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Francis Quarles.

IT was in the year 1592, just a year before the birth of George Herbert, that Francis Quarles first saw the light, at Romford in Essex. His forbears were possessed of considerable property in the neighbourhood, and his father, James Quarles, who died in the year 1642, was "Clerk of the Green Cloth" and purveyor to the navy of Queen Elizabeth. Francis was educated at a country school, where, we are told, "he surpassed all his equals," and in due course he proceeded to Cambridge, where we find him in residence in 1608, though there is no record of his having taken a degree. Subsequently he studied at Lincoln's Inn, but, we are told, "not so much out of desire to benefit himself thereby as his friends and neighbours, but to compose differences between them." How it came to pass that he was appointed Cupbearer to the beautiful and accomplished Queen of Bohemia we shall probably never know, nor can we tell how long he remained in her service, though it is generally supposed that on the ruin of the Elector's affairs he left and went to Ireland, and in 1621 we find him in Dublin. It was then, no doubt, that his connection with Archbishop Usher began, and for some years he acted as Secretary to that learned prelate. On the outbreak of rebellion in Ireland in 1641 he fled to England, but one of his publications—*The Royal Convert*—greatly incensed the authorities, so that he failed to find the quietude for which he sought. His espousal of the unpopular cause of Charles I, and his visit to him at Oxford, led to fierce persecution, and he was robbed of his books and of certain valuable manuscripts which he was preparing for publication—ill-treatment which brought on an illness which hastened his death at the comparatively early age of fifty-two, in the year 1644. It is said that he was at one time Cupbearer to Elizabeth, but no record of his appointment can be discovered, nor can we be certain that, as is alleged, he was granted a pension by Charles I. Probably Pope considered he had sufficient grounds for the assertion contained in the lines—

> The hero William, and the martyr Charles,
> One knighted Blackmore, and one pensioned Quarles.

Quarles was also "Chronologer to the City of London." What were the duties of this office, long since abolished, we do not profess

to know, but his wife Ursula (who, by the way, bore him seventeen children) tells us that " he held this place till his death ; and would have given that city and the world a testimony that he was their faithful servant therein, if it had pleased God to bless him with life to perfect what he had begun," which seems to indicate that the position carried with it certain responsibilities of which he was conscious.

He enjoyed the friendship of Dr. Aylmer, Archdeacon of London, who died of the plague in 1625, and whom he described as " famous for learning, piety and true friendship." To his memory he dedicated his *Alphabet of Elegies*.

He has left, besides this, many writings in prose and poetry. His *Enchiridion of Meditations, Divine and Moral*, is a collection of maxims, revealing an intimate knowledge of human nature and a strong desire for a higher standard of conduct. There is an underlying puritanism in this as in other of his productions, and it is a little surprising to find the work dedicated to " the glorious object of our expectation, Charles, prince of Wales." What a good thing it would have been if that prince, afterwards Charles II, had paid heed to the excellent advice contained in the four centuries of maxims into which the work is divided ! As a matter of fact the expectation of the seriously-minded Quarles was never realized, and his writings were neglected in the period of profligacy that set in with the Restoration.

His Paraphrase, entitled *Job Militant*, with suggestive meditations, won the admiration of no less a person than Fuller, the Church historian. While some of the work is crude, much is graceful and graphic. Take as an example the comparison, in the third meditation, of the tenderness of God to the watchful care of a nurse.

> Even as a nurse, whose child's imperfect pace
> Can hardly lead his foot from place to place,
> Leaves her fond kissing, sets him down to go,
> Nor does uphold him for a step or two;
> But when she finds that he begins to fall,
> She holds him up, and kisses him withal:
> So God from man sometimes withdraws His hand
> Awhile, to teach his infant faith to stand;
> But when He sees his feeble strength begin
> To fail, He gently takes him up again.

His best known work, however, is his *Divine Emblems*, of which many editions appeared in the seventeenth century, when it is no

exaggeration to say it was immensely popular, and Milton's nephew, Phillips, on this account described Quarles as "the darling of our plebeian judgments." Later on it was forgotten for wellnigh a century, and it is only, we believe, a little more than 100 years since it was republished. Many of the quaint prints and mottoes were copied by Quarles from the *Pia Desideria* of Herman Hugo the Jesuit, published a few years before. If the illustrations and verses are not always in the best taste, yet there are many poems of a high order of merit, and there is not sufficient ground for Pope's stricture, in his *Dunciad*—

"Quarles is saved by beauties not his own."

William Paterson of Edinburgh republished an excellent edition of the *Emblems* in 1878, and there may be other later editions which the writer has not seen. Augustus Toplady, the author of "Rock of Ages," in 1777 wrote recommending the reprinting of the *Emblems* and the *School of the Heart*. He says that the former was "of much spiritual use" to him at "an early period in life," and that he considers it "a very ingenious and valuable treasury of Christian experience." He enjoins the publisher to be particularly careful "to give neat and beautiful impressions of the numerous and expressive cuts" and not to vary from the original *designs* in a single instance, though the *execution* "calls for improvement." The late Rev. P. B. Power, author of *The Oiled Feather* and other well-known tracts, once showed the writer an old edition which he always carried about with him. He delighted in the quaint illustrations and knew many of the verses off by heart.

The closing years of Quarles' life were clouded with sickness and pain, but we are told his patience was wonderful.

Perhaps it was in those closing days of weakness and helplessness that he wrote—

Our wasted taper now hath brought her light
To the next door to-night;
Her sprightless flame grown with great snuff, doth turn
Sad as her neighb'ring urn:
Her slender inch, that yet unspent remains,
Lights but to further pains,
And in a silent language bids her guest
Prepare his weary limbs to take eternal rest.

When he was told, on his death-bed, that the person whose animosity towards him had no doubt contributed to his illness, had

been called "to account for it," he simply said—"God forbid: I seek not revenge; I freely forgive him and the rest." He lived and died a Protestant, warmly attached to the Established Church, and he was greatly distressed about the circulation, towards the close of his life, of reports that he was a Papist. He was laid to rest in St. Leonard's Church, Foster Lane.

One critic assigns him "a side-place in English literature." Another, more merciful, says, "When the name of Quarles is mentioned, let it never be mentioned without praise." So he still takes his place in a noble line, among the patient, prayerful men, who, in difficult days, strove to walk humbly with God and to use their talents rather for His glory than for their own advancement.

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