

THE LIFE AND LETTERS
OF
JOHN DONNE



This was for youth, Strength, Mirth, and wit that Time
 Most count their golden Age; but twas not thine.
 Thine was thy later yeares, so much refined
 From youths Droffe, Mirth, & wit; as thy pure mind
 Thought (like the Angels) nothing but the Praise
 Of thy Creator, in those last, best Dayes.
 Witnes this Booke, (thy Embleme) which begins
 With Love; but ends, with Sighes, & Teares for sinns.

Will: Marshall. sculpsit.

IZ:WA:

THE LIFE AND LETTERS
OF
JOHN DONNE
DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S

NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME REVISED AND COLLECTED BY

EDMUND GOSSE

HON. M.A. OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

HON. LL.D. OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS

WITH PORTRAITS, ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

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DEDICATION

to

The Right Honourable and Right Reverend MANDELL,
LORD BISHOP of LONDON, D.D.

My Dear Lord Bishop,

By a strange coincidence, I was already deeply concerned in composing these volumes, when you, unaware of the fact, urged upon me the preparation of a Life and Letters of Donne as a work which, above all others dealing with Elizabethan and Jacobean Literature, now required to be performed. This was a most encouraging incident to me, and a fortunate omen. To offer you the completed work, however modestly and imperfectly wrought, is no more than common gratitude.

Yet even had this happy accident not occurred, I do not know to whom I could have offered my volumes so appropriately as to yourself. Not only would Donne, were he now alive, have you for his diocesan, but I conceive that since the death of John King in 1621, there has been no Bishop of London so capable of sympathising with Donne in all his fluctuations as you are. He trembled under Laud, your severe predecessor; and certainly not to Laud would any friend of Donne's have

DEDICATION

dared to dedicate a life which unveils the early frailties and the constitutional faults of the seraphical Dean of St. Paul's. But I have no fear that you will not be of the σωφροί. Of you it may be said, as Steele (we know) said of Hoadly :

*“Virtue with so much ease on BANGOR sits,
All faults he pardons, though he none commits.”*

As a poet, as a divine, as a metaphysician, as a humanist, and not least as a fragile and exquisite human being, Donne is certain of your sympathy.

More reasons for this dedication are needless, and yet I will add the gratification which it gives me to testify thus to our long personal friendship, and to my constant admiration of your genius and character.

Believe me to be,

My dear Lord Bishop,

Yours very faithfully,

EDMUND GOSSE.

P R E F A C E

THE work which I have here attempted to perform has been the occupation of many years, although it is but lately that I have had an opportunity of devoting myself to it consecutively. There may be one or two indulgent readers who recollect that so long ago as 1880 I announced, and then withdrew, a proposal to write the Life of Donne. It is more than I deserve, that, in these days of antiquarian and biographical activity, what is perhaps the most imposing task left to the student of Elizabethan and Jacobean literature should still be left hitherto unattempted. There is no lack of interest in the subject; there is no lack of material for the biographer; and yet this is the first time that a full life of Donne has been essayed.

The causes of this apparent neglect are not difficult to discover. In the first place, the exquisite eulogy of Izaak Walton is a little masterpiece of narration which no one of any judgment would hastily disturb. It has taken its place among our classics, and the attempt to patch it up and correct it, as often as it has been ventured upon, has merely led to critical disaster. The real Life of Donne must not be, what modern editors have made it, a more or less elaborate tinkering of Walton. In the second place, the material for a biography of Donne very largely consists of a collection of letters, printed in 1651, in a state of such confusion, such errors of the press, such an absence of dates in the majority of cases, such mistakes as to dates in the minority, that no biographer has hitherto ventured to unravel the knotted and twisted web. No one can have examined, even superficially, the *Letters* of 1651—which, even in these days of reprinting, remain in their single original issue—without perceiving that some intrepidity

and a great deal of patience are needed to make them tell a consecutive and intelligible tale.

Walton's famous study appeared in its original form in 1640. What we read now is a recension of 1659, greatly expanded, corrected, and, in some degree, diverted from its original purpose. It is not sufficiently remembered that the original title of the narrative was: "The Life and Death of Dr. Donne, late Dean of St. Paul's, London." The words "and Death" disappeared from the enlarged edition, but it is well that we should bear them in mind. They indicate Walton's attitude in approaching his theme, the central feature of which was the dignified and even slightly scenic decease of the Dean, in the midst of pious and admiring friends. The keynote of Donne's life, in Walton's mind, was its preparation for his death; and so he hurries over the circumstances of forty years in a very few pages, that he may concentrate our attention on some forty months. In the days of Walton, of course, what we now call conscientious biography was unknown. The object of the author was not solely or mainly to tell in exact sequence the events of a career, but to paint a portrait in which all that was rugged or unseemly should be melted into a dignified gloom. He had to consider the morality of the reader; he dared not neglect the hortatory or the educational attitude. It is said that the late George Richmond, R.A., on being accused of not telling the truth in his delicate portraiture, replied with heat: "I do tell the truth, but I tell it in love." The ideal of the seventeenth-century biography was to tell the truth in love.

When Walton's "Lives" began to regain the great position which they are now never likely to lose, it was perceived that they were too rose-coloured and too inexact for scientific uses. In 1796 they were edited by Dr. Thomas Zouch, who returned to the task of annotation several times during his long life (1737-1815). The researches of Zouch, who was a useful and industrious antiquary, cleared away various obstructions in the text of Walton, but it did not dawn upon Zouch, as it has scarcely been evident to any later editor, that the discrepancies in the narrative were so

many and so important, as to be beyond the power of an annotator to remove. Meanwhile, in 1805, the Clarendon Press at Oxford issued an unannotated text, in two volumes. Zouch's text was re-issued in 1807, with a few additional notes; this has remained the foundation of all subsequent reprints of the "Lives," and mistakes of his are reproduced in the very latest issue which has left the press. One modern edition, however, is independent of Zouch, or rather substantially extends his labours. It is that which was published without a date (but I believe in July 1852), and without an editor's name (but under the care of Henry Kent Causton), in a cheap and obscure form as the opening volume of a projected "Contemplative Man's Library for the Thinking Few." Thinkers proved to be few indeed, and this modest little volume has become extremely rare. It contains, however, with a great deal that is inexact and fortuitous, genuine and valuable contributions to our knowledge of Donne.

Serious attention to the bibliography of the Poems of Donne was first called by Sir John Simeon in the treatise, founded on a rather late MS., which he printed for the Philobiblion Society in 1856. In 1872, the late Dr. A. B. Grosart exemplified the neglect which was still paid to the Dean of St. Paul's, by prefacing his edition of the Poetical Works, in two volumes, with the words, "I do not hide from myself that it needs courage to edit and print the poetry of Dr. John Donne in our day." His own issue, though not the happiest of his adventures, increased our knowledge of the poet, and tended to explode any prejudice existing against him. Twenty years more passed, however, without producing a really masterly text of Donne's poems. Dr. Brinsley Nicholson had long intended to prepare one, when he died in 1891. The responsibility was transferred to Mr. E. K. Chambers, who produced in 1896 an edition of Donne's poetical works in two volumes, which for all practical purposes leaves nothing to be desired. Donne as a poet is not likely ever to be better edited than by Mr. E. K. Chambers, although in later editions he will probably revise some of his conjectures.

The prose works remain in a very different condition. It is as painful as it is unbecoming to speak ill of one's predecessors, but I strive in vain to find a palliating word to say for what Henry Alford, afterwards Dean of Canterbury, issued as the "Works of John Donne, D.D.," in six volumes, in 1839. Alford was very young, was unaccustomed to the work he undertook, and had formed no standard of editorial excellence. I have been told that in later life he bitterly lamented the publication of this edition. If so, we must share his mortification; these pretended Works contain neither the *Pseudo-Martyr*, nor *Biathanatos*, nor *Ignatius his Conclave*, nor the *Miscellanies*, all of which remain unprinted to the present day. Alford professed to give the poems, but "pruned, some may be disposed to think, unsparingly." He promised the *bonne bouche* of "valuable notes by the late Mr. S. T. Coleridge," which did not appear. But, worse than all this, Alford was so little acquainted with the difficulties of press-reading and collation, that his text absolutely swarms with errors. His notes are few, but they are almost always glaringly inaccurate. In short, this edition of the Works of Donne, which is the only one which has ever been attempted, is (it is distressing to have to say) no better than so much paper wasted.

The first man, indeed, who really saw that what was wanted was not a patched-up revision of Donne but a totally new Life, was Dr. Augustus Jessopp. More than fifty years ago, when he was an undergraduate at Cambridge, he began to make collections illustrative of the character and writings of Donne. He could find no publisher to undertake such an enterprise, which the production of Alford seemed to render impossible—an excellent example of the way in which a bad book may spoil the market for a good one. In 1855 Dr. Jessopp brought out a reprint of the *Essays in Divinity*, with copious and learned notes, which were little valued by the reviewers of forty years ago, but which now prove how eminently well Dr. Jessopp was fitted to illuminate the theological characteristics of the great Dean of St. Paul's. After that, until 1897, the general

public had no means of knowing how persistent was Dr. Jessopp's interest in everything connected with Donne, except through his excellent article in the "Dictionary of National Biography."

Many years have passed since, by a mere accident, I discovered how lively was still the enthusiasm felt for the Dean by our admirable historian of East Anglia. I, also, had been making collections for the biography, and my first impulse was to place them unreservedly in Dr. Jessopp's hands. To this day, echoing the famous tirade of Young to Pope, I find myself saying—

"O had he press'd his theme, pursu'd the track, . . .
O had he, mounted on his wing of fire,
Soar'd where I sink, and sung immortal [Donne],
How it had bless'd mankind, and rescu'd me!"

He claimed, however, that I should join him in the delightful labour. We soon found, however, a great difficulty in the road of our collaboration. In his own words, Dr. Jessopp "has never been able to feel much enthusiasm for Donne as a poet," whereas to me, even to his last seraphical hour in his bedchamber at St. Paul's, Donne is quintessentially a poet. This difference of view offered so great a drawback to conjoint study that, although, for some years, we continued to speak of our united work, it made no practical progress. I had, indeed, well-nigh abandoned the idea of completing my share of the undertaking.

Suddenly, in 1897, in terms of unexampled generosity, and in a mode which left me helpless to resist, Dr. Jessopp transferred the whole responsibility to my shoulders. My first intimation of his change of mind was received by reading the preface to a charming little life of Donne as a Theologian which he contributed to Mr. Beeching's series of "Leaders of Religion." In this he repeated his indifference to the poetry of Donne, and he declared that it was from me only that any adequate and elaborate biography of Donne was to be looked for. These printed words—in which sympathy and generosity, for once, I fear, may have betrayed my ardent friend to some error of judgment—were

accompanied by a private letter, in which he placed all his material at my disposal, and offered me the inestimable advantage of his revision. This was a summons which it would have been churlish to disobey, and I immediately threw myself into a task which has been no holiday effort, and which I conclude at last with a thousand apprehensions. My severest and most learned critic, however, is silenced by his own declaration; however imperfect my work may prove, Dr. Jessopp cannot blame that of which he is the "onlie begetter."

The materials on which this life is founded must now be stated. Izaak Walton is, of course, the basis; the two versions or recensions of his narrative have been very closely examined, with a view to appreciating their spirit as well as their letter. It becomes obvious that Walton's personal knowledge of Donne was confined to the very close of his career. For some months (as I conjecture), in 1629 and 1630, he contrived to enjoy the Dean's intimacy, and beyond question to take notes of his conversation. We do not begin to understand what the early part of Walton's "Life of Donne" is until it occurs to us that it is largely Donne's own report of the incidents of his career. Replying to the enthusiastic curiosity of Walton, Donne would recount events the exact sequence of which had escaped his memory, would pass over in silence facts which seemed immaterial, and errors which he regretted, and would place his conduct in a light distinctly edifying to his listener. In short, without being in the least degree conscious that he was doing so, Donne would give a picture of his own life which was neither quite accurate nor perfectly candid. Whatever the great Dean said, Walton joyfully accepted; it would take too long to illustrate here, what the judicious reader will well understand, the necessity of treating Walton's narrative with the utmost sensitiveness, as a thread to be held tightly at some points and at others to be thrown resolutely away, in our progress through the labyrinth of Donne's career.

I would venture to deprecate the multiplication of annotated editions of Walton's "Life of Donne." They

are disrespectful to Walton, and they merely darken counsel with regard to Donne's career. Walton's treatment of the central years of his subject's life is a tangle quite inextricable by any number of notes. The "Life" is an exquisite work, which must stand alone, on the score of its sweet amenity and the beauty of its style. I yield to no one in my admiration of it, and I share to the full the opinion of Mr. Austin Dobson (expressed in an unpublished poem from which I have the indiscretion to quote) when he speaks of

"old Izaak's phrase
That glows with energy of praise,
Old Izaak's ambling un-pretence
That flames with untaught eloquence."

And the general impression the "Life of Donne" gives is, no doubt, as faithful as it is beautiful. As a compendium of dry consecutive facts about the career of the poet, however, it is absolutely misleading.

The correspondence of Donne, which is now for the first time collected, has been my main source of additional information. We are very richly supplied with letters from Donne, who seems to have enjoyed a wide reputation as a writer of epistles, and many of whose letters were kept, not on account of their intrinsic interest, but as models of epistolary deportment. Of these, one hundred and twenty-nine were published by John Donne the younger in 1651, and are now for the first time reprinted.¹ These letters, as has already been remarked, offer an extreme perplexity. No more tantalising set of documents can be imagined. They are printed with complete disregard to chronology; only twenty-two of the whole number are fully dated, and of these several are found to be dated wrongly; even the names of the persons to whom the letters are addressed are not always supplied, nor always correctly. These conditions make the *Letters* of 1651 far more difficult to deal with than any original MSS. are likely to be, for we have no data to go upon but what the careless original editor has

¹ The so-called second edition of 1654 is nothing but old sheets bound up with a new title-page, and Alford's attempt I take into no account.

chosen to give us, and we can never appeal to the author himself. In the few occasions where the originals of these letters have been preserved, the discrepancies between MS. and printed text are rather startling.

This neglected mass of correspondence is, notwithstanding, of extreme value. In the present work I have attempted no less arduous a task than to break up this inert mass of dateless letters, and re-arrange its component parts in consecutive illustration of the narrative. In this I have received inestimable help from Dr. Jessopp; it would be more just, indeed, to say that it is I who have supplemented his unpublished labours. If, however, in this huge enterprise, which is simply beset with pitfalls, I have fallen into error, I would take upon myself the full responsibility.

This re-arrangement and dating of the *Letters of 1651* is the portion of the work which has given Dr. Jessopp and myself the most extended labour. Even now, we are not entirely at one with regard to the value of certain indications of internal evidence. It will, nevertheless, be denied by no candid reader that the determination to force Donne's correspondence to illustrate his biography had become a necessary one; and even if the minute critic does not always agree with the order selected here, there is a large majority of instances in which it is impossible that he should not admit its correctness and value. For the practical purposes of biography these *Letters of 1651* have hitherto been almost of as little service as though they had never been printed.

Another neglected source of information about Donne is the little volume entitled *A Collection of Letters made by Sr. Tobie Mathews, Kt.*, and printed in 1660. Tobie Matthew (or Mathews), whose name frequently recurs in the following pages, was an acquaintance, although never a friend of Donne. He made a collection of holographs, which fell into the hands of John Donne the younger. The latter published them with a dedication to Lucy, Countess of Carlisle, the aged widow of his father's friend, James Hay, Viscount Doncaster and Earl of Carlisle, who had died nearly a quarter of a century before. Into this collection he shredded or flung some thirty letters written

by his father, but not included (with one or two exceptions) in the *Letters* of 1651. But if that publication was irregular, the Tobie Matthew collection is absolutely chaotic. The editor says of it, "it begins wheresoever you open it, and it ends wheresoever you see." A large number of the Donne letters have neither address nor signature, and are discoverable purely by internal evidence. Nevertheless, these are among the most valuable, because the most personal, which I have been able to discover. The volume of 1660 has never been reprinted or described. Besides the letters by Donne, it contains no small mass of highly important correspondence addressed to him.

Materials hitherto unpublished have been secured from the Domestic State Papers, the Manuscript Departments of the British Museum and the Bodleian Libraries, the Registers of Lincoln's Inn, the Registers of Wills at Somerset House, and the Library of Dulwich College. Various sources, such as the University Library at Cambridge, Sion College Library, and the Registers of St. Dunstan's-in-the-West, have been searched with no or disappointingly slight results. Mr. Horatio F. Brown has been so kind as to search the archives at Venice for me, but unhappily without success. Several very important letters have been copied from the collections of private owners, who were kind enough to permit them to be transcribed.

In printing Donne's letters, I have modernised the spelling, which has no philological value, and is often so eccentric as to annoy and repel the general reader. I do not think that "to join with you to move his Lordship to withdraw it" is made more luminous by printing it, "to joyne wth yo^w to moue hys Lp to wthdrawe ytt." In the same spirit, I have ventured throughout to give the dates in new style, as seems to me the only rational thing to do in the course of a modern narrative; and in this I have on my side the example of most of our reputed historians.

It is a great disappointment to me that so very little is still known about the incidents of Donne's early life. I am inclined to fear that we never shall discover anything precise about the wandering years of his youth. But even

here we know quite as much about Donne as about Shakespeare or Spenser. From 1600 onwards until the death of his wife in 1617, that is to say, through the entire central portion of his life, our knowledge of his emotions and movements becomes so precise, in the light of the documents published in these volumes, that we may now claim to follow Donne's career more minutely than that of any other Elizabethan or Jacobean man of letters, except, perhaps, Bacon.

My object has not been confined to the collection of all the documents which I could find which illustrated the biography of Donne. I have desired, also, to present a portrait of him as a man and an author. As, therefore, his prose works are rare, and in most cases are inaccessible to the general reader, I have dwelt on their characteristics as well as on those of the poems. In short, what I have essayed to present, is a biographical and critical monograph on Donne in his full complexity.

It will be observed that I have not attempted to annotate the Letters, which would be a labour quite apart from my present object; but wherever names are quoted as those of men and women with whom Donne was brought into personal relations, I have endeavoured to say enough about them to render each reference of this kind intelligible. The amplification of this sort of information might be extended much further, but I have forced myself to recollect that my subject is a biography of Donne, and not the Life and Times of James I. Hence I have avoided being led aside into a consideration of the historical points raised in the news-letters.

Already so much has been said, and will be repeated, of my debt to Dr. Jessopp, that I may be silent regarding it here. I have to thank the Bishop of London for kind encouragement and some valuable suggestions. The Rev. William Hunt has most generously placed at my service his great knowledge of ecclesiastical history, and has read the proofs to their constant advantage. I have to thank Lord Kenyon for opening to me his remarkable ecclesiastical library at Gredington, and thus enabling me

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to enrich the chapter which deals with the recusant controversy. Suggestive ideas regarding the biographical value of the Poems I owe to the Hon. Maurice Baring. I am indebted to Mr. James Fitzmaurice-Kelly, the learned historian of Spanish literature, for valuable hints as to the nature and extent of Donne's Spanish studies. Professor Edward Dowden has lent me some important MSS. I am obliged to Dr. Norman Moore for a very curious diagnosis of the state of Donne's health and of the probable cause of his death, which I print as an appendix. I must not fail to acknowledge the prompt and careful secretarial services of Miss M. B. Curran. Without making him responsible for any errors into which I may have fallen, I would say that for my historical background I have gone to the various writings of Dr. Samuel Rawson Gardiner.

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CHILDHOOD

1573-1589

CHAPTER I
CHILDHOOD

1573-1589

HISTORY presents us with no instance of a man of letters more obviously led up to by the experience and character of his ancestors than was John Donne. As we have him revealed to us, he is what a genealogist might wish him to be. Every salient feature in his mind and temperament is foreshadowed by the general trend of his family, or by the idiosyncrasy of some individual member of it. On both sides he was sprung from Catholics of the staunch old stock, animated by a settled horror of reform and by a determination to oppose it. For these views, held, apparently without exception, by all his maternal relations since the early days of Henry VIII., there were no sacrifices which were not to be made cheerfully, promptly. "No family," says Donne himself in 1610, "which is not of far larger extent and greater branches, hath endured and suffered more in their persons and fortunes for obeying the teachers of Roman doctrine." This habitual stress and tension had given to the members of this class—men and women of exceptional cultivation—an independence of opinion which bordered upon eccentricity, a contempt for English standards of religion and literature, a habit of looking to the Continent for intellectual stimulus, a manner of life superficially silken to excess, but tantalisingly abrupt and inscrutable in its movements. We see these characteristics in the Rastells and the Heywoods, but we find them superlatively in that illustrious descendant of theirs who is the subject of these pages.

What has just been said of the heritage of Donne from

his ancestors is mainly and obviously true of those on the maternal side. Nothing leads us to question that it was disturbed by anything on the paternal side; but here we are left to conjecture. Of the parentage of the poet's father nothing whatever is known. His name was John. As he possessed two maiden aunts—one a Dawson, the other a Cooper—his father (whose Christian name is unknown) must have married twice. He had a married brother, who left an orphan daughter, Alice Donne, who was still a child in 1576, and who is heard of no more. There were in Oxford some Dawsons with whom he kept up relations, and therefore the Dawson wife was probably the elder John Donne's mother. It seems possible that Edward Dawson, the Jesuit of Louvain, was a relative. Two cousins, Edward Dawson and his sister, Grace Dawson, were "decayed" and "aged persons" when the Dean of St. Paul's made his will in 1630. Another cousin, Jane Kent, had long lived with his mother as her maid. With these facts our extremely scanty knowledge of the poet's paternal forebears ceases, except that we know them to have been Catholics.

It is pure conjecture that John Donne was sprung from the ancient family of the Dwnns of Dwyynn, in Radnorshire. There is one circumstance which favours the theory that he descended from the Duns or Dwnns of Kidwelly, in Caermarthenshire, namely, that their arms, *a wolf salient, and a chief argent*, were borne by Donne when he was Dean of St. Paul's. But if he had believed that he was able to prove himself to have been of knightly family, he would doubtless have done so. And it is noticeable that he never claims relationship with his prominent contemporary, Sir Daniel Donne, the Master of Requests, nor with John Donne of St. Martins-in-the-Fields, who was Gentleman of the Privy Chamber to James I. The fact, doubtless, was that Donne's father made his own way in trade, and had no ostensible claim to any mark of gentility. The name—variously spelt Donne, Don, Done, Dun, Dunne, Dwnne, and Dwyenne—was a much commoner one in the sixteenth century than it has been since. A John Donne or Dwyynn,

of Welsh descent, who was killed fighting in Flanders in 1576, may, conceivably, have been the poet's uncle. But, on the whole, we must take the statement of Walton that "the reader may be pleased to know that the poet's father was masculinely and lineally descended from a very ancient family in Wales" as breathing no more than a pious wish. For practical purposes the Donnes were reputable Catholics of the middle class, trading in the city of London.

It was very different on the maternal side. Here the child was hemmed in by a cloud of intense and distinguished witnesses to the faith of their fathers, persons who had suffered and striven, who had achieved in no small measure the laurel as well as the palm. One can imagine nothing more stimulating to the imagination of such a lad as Donne than to walk in the light which

"Beat bright upon the burning faces"

of the martyrs, poets, scholars, and enthusiasts of his race down four generations. His mother's great-grandmother, who was born in 1482, had been Elizabeth, sister of the illustrious Sir Thomas More. Elizabeth More married a friend and fanatical follower of the great Chancellor, John Rastell, the printer and lawyer. He was a wealthy man, and expended money as well as energy in defending Catholic doctrine against the Reformers. In 1534 he supported Sir Thomas More in his opposition to the Act of Supremacy, and shared his ruin. When the Chancellor was beheaded on the 6th of July 1535, Rastell was still in captivity, and he died in prison in 1536. This man, John Rastell (or Rastall) the elder, was an impetuous controversialist, and like his more eminent grandson by marriage, John Heywood, took an interest in the infancy of the drama. Of his interludes, one at least survives.

In Holbein's group of the family of Sir Thomas More, a young woman, with an irregular, eager face, stands at the Chancellor's right hand, and impulsively points out to him a passage in a book with her extended finger. Her animation is oddly contrasted with the passive modesty of her companions, the daughters of More. This was Margaret

Giggs, another direct ancestress of Donne's. She was a kinswoman of the Mores, possibly an orphan, who was adopted by the Chancellor and brought up with his daughters. Margaret Giggs was what we call "a character," and Holbein no doubt appreciated her individuality. She became a famous blue-stocking, one of the most learned women of her time, and a miracle of intellectual accomplishments. She was a passionate admirer of her adoptive-father, and when his daughter Margaret Roper was permitted to remove his body from the chapel of the Tower, the shirt in which he had been executed passed into the possession of Margaret Giggs, who made an heirloom of it. She was twenty-seven when the tragical event occurred, and had probably been for some years married to Dr. John Clements (or Clement), another distinguished ancestor of Donne.

John Clements was one of the most successful doctors of his time, and rose to be President of the College of Physicians. In his youth he was presented to Sir Thomas More, who made him tutor to his children. He thus met Margaret Giggs, whom he may have married about ten years after Wolsey, who was his patron, had made him Reader in Rhetoric to the University of Oxford. It would seem that the Clements escaped the general ruin of the More interests in 1535, but upon the accession of Edward VI. in 1547 they felt it advisable to emigrate. They settled at Louvain. Meanwhile two threads of family history had been pleasantly joined by the marriage of their daughter Winifred to William Rastell, the distinguished jurist, who was the son of John Rastell and Elizabeth More. He was a staunch Catholic, who was threatened with disabilities at the close of Henry VIII.'s reign. The Rastells accompanied the Clements in their flight to Louvain, and settled there through the reign of Edward VI. John Rastell the younger, afterwards a prominent Jesuit, also retired to Louvain; he was a brother or a cousin of William.

We descend another generation. Elizabeth Rastell, the daughter of William and Winifred, married the famous John Heywood, and these were the grandparents of Donne.

John Heywood, who is supposed to have been born in 1497, was of the same stubborn Catholic fibre as the rest of the family. He was a singer and a "player on the virginal" to Henry VIII. in his boyhood, and after 1520 he developed a dramatic talent, which placed him easily at the head of the primitive theatre of his age. His interludes, of which the most remarkable are *The Pardoner and the Frere* and *The Four P.P.*, led the way directly to the foundation of English comedy. He was a jocosely and laughter-loving man, but of immovable fidelity to his religion, and he fell from his comfortable place at Court in 1544, when he was accused of denying the royal supremacy. Heywood, however, was not of the stuff of martyrs, and he escaped execution by publicly recanting at St. Paul's Cross. Through the remainder of the reign, and until the close of the next, John Heywood was probably at Louvain or Malines.

John and Elizabeth Heywood had three children—Elizæus (commonly called Ellis), Jasper, and Elizabeth, the mother of our poet. Elizæus was born in London in 1530, went early to Oxford, and was elected to a Fellowship at All Souls' in 1548. Jasper, who was five years younger, after having been page of honour to the Princess Elizabeth, went to Oxford at the age of twelve, and eventually became Fellow of Merton in 1554. The brothers seem to have lived quietly at the university through the reign of Edward VI., though persisting in their Catholic faith. Their sister, Elizabeth, may have been born as late as 1540, and probably shared her parents' vicissitudes. She outlived every member of her own generation and of the next, surviving the latest of her children and dying in 1632, when she cannot have been less than ninety-two or three, and was probably more. Had it occurred to Walton to question this aged lady, or had her memory survived in extreme years, she would have thrown light on much that is now obscure in the early life of her illustrious son.

At the accession of Queen Mary the dew covered the fleece once more. The ancestors of the poet, in company with other distressed co-religionists, came hastening back

from the Low Countries. John Heywood sat under a vine at the coronation of Mary, as Stow informs us, and congratulated her in a Latin discourse. His interludes and his epigrams, his ballads and his jests, were alike to the Queen's taste; to please her he indited and published in 1556 his elaborate allegorical poem of *The Spider and the Fly*, in which the cruel destroyer was the Protestant, swept away, before it could suck the juices of the pious fly, by the firm domestic hand of Mary. All through her reign John Heywood basked in the Queen's unbroken favour, and when she sank into her final dejection, he is said to have been brought to her bedside to divert her with his jokes.

The Rastells, too, returned from Louvain, and William, abandoning the printing-press, regained his prominent position in the law. He was active in the councils of Lincoln's Inn; in 1555 he was made a Puisne Judge. The family seems to have kept up an establishment at Louvain, where William's wife, Winifred, Donne's great-grandmother, died in 1553. His brother (or cousin), John Rastell the younger, returned thither on the accession of Elizabeth; but William struggled on in London until 1563, when he lost his judgeship, and withdrew to the Low Countries in disgrace. During the period of his favour at court he obtained permission to publish, in 1557, the Works of Sir Thomas More, the great family heirloom. William Rastell died in banishment in 1565, and in 1568 John left Louvain and settled in Rome, where he became a Jesuit, and lived on into the poet's childhood. Dr. Clements accompanied the Rastells back to England when Mary came to the throne, and he practised as a physician until the Queen died. At this event he and his wife retired to Malines. These persons—the great-great-grandparents of Donne—lived to be old people, and died, he on the 1st of July 1572, and she on the 6th of July 1570, both buried at Malines. They had been accompanied thither in 1558 by John Heywood, who was threatened, as a contumacious Catholic, with the loss of his lands, and who presented to his daughter Elizabeth, Donne's mother,

an estate, probably in Kent, which had belonged to her mother, and which he was afraid might be forfeited.

The uncles of Donne suffered no less than the rest of the family by the death of Mary and the accession of Elizabeth. Elizæus Heywood threw up his Fellowship at All Souls' and went to Rome; Cardinal Pole became his patron, and, as the secretary of that statesman, it is possible that he visited England, but Florence was his residence. His brother Jasper resigned his Fellowship at Merton in May 1558 to avoid expulsion; but it could not have been, as has been supposed, for religion, as the Queen did not die till November 14. He was recommended to stay at Oxford by Cardinal Pole, who sought to obtain for him a Foundation Fellowship at Trinity, although without success. But late in 1558 Jasper Heywood secured a Fellowship at All Souls', perhaps the very one which Elizæus was resigning. From 1559 to 1561 Jasper was publishing his contributions to the grotesque joint-translation then being made of the tragedies attributed to "the most grave and prudent author Lucius Annæus Seneca," in verse of the "ugsome bugs" kind which has made the names of the translators ludicrous. He seems to have found it hopeless to withstand the new flood of Protestantism, and he soon withdrew to Rome, where he became a Jesuit in 1562. He was made a D.D. and appointed to the Chair of Moral Theology at the important training college of Dillingen, in Bavaria, in 1564, and thither his brother Elizæus came two years later, becoming himself a Jesuit there. In 1570 Jasper was appointed Father of the Society in Dillingen, and Elizæus was made the Head of the Jesuits in Antwerp.

Although it is not possible to point to a series of ancestors so active and distinguished as these on Donne's paternal side, yet there is evidence of the staunchness of the Catholics among whom his father was brought up. John Donne the elder, who was probably born about 1530, served his apprenticeship to James (afterwards Sir James) Harvey, Alderman of London. His interests were with the Ironmongers' Company, into whose freedom he was

admitted in the reign of Mary. A wealthy ironmonger, Thomas Lewin, died childless in 1557, and we find John Donne immediately afterwards managing the affairs of the widow. By his will, dated 20th April 1555, Lewin bequeathed all his property in London and Bucks, which was very considerable, to his widow for her life, and after her death he directed that it should pass to the Master, Warden, and Company of "the mystery or occupation of the Ironmongers of the city of London and their successors, to hold the same until such time as a new monastery be erected at Sawtrey, in the county of Huntingdon, of the same order of monks as were then in the old monastery before its suppression, charged with the maintenance of a mass priest in the Church of St. Nicholas aforesaid, to pray and preach therein, and prepare other services as set out. . . . The said Master and Wardens are further enjoined to pay yearly to the Friars Observants within the realm of England the sum of five pounds ; and a like sum to two poor scholars, one to be of Oxford and the other at Cambridge, towards their maintenance. . . . Immediately after the rebuilding of a monastery at Sawtrey, the said Master and Wardens are to pay to the abbot or prior the money previously devoted to the mass priest, . . . and shall cause a mass daily to be said, and four sermons yearly to be preached within the said monastery for the good of his soul."

Dr. Jessopp remarks that, "As far as I know, this is the first and last important bequest made after the plunder of the monasteries by Henry VIII. for the restoration of a suppressed religious house ; and as the widow did not die till the 26th October 1562, when Queen Elizabeth had been on the throne nearly four years, Alderman Lewin's intentions, so far as the rebuilding of this Cistercian abbey was concerned, were never carried into effect, and the bulk of the property is still held, I believe, by the Ironmongers' Company, subject only to the charges for maintaining the two scholars at Oxford and Cambridge down to the present time."

We may conjecture that the elder John Donne married

Elizabeth Heywood a few years after the death of Mrs. Lewin, who left him handsomely rewarded for his services to her estate. But all particulars of his family life are unhappily lost, nor are they likely to be recovered, since the records of the parish in which he lived were destroyed in the Great Fire of London. He is thought to have had six children, but he neglects to mention their names in his will, a document which offers little to satisfy genealogical curiosity.¹ It does, however, bear testimony to a character of great generosity and amiability, and suggests to us that the father of the poet was a man of humane and estimable qualities.

JOHN DONNE, destined to become a celebrated poet and the greatest preacher of his age, was born in 1573 in the parish of St. Nicholas Olave, in the city of London, and probably in that "great messuage, with a garden attached," opening into Bread Street, which Mrs. Lewin had bequeathed to his father, and in which his parents resided. This house was destroyed in 1666. Of the childhood of Donne it is to be regretted that we know nothing. It is certain, however, that it opened in opulence. In 1574 his father became Warden of the Company of Ironmongers; and he was not only very prosperous, but had already amassed a fortune. He was taken ill, however, in the winter of 1575, and on the 16th of January following he made his will, being "sick in body, but of good and perfect mind and remembrance." This document is an admirable specimen of what the will of a "citizen and ironmonger of London" should be. The property is to be divided into three parts—one-third for his wife, one-third for his children, one-third for debts and legacies, the residue of this third to be equally divided among wife and children. Of the latter, if any die before reaching due age, the property of each is to be divided among the others. Two notable ironmongers, Francis Sandbach and Edmund Adamson, are appointed trustees, and after small legacies to the young cousin, Alice Donne, to the maiden aunts and to the Dawsons at Oxford, con-

¹ See *Appendix A*.

spicuous benefactions are made to the poor of the city of London. These include gifts to all the prisons of London and its suburbs, and to three hospitals. Mr. Sayward, the parson of the parish, is gracefully remembered.

The death of John Donne the elder must have occurred shortly after the drawing up of the will, which was proved by the widow on the 8th of February 1576. The poet was therefore left fatherless in his third year. Of his sisters, three died in infancy; and there survived, besides himself, a younger brother, Henry, and a sister, Anne, who was probably the eldest of the family, since in 1586 she married into a staunch family of Yorkshire Catholics and became Mrs. Avery Copley. Her husband soon died, and in 1594 she married again, this time a William Lyly of London, gentleman. Whether he belonged to that family of Lyly, gentlemen, who resided at that time in the parish of St. Bartholomew the Less, and of whom the author of *Euphues* was one, cannot be discovered. Mrs. Lyly died about 1616.

The boy may have been just able to observe and reflect when fresh persecutions fell upon his family. His grandfather, John Heywood, who is mentioned for a small legacy in the will of the elder Donne, was in 1577 included among Catholic fugitives whose lands were manipulated by a Royal Commission. There were troubles, too, in the Low Countries, which now proved to these fugitives less safe an asylum than they had hoped. Donne's uncle, Elizæus Heywood, was driven out of his house at Antwerp by a fanatical mob, and though he contrived to evade their actual violence and to reach his relations in Louvain, he did not recover from the shock, and died there on the 2nd of October 1578. John Rastell the younger died also at Louvain some months earlier. The old generation was passing away, all the leaders of it in banishment. The weary old playwright and epigrammatist, John Heywood himself, died, probably at Malines, somewhere about 1580. It is not unlikely that Donne saw this his illustrious grandfather in the flesh, for the absolute silence preserved with regard to his early education is best ex-

plained if we suppose that he was sent over to his own people at Malines or Louvain in earliest childhood. Later on "a private tutor had the care of him until the tenth year of his age," Walton says; but as Walton supposed that his father lived on until about 1589, his evidence is to be received with caution.

An exciting event in the family must have been the appearance of the boy's uncle, Father Jasper Heywood, on a mission to England from Rome. He arrived in the summer of 1581, when Donne was eight years old, in company with Father William Holt. The severity with which the Heywoods had been used had always been somewhat relaxed in the case of Jasper, who was understood not to belong to the extreme party. He was allowed to leave Dillingen, and became Superior of the English Jesuits in succession to Parsons. He must have been a quaint, fantastic person. He appeared to have had no sense of the delicacy of his position in England. He assumed the perilous airs of a Papal Legate, and was positively accused of a parade of wealth and pomp in his private life in London. He had lax views of discipline, and quarrelled with the austerer section of his co-religionists to such an extent that he was recalled by Rome in 1583, after having outraged the commonest prudence by summoning a Council under the style of Provincial of the Jesuits in England. The Government had its eye upon him, but he was permitted to set sail in peace. Unfortunately, the ship was unable to land at Dieppe, and was driven back by winds on the Sussex coast, where Jasper Heywood was arrested and brought in chains to the Clink Prison, in Southwark.

The winter of 1583-84 saw a fresh outbreak of Catholic persecution, but Jasper Heywood was again treated with special consideration. Urgent efforts were made to convert him; it is said that he was offered a bishopric if he would become an Anglican. On the 5th of February 1584 he was arraigned, with five other priests, in Westminster Hall; all six were condemned, and five were executed; but again a mysterious good fortune attended Jasper