

John Bunyan as a Writer for Children

EVERYBODY knows that John Bunyan wrote *Grace Abounding, The Pilgrim's Progress, and The Holy War*. How many are aware that he also wrote a book of verse for boys and girls? There was certainly room for a publication of the kind at the time of its appearing, for the seventeenth century was poor in children's books. The juvenile of the period, alas, had no well-filled shelf laden with such treasures as *Alice in Wonderland, Grimm's Fairy Tales, The Child's Garden of Verses, or The Rose and the Ring*. Nor was his nursery floor strewn with any splendid masterpieces of colour and design, such as Randolph Caldecott, Kate Greenaway, Walter Crane, Charles Robinson, and Leslie Brooke have so lavishly produced for the delight of the children of to-day. Even our fathers' favourite nursery books, *Sandford and Merton, Robinson Crusoe, and Gulliver's Travels*, were not yet in being, and the joy of gazing upon Bewick's illustrations to *Æsop's Fables*, or learning by heart the *Divine and Moral Songs* of Isaac Watts, was an experience to be reserved for the youngsters of a succeeding generation. The seventeenth-century child was born two centuries before Froebel was ever heard of, and was deemed hardly important enough to have books written and published for his own special benefit. Such books as were put into his hands were intended for instruction rather than for amusement, and had a provoking resemblance to sugar-coated pills. Thus, he might some day be invited to begin the study of Latin by the following appetizing title-page of a school-book published in 1569: "A delysius surupe newly clarified for yonge scholers yt thurste for the sweete lycore of Latin speche." Or he would be inveigled into the mastering of the conjugations and declensions of that hated language by the device of a supposed state of warfare between "Amo," king of the verbs, and "Poeta," king of the nouns, in which all sorts of rules of grammar were deftly and surreptitiously introduced. Why could not the thing be made either a story-book or a lesson-book out and out?

If the day were a Sunday, and these ingenious frauds were for the time being laid aside, books of an equally improving character were certain to be substituted. The child would be sent upstairs, perhaps, to read *Divine Blossomes, a Prospect or Looking-Glass for Youth, wherein and whereby he may plainly behold and see a Supereminency and Superexcellency of Grace and Religion beyond the World's Honor, Glory, Fame, Reputation, Pleasure, Joy, Delight, Love, and all Lower Accomplishments whatsoever*. By Francis Cockin, alias Cockayne, 1567. Or he would be given that widely circulated book, James Janeway's *Looking Glass for Children*, in the hope that he might be edified and humbled by the story of "the Notorious Wicked Child that was taken up for Beggary and admirably converted, his Holy and Joyful Death"—at the age of nine years. If the child in question happened to be a girl, it is quite probable that the book given to her to read would be *The Maiden's Best Adorning, or a Directory for the Female Sex, being a Father's Advice to his Daughter*, wherein all young ones, especially those of that sex, are directed "how they may obtain the greatest Beauty and Adorn themselves with a Holy Conversation." Finally, if the home were a Scottish one, of the stricter sort, what more likely than that the children would all be occupied in learning the *Shorter Catechism*, published in 1643?

One is thankful to believe that the young folk of those days must have had some other intellectual provender than this. Their nurses, it is true, knew nothing of "Uncle Remus," or "The King of the Golden River," or "Peter Pan," but they would be sure to have something to say about "The Babes in the Wood," and "Dick Whittington," and "Robin Hood." Most boys, too, though they had not *The Scottish Chiefs*, or *Martin Rattler*, at their disposal, would have heard of *The Seven Champions of Christendom*; and some of them, no doubt, could boast of having secretly taken down from their father's bookshelves an old folio called Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, and gloated over pictures far more blood-curdling than anything to be found in the "penny dreadfuls" of to-day. It is a special joy to come across evidence that the seventeenth-century child was aware of the all-important fact that

A was an Archer, and shot at a frog;
B was a Blindman, and led by a dog.

He had also the happiness of knowing that A was an apple-pie, and B bit it. But for the most part the juvenile literature of the century was morbid, insipid, and wearisomely didactic. To direct the child into the paths of morality and religion by lures, by birch-rods, or by picture-books was the generally avowed object of pedagogic effort.

With these aims and ideals Bunyan was in hearty sympathy. He had six children of his own, and was a fond and loving father, as his passionate grief on being parted from his blind little daughter, on the occasion of his imprisonment, abundantly shows. Already, in *The Pilgrim's Progress* he had indicated how, in his view, a child should be brought up. He was expected to be well grounded in the catechism first of all, and to have a sound theological knowledge of the doctrines of sin and salvation. He should also be interested in all kinds of evangelical riddles and scripture puzzles, and be able on occasion to give expression to pious and wise aphorisms, in the manner of his elders. Bunyan seems to have been very fond of educating his children by calling their attention to the moral lessons to be drawn from common objects. The cloud, the spider, the robin, the cock, the pelican, the candle, are all introduced into *The Pilgrim's Progress*, as having a spiritual suggestiveness peculiarly suited to the comprehension of the youthful mind. And only an experienced *pater familias*, such as Bunyan was, could have given us the scene in which poor little Matthew suffers grievously from the gripes for eating green plums from the garden of Beelzebub, with the result that he had to be well purged with a potion concocted "ex carne et sanguine Christi."

The popularity of *The Pilgrim's Progress* seems to have led Bunyan to contemplate the publication of a book for children only. If a larger number of emblems could be collected and material things spiritualised, if their significance could be wondrously set forth in the form of poetry (an art on which Bunyan rather prided himself), and if each poem could be illustrated by a simple woodcut, not too artistic, might not the book be one which a child would hail with delight, and which would train him up diligently in the way he ought to go?

The result was a tiny volume which appeared in 1686, two years before Bunyan's death, entitled, *Country Rhymes: A Book for Boys and Girls*, by J.B. It is a kind of religious Æsop in poor doggerel. The child is accompanied through the ordinary scenes and incidents of domestic life by a mentor who not only finds "sermons in stones and good in everything," but who assiduously squeezes out of the said stones the last drop of sermon they are calculated to produce. Does the child notice an egg, for example, as he is strolling one day through his father's farmyard? Then he is invited to reflect thus upon it:

The egg's no chick by falling from the hen;
 Nor man a Christian till he's born again.
 The egg's at first contained in the shell;
 Men, before grace, in sin and darkness dwell.
 The egg, when laid, by warmth is made a chicken;
 And Christ, by grace, those dead in sin doth quicken.

Does the flint lie in the bed of a running stream and still remain hard and obdurate? Why, then :

This flint an emblem is of those that lie
Like stones, under the Word, until they die.

Even games, it seems, may be made educative and instructive, and when a boy takes up a whip to scourge his top, he is encouraged to turn his thoughts to that most mistaken of all deluded sinners, the man who thinks to be saved by virtue of his own good works :

Our legalist is like unto this top,
Without a whip he doth not duty do;
Let Moses whip him, he will skip and hop;
'Tis with the whip the top is made to go.

As for the frog, we expect him to be the emblem of something peculiarly loathsome and hideous. And so he is :

The frog by nature is both damp and cold,
Her mouth is large, her belly much will hold;
She sits somewhat ascending, loves to be
Croaking in gardens, though unpleasantly.
The hypocrite is like unto this frog,
As like as is the puppy to the dog.
He is by nature cold, his mouth is wide
To prate, and at true goodness to deride.
He mounts his head as if he were above
The world, when yet 'tis that which has his love.
And though he seeks in churches for to croak,
He neither loveth Jesus, nor His yoke.

As one turns over the faded pages of this old book, a unique copy of which, in the original edition, exists in the British Museum, one wonders what its first owner really thought of it. Did the little Puritan child who received it in 1686, perhaps as a birthday gift, value it for its pictures, or for its poetry, or for its theology? After reading it through was he mindful to meditate duly upon the sunrise, and the snail, and the penny loaf, just in the manner suggested, when he next saw them? Did he really believe, on beholding a horrid spider, that he himself was as full of sin as that creature was of venom? And did he ever ask himself, with surprise, why the huge whipping-top in the picture was made quite as large as a house, and ten times larger than a windmill? Perhaps not. That good angel which sits up aloft, taking care of little children, no doubt enabled the Reuben and Rebecca of those days to digest just what was beneficial in the book and to reject the rest. The pictures would be all right, for no child ever asks for verisimilitude in drawings which it likes. As for the morals, really

they were so obvious that perhaps they could be skipped. In vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird. Probably our serious little friend, when set to learn these verses for his Sunday lesson, would absorb just enough of the book to strengthen that strain of grave Puritanism which is so valuable an element in our English character, but not enough to develop within him the vices of priggishness and bigotry and pride. Then, let us hope, when his lesson had been duly conned, he would turn with eager zest to that other book of Bunyan's which he far preferred, the book which he was permitted to read on Sundays, and which yet was interesting, the book with a real, live story in it about lions, and adventures, and the fiend Apollyon, and the dungeons of Giant Despair in Doubting Castle.

R. H. COATS.

Notable Baptists

Additions and Corrections to List in Volume VII.

AXTELL, Daniel,* executed 1660. Lieutenant-colonel in charge of the trial of Charles I., Irish service, governor of Kilkenny, joined in suggesting Associations of Baptist churches throughout England.

BARCLAY, George, 1774-1823. Congregational 1802, baptized 1803, formed Baptist church 1804 (Kilwinning, later Irvine), published 1820-1830.

BEISSEL, Johann Conrad, 1691-1768. Baker, religious leader, founder of German seventh-day Baptists and the religious orders at Ephrata, preacher, author, musician.

BLUNDELL, Thomas, father. Member at Kettering, student at Bristol 1790, original subscriber of 10/6 to B.M.S., pastor at Arnesby 1793, at Luton 1804-12 (?), at Keighley 1820-4; published sermons, exposition of the Seven Vials, circular letters.

BLUNDELL, Thomas, son, 1786-1861. Member at Luton, student at Bristol 1804-9, pastor at Northampton 1810-24, member B.M.S. committee 1815-28, secretary of Stepney 1827-8, chaplain of Mill Hill 1821-31, kept school at Totteridge, died incumbent of Mere.

BURNSIDE, Robert,*† 1759-1826. Merchant Taylor's and Aberdeen. Teacher of languages, ministered to Bampfield's seventh-day church.

CARTERET, Philip, LL.D. Advocate-general of the army in Ireland, 1652, active in plantation of English and Scots. Member of church in Dublin.

CONGREVE, George Thomas,† 1821-1898. Deacon and superintendent at Rye Lane, published school hymn-book in 1869, 1871, benefactor of Holland Road, Brighton.

DAVIES, Thomas, 1812-1895. Bristol student, pastor at Merthyr 1837, at Haverfordwest 1857-1888, president Haverfordwest college 1857-1894, presided Welsh Baptist Union 1874. Hon. D.D.

DAVIES, Thomas Rhys, 1779-1859. Pastor at Ffordlas, Glyneiriog, Liverpool 1830. Wrote Welsh hymns. "Black-cap."

ECKERLIN, Israel, 1705-1756 (?). Seventh-day monk at Ephrata, industrialist, frontiersman in Virginia, died prisoner in France.

ELLIS, Robert,*† 1812-1875. Pastor of many churches, antiquary, theological author (Welsh and English), bard, "Cynddelw."

FRANKLIN, Francis, 1772-1852. Bristol student, minister at Coventry 54 years, his daughters' pupil Marian Evans depicted him as Rufus Lyon in "Felix Holt," eldest daughter married Andrew Leslie.

HEARN, Marianne,† 1834-1909. "Marianne Farningham." Member and S.S. teacher at Northampton, editor of the *Sunday School Times*, contributor to *Christian World*.

HERRING, John, 1789-1832. Bristol student, pastor at Cardigan 1811, preacher and leader.

HILEY, Francis, 1781-1880. Pastor at Llanwenarth 1811, preacher, author, editor of Welsh hymn-book.

HOECKER, Ludwig, 1715-1792. School-master at Ephrata, founded schools on Sabbath and on Sunday 1749, printer, bookbinder.

JONES, Henry, LL.D. Scout-master-general in Ireland 1652, enquire into massacre of 1641, concerned in finance and justice there.

MACLAREN, David, 1785-1850. Scotch Baptist pastor Glasgow 1823-1836, pioneer in South Australia. Father of Alexander.

MACLEAN, Archibald,*† 1733-1812. Printer's overseer. After being Presbyterian and Sandemanian, joined Baptists 1765 and became the effective founder in Scotland, aiming at apostolic and primitive practices, 'Scotch Baptists' becoming known down the west coast to Holyhead. Works collected in seven volumes 1823. Hon. A.M. 1793.

MACQUIGE, James, died 1820 (?). Agent of Irish Society, edited Irish Bible 1817.

MACK, Alexander, 1679-1735. First German Baptist, 1708, to Philadelphia 1729, founder of the "Dunkers."

MILLER, John Peter, 1710-1796. Theologian, lawyer, translator to Congress. Once "Prior Jaebez" at Ephrata.

MORGAN, William, 1801-1872. Abergavenny student, pastor at Holyhead 1825, preacher, biographer, author. Hon. D.D.

ROBERTS, Edward. Member of Glass-house, London, auditor-

general in Ireland 1652, repudiate Venner 1661, preaching in Ireland 1676.

STEPHEN, D. Rhys, 1807-1852. Abergavenny student, pastor at Newport, Manchester Grosvenor Street 1845, debater and preacher in English and Welsh.

WATT, James, died 1821. Secession minister, joined Baptists 1797, pastor Glasgow 1802, opposed the special views of McLean.

WEISER, John Conrad, 1696-1760. Seventh-day monk at Ephrata 1735-43, J.P., captain.

WILKS, George Washington, 1793-1832. High Calvinist author and pastor at Great Alie Street.

WOHLFARTH, Michael, 1687-1741. Evangelist in Pennsylvania, seventh-day monk at Ephrata.

Baptist Bibliography

56-647. Robert Lilburne's regiment included lieutenant-colonel Henry Lilburne, major Paul Hobson, captains Abraham Holmes, and Richard Deane, lieutenants John Turner, John Mason, and Nathanael Strange. In the summer of 1648 a second civil war broke out, when Henry Lilburne, in charge of Tyne-mouth Castle, declared for the king. On 10 August Sir Arthur Hesilrigge reported to the Committee at Derby House that he had re-captured the castle, and that Henry Lilburne was slain. Paul Hobson obtained the lieutenant-colonelcy.

52-662. Henry Foulis, Master of Arts and Fellow of Lincoln College in Oxford. The history of the wicked plots and conspiracies of our pretended saints: representing the beginning, constitution, and designs of the Jesuite. With the
 Conspiracies } { Schisms } { Perjury } Seditions and
 Rebellions } { Hypocrisie } { Sacrilege } Vilifying humor
 Small folio, 247 pages. Copy owned by A. H. Newman.

18-687. A representation of the threatening dangers impending over Protestants in Great Britain, with an account of the arbitrary or Popish ends, unto which the Declaration of liberty of conscience in England, or the Proclamation for a toleration in Scotland, are designed. London. Copy owned by A. H. Newman.

31-742. An elegy on the much lamented death of Mr. John Lee, minister of the gospel, who departed this life at Spratton, February 8, 1741/2, in the fortieth year of his age. Broadside, three columns; copy in Northampton Library.