the peace and liberty of the nation to have them removed out of the people’s eyes, that they may neither longer continue the objects of their envy who hate them, or by dazzling, by their gaudy splendor, the weak eyes of fond admirers, revive and awaken the memories and desires of what they were sometimes the appurtenances and Appendix; or if they are (as by some pretended) the very pillars and buttresses of Monarchy, the Bulwarks and Citadels of Pride and Tyranny, and that notwithstanding the Standard of Regal Power be taken down, the Peace and Liberty of the Nation seems not sufficiently secure, or to have obtained a full and perfect Conquest over oppression, while any of the Fortresses in which it hath been formerly ingarrisoned be not levelled and dismantled; it were better that these should abate something of their Height and grandeur, that seems to ore-top and threaten ruine to the Public Liberty, than that the Nation should be put in danger of relapsing into Slavery, or to have their controversy so lately decided by the Umpire of Heaven again disputed in fields of blood.” P. 101.

Toward the close of the treatise we meet with paragraphs that from internal evidence were more nearly contemporaneous with its publication. They were doubtless written when Richard Cromwell’s protectorate was at least on the wane, if it had not actually ceased. Milton pleads for a free Commonwealth. He says :

“But to proceed, since it hath pleased God once more to put a price into our hands, and cause another opportunity of recovering our native rights and liberties to dawn upon us, I desire we may not be as fools, not knowing how to use it; but all ways that are safe and honorable may be taken for the securing and improvement of it; and therefore that the builders of our state may be furnished with a spirit of wisdom from above, that they may become *The Repairers of our Breaches*, and *Restorers of Paths to dwell in*; that they may not deceive themselves, or the nation, by thinking to patch up a

sorry half-patched commonwealth, upon the old, crazy, and rotten foundations of monarchy as heretofore, having had experience that it will not, it cannot stand. They that are best read in politics, and have been most conversant in the Histories of Antiquity, know, that as a commonwealth is the best and most absolute form of government; so it is a nice and ticklish thing, and hath been difficult to fix in Nations under less disadvantage than we, who have been so long used to a contrary way of government; which I speak, not to discourage, but rather to awaken the endeavors and resolutions of our seutors, to watch and secure our liberties. The ancient Commonwealths have been necessitated to make use sometimes of violent physick, to purge and evacuate the rauk humours of the body politick, and such as I would not have prescribed to a Christian State, supposing there may be found out such as are more safe and gentle." P. 108.

His conservative views as to the right of suffrage, in harmony with what he has written elsewhere, are thus stated:

"And to this end that the qualifications according to which they are to be capacitated, may be so stated and limited, as to barre the access of all unworthy persons, that are like to betray their trust, or connive at the springings up of usurpations, tyranny and oppression; and by reason the elections of Parliament-men are at present managed with so much tumult and noise, that the more sober and modest people are ashamed, and discouraged to be present at them. that the Parliament would think of some other way by subscriptions in each parish or the like; less subject to popular tumults, in which the more rude and violent carry it from the more discreet and sober, not so much by plurality of voices as by noise and violence, being, (as commonly managed) more like an assembly met to choose the Lord of a Whitsun-Ale, than Knights of the Shire. As also that none may be trusted with more power than God hath furnished them with a capacity to understand, and abilities to administer without stain to the reputation of the Commonwealth, and therefore that no apes in purple, or asses with golden trappings, may be admitted to sit and bray upon our tribunals and seats of judicature, to bring authority into contempt and disgrace; but that every one may carry their own brains, and not understand their places by proxy, or have the orbs and spheres of their understandings turned about and governed by a mercenary intelligence, as is the custom of some Reverend Mayors by their Learned Recorders," &c. P. 118.

In his closing paragraphs he indulges in one of those flights of eloquence peculiarly his own, in which he anticipates fondly what he elsewhere phrases "the bringing in of the Golden Age."

"Thus shall it be, when the knowledge of the Lord hath destroyed every base and private interest from off the face of the earth; when he hath taken away that diversity of preying interests, that are the source and spring of all our miseries, the seeds of all those factions and divisions that rage among the sons of men, and makes them tear, rend and prey upon one another; that hath so entangled the doctrine of politicks, and rendered them so dark and abstruse a labyrinth, so difficult a mass and mystery of in-

iquity ; that hath turned the art of government into an art of juggling and dissembling ; that hath brought to light those wicked Machavilian maxims of the kingdoms of darkness, that were first broached by a conclave of devils, *divide et impera*: *Qui nescit dissimulare nescit regnare*, and the like ; that hath devised necessity of state as an apology, and religious pretenses as a cloak for the blackest crimes the sun ere looked on, that hath put the inscription of the cause of God upon most wicked and devilish designs ; that hath made religion hold the stirrup to ambition, become the pander of greatness, and a stalking-horse to lust and wickedness. But it shall not be thus in the Holy Mountain of the Lord, in the Holy Commonwealth of *Israel*, in the *New Jerusalem* that is coming down from above, and when there shall be new heavens and a new earth, all old things shall pass away, which is not far off ; the world and unrighteousness of man hath now but a short part to act ; for the time is approaching, in which every false mark and vizard shall be pulled off, in which a window shall be opened into every secret and false breast, and the hidden thoughts of men's hearts discovered ; and that the world shall be no longer cheated, to espouse corrupt and base interests, because gilded with glorious pretenses of religion, and bearing false inscriptions upon them. P. 134.

There can be no reasonable doubt, in our opinion, that this treatise is to be ascribed to Milton. In his epistle to the reader, he speaks of himself as being in capacity of doing his country no greater service, language which in Milton's case was certainly appropriate. He refers in the course of his treatise to the affairs of Hull, and this is an important point of evidence, when it is considered that in 1657, the celebrated Andrew Marvell, of Hull, which he subsequently represented in Parliament, became assistant Latin Secretary to the Protector, and of course intimate with Milton. Incidental matters like these have the greater weight when we take them in connection with both the political and religious views set forth in the treatise, views which are such as Milton is well known to have entertained. To all this must be added the peculiar style and occasional poetic flights which seem to identify the author as Milton, and tempt the reader to say that such a consummate master of eloquence, and such a studious investigator of the relations of Church and State could not have been a man of obscure name or position.

Other passages in a similar strain reflect at once the style and sentiments of Milton on a variety of topics. We have presented enough however to enable the reader to judge for himself whether we are mistaken in crediting this eloquent, and in that day radical, pamphlet to Milton's pen.

It is evident that Milton's own language would lead us to infer that throughout the period of controversy at the commencement of the civil war, his pen was busily employed. In his "Second Defense of the People of England," he says: "As I had from my youth studied the distinctions between religious and civil rights, I perceived that if I ever wished to be of use, I ought at least not be wanting to my country, to the

Church, and to so many of my fellow Christians, in a crisis of so much danger: I therefore determined to relinquish the other pursuits in which I was engaged, and to transfer the whole force of my talents and my industry to this one important object." Of course the presumption is that he was busy with his pen, that his talents and industry were actually devoted to the interests of the great cause of civil and religious liberty. He specifies also the principal works upon which he was engaged, but he remarks in this connection that after his defense of Smectymnuus, he "was actively employed in refuting any answers that appeared." Evidently we are warranted in crediting to him works, or controversial pamphlets, which he has not seen reason to specify individually. To this class of literature the two pamphlets from which we have quoted evidently belong.

This second volume of Milton's Life introduces us to one of the most exciting and momentous periods of English history, and conducts us from the Scotch Protest against Episcopacy, in 1639, to the opening of the Westminster Assembly in 1643. It is full of events of epic grandeur and of dramatic interest. Years seem crowded into days, and two nations, more or less kindred in language and political and religious sympathies, passed from a condition of suppressed indignation and whispered apprehension, to that position in which they could fearlessly assert their liberties, unawed by the name, the prestige or the military resources of their despotic King. Great events and great characters pass in review before us. The attitude of Presbyterian Scotland, firm as her own Grampians against the daring or the subtle assaults of Episcopal innovation—the humiliation of the defeated monarch, compelled to call a Parliament, the one power in England which could traverse and defeat his arbitrary projects—the bold impeachment of Strafford and the impressive scenes of his trial to which three Kingdoms were parties, and on the issue of which the fate of English liberty seemed to depend—the terrible retribution which overtakes that arch-innovator, Archbishop Laud, and sends him to the Tower, on his way to the scaffold—the successful demand for the concession of Parliamentary rights, and triennial assemblies—the rupture between the King and Commons, hurried on by his own rash attempt to arrest obnoxious members—the Episcopal Controversy, in which the pen gave place to the statute, and the statute to the sword—the Memorable League of England and Scotland, into which were infused the sympathies as well as the daring and defiance of the heroes of the Covenant—the outburst of religious fervor, when closed pulpits were thrown open and padlocked lips were loosed—the spontaneous and unprecedented patriotism of London train-bands and rustic yeomen, with men like Fairfax and Hampden stepping forward to be their leaders—all these events, and others scarcely less memorable, sweeping before us in rapid succession, seem almost to epitomize the history of centuries in less than a lustrum.

Nor are the characters with whom we are made more or less familiar, as the allies or antagonists, the friends or contemporaries of Milton, lacking in those elements which invest the part they play in the great historic tragedy of the time with a dramatic interest. The men who waked Scotland's echoes for Christ's crown and covenant—Henderson, Blair, Gillespie, and others like them—the London ministers, some of them fresh from exile, and giving utterance to truths which bishops dreaded but the masses applauded—the leading members of the Long Parliament, Pym, who to the genius of a Burke conjoined a practical statesmanship to which Burke could not aspire, and whose speeches were the manifestoes of religious as well as civil freedom—Hampden, whose martyrdom for his country has immortalized a fame that could in no case have been less if he had lived—Hyde, shrewd, haughty, conservative and aspiring, crowning his ambition at last with a noble title, and passing down into history as Lord Clarendon—Digby, Falkland, Culpepper, Rudyard, and scores of others who would have made any senate to which they belonged memorable—the parasitical judges who tremble and fall and flee before the rising indignation of the people—Bishops like Hall, Milton's antagonist, the politic Williams, the learned Usher, or the infatuated and Romanizing primate—in a word, scholars, pamphleteers, courtiers, knights and lords, as unscrupulous as Strafford, as enthusiastic as Vane, or perhaps as turbulent as Lilburn, form a group which is itself a study, even apart from the momentous events with which its members were associated.

With such materials at his command, and with his biographical plan enlarged to take them in, Prof. Masson has devoted himself with an enthusiasm cool enough to lose no advantage that patient investigation could offer, to tell the story of what England was to Milton, and Milton to England in the four years that antedate the convoking of the Westminster Assembly.

It is impossible not to admire Milton at this period of his life, tirelessly devoting himself to what he believed himself called by the voice of his own conscience, as well as of his country and his God. His enthusiasm is irrepressible, and as yet in a private station, he has not experienced that rebuff from a class whom his later writings offended, which resulted in permanently alienating his sympathy from the Presbyterian party. He cherished at this period the consciousness of noblest motives and a high independence. He exulted in gratuitously presenting the fruits of his private studies "to the Church *and* to the State." He felt himself sufficiently rewarded with "peace of conscience and the approbation of the good." Others, he could say, "without labor or dessert, get possession of honors and emoluments; but no one ever knew me, either soliciting anything myself, or through the medium of my friends; ever beheld me in a supplicating posture at the doors of the Senate, or the levees of the great."

Such is the man in the vigor of his early manhood, whom Prof. Masson has essayed to portray, hanging up his portrait on the walls of the gallery which he has prepared to receive it. He has done his work faithfully and honestly, admiring his hero for what is admirable in him, and yet not digressing into impertinent eulogy. The style of narrative is clear and forcible, scarcely picturesque, but grave and earnest as becomes his theme, and we cannot lay his book down without admitting in justice, that however open to criticism, as a mere biography, it makes a fair and ample presentation of the life and times of John Milton. Milton's fame as a prose writer may not be materially affected by the ascription to him of the hitherto unknown pamphlets to which we have reference. Certainly it will not suffer thereby, while his character as a political reformer, and his activity as a controversialist are strikingly illustrated. His reputation as a poet has served to overshadow his other merits, and thousands who are familiar with his *Paradise Lost*, are all unaware of the striking felicities which constitute the charm of his prose style—a charm which rises superior to his involved sentences and frequent parentheses, and oftentimes fascinates the reader by its surprising blending of the varied graces of lofty or familiar expression.

Of course, neither Prof. Masson's volumes, nor any newly discovered, or hereafter-to-be discovered pamphlets of Milton, can be expected to modify, to any considerable extent, the verdict which now, after two centuries, has been so emphatically confirmed by all who are familiar with his career. But the gratitude of the literary world is due to Prof. Masson for presenting us with a full-length portrait of a man, whose name is the pride of our English tongue, and who, whatever his faults or mistakes, extorted from the conservative Wadsworth the apostrophe:

“Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour,
England hath need of thee.”