

says Mr. Moses, once an Anglican clergyman, "seemed especially attacked : and it was this that startled me."¹ It might well startle him. "It has been one of our chiefest difficulties," the spirits informed him, with whom he consorted daily for thirty years, "to uproot false dogmas from your mind : *so long as you reply to our arguments with a text, we cannot teach you.*"² Says a medium of long standing : "I learn from spirits that a vast spiritual movement is working out a great religious scheme, having for its basis universal Deism and brotherhood." The conclusion is inevitable. Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but, in a manner now appallingly real, against the world-rulers of this darkness. "It may be," as Canon Wilberforce assured the Church Congress in 1881, "that the manifestations are part of the dark clouds which have to appear and be dispersed before the promised advent of the Lord with His saints." The sunset of the world is the sunrise of the Christ of God.



The Father of Topography.

BY MISS M. ADELINÉ COOKE.

AMONG the vast store of modern guide-books and their compilers, we run a risk of forgetting that picturesque figure in the reign of King Hal who assuredly may be considered the first of antiquaries, the father of topography, and the forerunner of the horde of folk who perambulate Merrie England and set down much knowledge concerning her.

John Leland stands forth as a vivid personality the moment we really begin to think about him, a man with marked individuality, which probably bordered on the eccentric, blessed with the gift of observation, sometimes streaked with a grain of genius, and positively overflowing with industry. If he were a trifle conceited concerning himself and his doings, who can find it in their hearts to blame him ! The very title given to that

¹ "Spirit Teachings," p. 101.

² *Ibid.*, p. 198.

"Newe Yeare's Gifte," describing his aims and achievements, quite disarms one at the outset. "The Laborious Journey and Serche of J. Leland for England's Antiquities" cannot fail to conjure up a picture of this sixteenth-century priest who cared next to nothing about parish work, and ardently adored ancient manuscripts, setting forth to travel all over England, despite the difficulties and dangers which a journey meant at that time. So we feel inclined to pardon the conceit which makes him declare that he spared neither cost nor labour, and that he had performed the incredible task of visiting almost—he justifies his statement by that little word which forms such a convenient loophole—almost every bay, river, lake, mountain, abbey, moor, heath, wood, city, castle, manor-house, monastery, and college in the land. Truly a stupendous claim! The story of his life affords some insight into the different ideas and ways of the men who lived in the reign of King Henry VIII.

There is an uncertainty about the exact date of his birth, and oddly enough his parents bestowed upon him the same Christian name as their elder son, whether from inability to think of another or from a desire to make sure of perpetuating it in the family it is impossible to determine. He was born in London, and received an excellent education. First of all he went to St. Paul's School, London, and afterwards to Christ's College, Cambridge, where he took his B.A. in 1522. Subsequently he studied at All Souls' College, Oxford, where he made the acquaintance of Thomas Caius, and completed his education in Paris. He appears to have been particularly learned in Latin and Greek, to have gained considerable knowledge of French, Italian, and Spanish, and early acquired that remarkable industry which proved such a feature of, and assisted him so much in, his later life. It would be interesting to know what were the reasons which led him to take Holy Orders. Leland always seems to have had what is slangily termed "an eye to the main chance," and we should hardly have considered that this step would have been likely to commend him at the Court of Henry VIII., unless, indeed, he had a vision of glorious

Wolsey before his mind, and hoped to rise in like manner. Perhaps, however, he thought of taking the scholastic side, for which at that time Orders would have been a *sine qua non*. Undoubtedly he acted as tutor to a son of Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk. The interval was employed in writing Latin panegyrics on the King, which so recommended him at Court that at Christmas, 1528, Henry bestowed upon him a small annual income, and not long afterwards he was made Keeper of the Library and Royal Chaplain. In June, 1530, he was presented to the rectory of Pepeling, and Pope Clement VII. granted him a dispensation to hold four benefices, provided their yearly value did not exceed 1,000 ducats. He does not appear to have taken the responsibilities of a parish very seriously, but at least he employed someone else to do his work, for two years later we find him returned as an absentee from his rectory, and mention made that he was specially relieved from all obligation of residence, and allowed to keep a curate. The Papal dispensation is rendered decidedly amusing by the fact that as a personal adherent of the King, who possessed the power to make or mar his career, Leland actively championed the "new religion." What a pity we cannot know his true opinions, for certainly he seems somewhat of a time-server, or perhaps a king-server would be more appropriate. That Leland was now high in favour with Henry is quite apparent, for in 1533 he was made King's Antiquary, an office, by the way, which must have been specially created for him, as he had neither predecessor nor successor, and that very year he attained his great desire. A commission was granted him under the broad seal which permitted and directed him to search for "English antiquities in the libraries of all cathedrals, abbeys, priories, and colleges, and all places where records, writings, and secrets of antiquity were deposited." But he intended to gather material concerning the history of England, with a description of its towns and villages, beside monastical manuscripts and records. No doubt he fondly dreamed that his "History and Antiquities of the Nation" would win him wide prominence. Six years were

spent upon this gigantic task ; at least, so Leland avers, though it would appear that he was really occupied from 1534 to 1543 ; and we cannot help wondering in what style he travelled the length and breadth of all England, and how he was received. Abbots would look upon him with suspicion until, perchance, their visitor's genuine delight in ancient documents and love of learning lulled their doubts. It is probable that Leland's Protestant opinions were coloured by the company of violent partisans, for it is expressly stated that he "did not disdain social intercourse with abbots and priors" ; and we can fancy that this was the kind of society in which he most delighted, and in which his conceits, eccentricities, and time-serving opinions dropped from him. And then, what tales he must have had to tell his hosts of the places he had seen and the archives he had perused ! There must have been eager faces round the abbot's table, and it ended most likely in his being a welcome guest. Whatever Leland may have thought about the dissolution of the monasteries, he was horrified at the destruction of valuable manuscripts which occurred, and he entreated Cromwell to so extend his commission as to enable him to collect such documents for the King's library. His wish was partly fulfilled.

Although manuscripts attracted him more than architecture, Leland conscientiously describes with some minuteness the diverse buildings and cities visited during his "Itinerary." He takes a good deal of trouble to search out the history of abbeys and their precincts, and to discover the origin of alterations ; and though it has been said that his style is disjointed and rough, more like a mass of undigested notes—which was probably the case—than a carefully written and revised work, there is yet a certain picturesqueness about his descriptions and explanations. How quaintly he narrates the dissensions between the monks of Sherborne Priory and the townsfolk : "The body of the abbay church, dedicated to our Lady, servid ontill a hundred yeres syne, or more, for the chife parochie church of the town." He then explains the cause of "variance," the

acts of the "stoute butcher," and how "a prest of Alhalowis shot a shaft with fier onto the topp of that part of St. Marye chirch that divided the Est part that the monks usid from that the tounes-men usid ; and this partition chauncing at that tyme to be thakkid yn the rofe was sette a fire and consequently al the hole chirch, the lede and belles melting, was defacid."

This is delightful, and although Leland's very conscientiousness sometimes renders his descriptions tame, a certain quaintness is rarely absent. His usual method seems to have been to describe the town as he approached it, and afterwards the objects of interest. He can hardly be said to possess the artistic soul, and his conceptions of nature or architecture are scarcely gilded by imagination. "A praty uplandish town" is a favourite epithet when phrases or ideas fell short. Sometimes a local custom is commented upon, or Roman or Saxon remains. Nor is such a trifling matter omitted as that the passage over the Wey to Melcombe Regis was "by a bote and a rope bent over the haven, so yt in the fery bote they use no ores." Like all seekers after information, he was occasionally misled. Hemp was largely grown at Bridport, and during Leland's time the town supplied most of the cordage used in the navy. The local phrase for a man being hanged, "He was stabbed with a Bridport dagger," was taken literally by him, and he therefore gravely remarks, "At Bridport be made good daggers." But now and again a golden gleam transfigures the solidity of his descriptions. "A praty market town set in the rootes of an high rokky hille down to the hard shore. There cummith a shalow broke from the hilles about a three miles by north, and cummith fleting on great stones through a stone bridge in the bottom—Marchaunts of Morleys in Britaine haunt this town." Such was Lyme Regis as Leland saw it, and the trade was in serges and linens. No doubt he watched the wild sea breaking over the Cobb, and trod the bridle track, just a path wide enough for pack-horses, leading past the old Church of St. Michael high on the cliff overlooking the ocean. Leland bestows few words on the places which he considered un-

important. "The townlette is no great thing, and the building of it is mene," he says upon one occasion; another is "a good fishar town." Manufactures were also noted. Bradford-on-Avon is described as "standing by clooth-making," and "the beauty of the town of Vies is all in one strete—it standeth on a ground somewhat clyvinge, most occupied by clothiers." Of course he visited Old Sarum, of which he reports: "There is not one house, neither within or without Old Saresbyri, inhabited. Much notable ruinus building of the castell yet ther remaynith."

On the conclusion of his tour of England, Leland presented an account of his researches to the King under the title of "A Newe Yeaere's Gifte." But he hoped to prepare a full description of the topography of England, together with a map engraved in silver or brass, a civil history of the British Isles in fifty books, a survey of the islands adjoining Britain and the Isle of Wight, Anglesey, and Isle of Man in six books, and an account of the nobility in three volumes, all in one year. He also wrote about early English writers, designed an account of Henry's palaces, and prepared a treatise which defended the King's supreme dignity in Church matters. Honours were not slow in showering themselves upon this redoubtable scholar. Archbishop Cranmer presented him to the rectory of Haseley, Oxford, in 1542. Three years later he was made Canon of King's College, Oxford, and Prebendary of East and West Knoyle in the county of Salisbury. But he chiefly resided in the parish of St. Michael-le-Querne in London, occupying himself with the numerous works he had projected. Such arduous labour enfeebled his constitution, and probably it was on account of his failing health that he wrote to a friend living at Louvain to find him an assistant, or, as we should call it, a secretary, who was required to be "a forward young man about the age of twenty years, learned in the Latin tongue, and could *sine cortice nare* in Greek." His reason became clouded, and in 1550 the Privy Council gave him into his brother's custody, together with the revenues derived from Haseley and Pepeling, which were to serve for his maintenance. Two years later John

Leland died without recovering sanity. He was buried in the Church of St. Michael-le-Querne, which stood at the west end of Cheapside, and laudatory tributes inscribed on his tomb. The church was destroyed in the Great Fire, and never rebuilt, and so perished all outward memorial of the father of topography and first of antiquaries. It was a sad ending, and perhaps is a silent commentary on the truth that no man can achieve the impossible, and that Leland certainly aimed at doing when he set himself such stupendous tasks. Very little was published during his life, and at his death his manuscripts were made over by Edward VI. to the custody of Sir John Cheke, and were dispersed when that gentleman left England in Queen Mary's reign. The original of his "Itinerary" passed into many hands, and was ultimately presented with five volumes of the "Collectanea" to the Bodleian Library. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries numerous antiquaries gained access to his manuscripts, and borrowed largely from them. Indeed, Leland may be truly said to have conferred enormous benefits on all succeeding historians.

Most people own to a vague knowledge concerning the name they frequently see beneath some bit of information. But it stops there.

Do we ever really think of John Leland as a living man who set himself to do a great work, and succeeded? Do we picture him as a vivid personality, a seeker after learning, who loved and revelled in it for itself alone? Do we care about the daily effort to keep at his self-appointed task as his mental faculties failed and his reason became clouded? And the two years before his death, when all that made the man was dead, though the body lived! It is a piteous portrait, though he attained honours with ease and did not live long enough to taste the bitterness of disillusion. Was his pursuit of knowledge all he cared about, we wonder? Was there no softening influence, no love in his life? Perhaps he never felt the need or the lack.

But at least a sense of mystery, a vague fascination, invests the picturesque personality of King Henry's antiquary, the Father of Topography.