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Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Maupassant Schiller
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Cotton Dostoyevsky Dostoyevsky Smith Willis
Baum Henry Kipling Doyle Henry Willis
Leslie Dumas Flaubert Nietzsche Turgenev Balzac
Stockton Vatsyayana Crane
Burroughs Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch
Homer Tolstoy Whittman Gogol Busch
Darwin Zola Lawrence Twain Plato Scott
Potter Freud Jowett Stevenson Dickens Harte
Kant Andersen London Descartes Cervantes Burton Hesse
Poe Aristotle Wells Voltaire Cooke
Hale James Hastings Shakespeare Chambers Irving
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Andrew Marvell

Augustine Birrell

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PREFACE

I desire to express my indebtedness to the following editions of Marvell's Works:—

- (1) *The Works of Andrew Marvell, Esq., Poetical, Controversial, and Political*: containing many Original Letters, Poems, and Tracts never before printed, with a New Life. By Captain Edward Thompson. In three volumes. London, 1776.
- (2) *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Andrew Marvell, M.P.* Edited with Memorial-Introduction and Notes by the Rev. Alexander B. Grosart. In four volumes. 1872.
(In the Fuller Worthies Library.)
- (3) *Poems and Satires of Andrew Marvell, sometime Member of Parliament for Hull.* Edited by G. A. Aitken. Two volumes. Lawrence and Bullen, 1892.

Reprinted Routledge, 1905.

Mr. C. H. Firth's Life of Marvell in the thirty-sixth volume of *The Dictionary of National Biography* has, I am sure, preserved me from some, and possibly from many, blunders.

A. B.

3 New Square, Lincoln's Inn,
June 3, 1905.

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ANDREW MARVELL

CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS AT SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

The name of Andrew Marvell ever sounds sweet, and always has, to use words of Charles Lamb's, a fine relish to the ear. As the author of poetry of exquisite quality, where for the last time may be heard the priceless note of the Elizabethan lyricist, whilst at the same moment utterance is being given to thoughts and feelings which reach far forward to Wordsworth and Shelley, Marvell can never be forgotten in his native England.

Lines of Marvell's poetry have secured the final honours, and incurred the peril, of becoming "familiar quotations" ready for use on a great variety of occasion. We may, perhaps, have been bidden once or twice too often to remember how the Royal actor

"Nothing common did, or mean,
Upon that memorable scene,"

or have been assured to our surprise by some self-satisfied worldling how he always hears at his back,

"Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near."

A true poet can, however, never be defiled by the rough usage of the populace.

As a politician Marvell lives in the old-fashioned 2vivacious history-books (which if they die out, as they show some signs of doing, will carry with them half the historic sense of the nation) as the hero of an anecdote of an unsuccessful attempt made upon his political virtue by a minister of the Crown, as a rare type of an inflexible patriot, and as the last member of the House of Commons who was content to take wages from, instead of contributing to the support of, his constituents. As the intimate friend and colleague of Milton,

Marvell shares some of the indescribable majesty of that throne. A poet, a scholar, a traveller, a diplomat, a famous wit, an active member of Parliament from the Restoration to his death in 1678, the life of Andrew Marvell might *a priori* be supposed to be one easy to write, at all events after the fashion in which men's lives get written. But it is nothing of the kind, as many can testify. A more elusive, non-recorded character is hardly to be found. We know all about him, but very little of him. His parentage, his places of education, many of his friends and acquaintances, are all known. He wrote nearly four hundred letters to his Hull constituents, carefully preserved by the Corporation, in which he narrates with much particularity the course of public business at Westminster. Notwithstanding these materials, the man Andrew Marvell remains undiscovered. He rarely comes to the surface. Though both an author and a member of Parliament, not a trace of personal vanity is noticeable, and vanity is a quality of great assistance to the biographer. That Marvell was a strong, shrewd, capable man of affairs, with enormous powers of self-repression, his Hull correspondence clearly proves, but what more he was it is hard to say. He rarely spoke during his eighteen years in the House of Commons. It is impossible to doubt that such a man in such a place was, in Mr. Disraeli's phrase, a "personage." Yet when we look for recognition of what we feel sure was the fact, we fail to find it. Bishop Burnet, in his delightful history, supplies us with sketches of the leading Parliamentarians of Marvell's day, yet to Marvell himself he refers but once, and then not by name but as "the liveliest droll of the age," words which mean much but tell little. In Clarendon's *Autobiography*, another book which lets the reader into the very clash and crowd of life, there is no mention of one of the author's most bitter and cruel enemies. With Prince Rupert, Marvell was credited by his contemporaries with a great intimacy; he was a friend of Harrington's; it may be he was a member of the once famous "Rota" Club; it is impossible to resist the conviction that wherever he went he made a great impression, that he was a central figure in the lobbies of the House of Commons and a man of much account; yet no record survives either to convince posterity of his social charm or even to convey any exact notion of his personal character.

A somewhat solitary man he would appear to have been, though fond of occasional jollity. He lived alone in lodgings, and was much immersed in business, about a good deal of which we know nothing except that it took him abroad. His death was sudden, and when three years afterwards the first edition of his poems made its appearance, it was prefaced by a certificate signed "Mary Marvell," to the effect that everything in the book was printed "according to the copies of my late dear husband." Until after Marvell's death we never hear of Mrs. Marvell, and with this signed certificate she disappears. In a series of Lives of Poets' Wives it would be hard to make much of Mrs. Andrew Marvell. For different but still cogent reasons it is hard to write a life of her famous husband.

Andrew Marvell was born at Winestead in Holderness, on Easter Eve, the 31st of March 1621, in the Rectory House, the elder Marvell, also Andrew, being then the parson of the parish. No fitter birthplace for a garden-poet can be imagined. Roses still riot in Winestead; the fruit-tree roots are as mossy as in the seventeenth century. At the right season you may still

"Through the hazels thick espy
The hatching throstle's shining eye."

Birds, fruits and flowers, woods, gardens, meads, and rivers still make the poet's birthplace lovely.

"Loveliness, magic, and grace,
They are here — they are set in the world!
They abide! and the finest of souls
Has not been thrilled by them all,
Nor the dullest been dead to them quite.
The poet who sings them may die,
But they are immortal and live,
For they are the life of the world."

Holderness was not the original home of the Marvells, who would seem to have been mostly Cambridgeshire folk, though the name crops up in other counties. Whether Cambridge "men" of a

studious turn still take long walks I do not know, but "some vast amount of years ago" it was considered a pleasant excursion, either on foot or on a hired steed, from Cambridge to Meldreth, where the Elizabethan manor-house, long known as "the Marvells'," agreeably embodied the tradition that here it was that the poet's father was born in 1586. The Church Registers have disappeared. Proof is impossible. That there were Marvells in the neighbourhood is certain. The famous Cambridge 5antiquary, William Cole, perhaps the greatest of all our collectors, has included among his copies of early wills those of several Marvells and Mervells of Meldreth and Shepreth, belonging to pre-Reformation times, as their pious gifts to the "High Altar" and to "Our Lady's Light" pleasingly testify. But our Andrew was a determined Protestant.

The poet's father is an interesting figure in our Church history. Educated at Emmanuel College, from whence he proceeded a Master of Arts in 1608, he took Orders; and after serving as curate at Flamborough, was inducted to the living of Winestead in 1614, where he remained till 1624, in which year he went to Hull as master of the Grammar School and lecturer, that is preacher, of Trinity Church. The elder Marvell belonged, from the beginning to the end of his useful and even heroic life, to the Reformed Church of England, or, as his son puts it, "a conformist to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England, though I confess none of the most over-running and eager in them." The younger Marvell, with one boyish interval, belonged all through his life to the paternal school of religious thought.

Fuller's account of the elder Marvell is too good to be passed over:—

"He afterwards became Minister at Hull, where for his lifetime he was well beloved. Most facetious in discourse, yet grave in his carriage, a most excellent preacher who, like a good husband, never broached what he had new brewed, but preached what he had pre-studied some competent time before. Insomuch that he was wont to say that he would cross the common proverb which called Saturday the working-day and Monday the holyday of preachers. It happened that Anno Dom. 1640, Jan. 23, crossing Humber in a Barrow boat, the same was sandwarpt, and he was drowned therein (with

Mrs. Skinner, daughter to Sir Edward Coke, a very religious (gentlewoman) by the carelessness, not to say drunkenness of the boatmen, to the great grief of all good men. His excellent comment upon St. Peter is daily desired and expected, if the envy and covetousness of private persons *for their own use* deprive not the public of the benefit thereof."1

This good man, to whom perhaps, remembering the date of his death, the words may apply, *Tu vero felix non vitæ tantum claritate sed etiam opportunitate mortis*, was married at Cherry Burton, on the 22nd of October 1612, to Anne Pease, a member of a family destined to become widely known throughout the north of England. Of this marriage there were five children, all born at Winestead, viz. three daughters, Anne, Mary, and Elizabeth, and two sons, Andrew and John, the latter of whom died a year after his birth, and was buried at Winestead on the 20th September 1624.

The three daughters married respectively James Blaydes of Sutton, Yorkshire, on the 29th of December 1633; Edmund Popple, afterwards Sheriff of Hull, on the 18th of August 1636; and Robert More. Anne's eldest son, Joseph Blaydes, was Mayor of Hull in 1702, having married the daughter of a preceding Mayor in 1698. The descendants of this branch still flourish. The Popples also had children, one of whom, William Popple, was a correspondent of his uncle the poet's, and a merchant of repute, who became in 1696 Secretary to the Board of Trade, and the friend of the most famous man who ever sat at the table of that Board, John Locke. A son of this William Popple led a very comfortable eighteenth-century life, which is in strong contrast with that of his grand-uncle, for, having entered the Cofferers' Office about 1730, he was made seven years later Solicitor and Clerk of the Reports to the Commissioners of Trade and Plantations, and in 1745 became in succession to a relative, one Alured Popple, Governor of the Bermudas, a post he retained until his death, which occurred not

"Where the remote Bermudas ride
In the ocean's bosom unespied,"

but at his house in Hampstead. So well placed and idle a gentleman was almost bound to be a bad poet and worse dramatist, and this William Popple was both.

Marvell's third sister, Elizabeth, does not seem to have had issue, a certain Thomas More, or Moore, a Fellow of Magdalen College, Cambridge, whose name occurs in family records, being her stepson.

In the latter part of 1624 the elder Marvell resigned the living of Winestead, and took up the duties of schoolmaster and lecturer, or preacher, at Hull. Important duties they were, for the old Grammar School of Hull dates back to 1486, and may boast of a long career of usefulness, never having fallen into that condition of decay and disrepute from which so many similar endowments have been of late years rescued by the beneficent and, of course, abused action of the Charity Commissioners. Andrew Marvell the elder succeeded to and was succeeded by eminent headmasters. Trinity Church, where the poet's father preached on Sundays to crowded and interested congregations, was then what it still is, though restored by Scott, one of the great churches in the north of England.

The Rev. Andrew Marvell made his mark upon Hull. Mr. Grosart, who lacked nothing but the curb upon a too exuberant vocabulary, a little less enthusiasm and a great deal more discretion, to be a model editor, tells us in his invaluable edition of *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Andrew Marvell, M.P.*,¹ that he had read a number of the elder Marvell's manuscripts, consisting of sermons and miscellaneous papers, from which Mr. Grosart proceeds:—

“I gather three things.

“(1) That he was a man of a very brave, fearlessly outspoken character. Some of his practical applications in his sermons before the Magistrates are daring in their directness of reproof, and melting in their wistfulness of entreaty.

“(2) That he was a well-read man. His Sermons are as full of classical and patristic allusions and pat sayings from the most occult literatures as even Bishop Andrewes.

“(3) That he was a man of tireless activity. Besides the two offices named, he became head of one of the Great Hospitals of the Town

(Charter House), and in an address to the Governors placed before them a prescient and statesmanlike plan for the better management of its revenues, and for the foundation of a Free Public Library to be accessible to all."

When at a later day, and in the midst of a fierce controversy, Andrew Marvell wrote of the clergy as "the reserve of our Christianity," he doubtless had such men as his father in his mind and memory.

It was at the old Grammar School of Hull, and with his father as his *Orbilius*, that Marvell was initiated into the mysteries of the Latin grammar, and was, as he tells us, put to his

"Montibus, inquit, erunt; et erant submontibus illis;
Risit Atlantiades; et me mihi, perfide, prodis?
Me mihi prodis? ait.

"For as I remember this scanning was a liberal art that we learn'd at Grammar School, and to scan verses as he does the Author's prose before we did or were obliged to understand them."2

Irrational methods have often amazingly good results, and the Hull Grammar School provided its head-master's only son with the rudiments of learning, thus enabling him to become in after years what John Milton himself, the author of that terrible *Treatise on Education* addressed to Mr. Hartlibb, affirmed Andrew Marvell to be in a written testimonial, "a scholar, and well-read in the Latin and Greek authors."

Attached to the Grammar School there was "a great garden," renowned for its wall-fruit and flowers; so by leaving Winestead behind, our "garden-poet," that was to be, was not deprived of inspiration.

Apart from these meagre facts, we know nothing of Marvell's boyhood at Hull. His clerical foe, Dr. Parker, afterwards Bishop of Oxford, writes contemptuously of "an hunger-starved whelp of a country vicar," and in another passage, which undoubtedly refers to Marvell, he speaks of "an unhappy education among Boatswains and Cabin-boys," whose unsavoury phrases, he goes on to suggest,

Marvell picked up in his childhood. But truth need not be looked for in controversial pages. The best argument for a married clergy is to be found, for Englishmen at all events, in the sixty-seven volumes of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, where are recorded the services rendered to religion, philosophy, poetry, justice, and the empire by the "whelps" of many a country vicar. Parsons' wives may sometimes be trying and hard to explain, but an England without the sons of her clergy would be shorn of half her glory.

Marvell's boyhood seems to have been surrounded with the things that most make for a child's happiness. A sensible, affectionate, humorous, religious father, occupying a position of authority, and greatly respected, a mother and three elder sisters to make much of his 10bright wit and early adventures, a comfortable yet simple home, and an atmosphere of piety, learning, and good fellowship. What more is wanted, or can be desired? The "Boatswains" and "Cabin-boys" of Bishop Parker's fancy were in the neighbourhood, no doubt, and as stray companions for a half-holiday must have had their attractions; but it is unnecessary to attribute Andrew Marvell's style in controversy to his early acquaintance with a sea-faring population, for he is far more likely to have picked it up from his great friend and colleague, the author of *Paradise Lost*.

Marvell's school education over, he went up to Cambridge, not to his father's old college, but to the more splendid foundation of Trinity. About the date of his matriculation there is a doubt. In Wood's *Athenæ Oxonienses* there is a note to the effect that Marvell was admitted "in matriculam Acad. Cant. Coll. Trin." on the 14th of December 1633, when the boy was but twelve years old. Dr. Lort, a famous master of Trinity in his day, writing in November 1765 to Captain Edward Thompson, of whom more later on, told the captain that until 1635 there was no register of admissions of ordinary students, or pensioners, as they are called, but only a register of Fellows and Foundation Scholars, and in this last-named register Marvell's name appears as a Scholar sworn and admitted on the 13th of April 1638. As, however, Marvell took his B.A. degree in 1639, he must have been in residence long before April 1638. Probably Marvell went to Trinity about 1635, just before the register of

pensioners was begun, as a pensioner, becoming a Scholar in 1638, and taking his degree in 1639.

Cambridge undergraduates do not usually keep diaries, nor after they have become Masters of Art are they much in the habit of giving details as to their academic career. Marvell is no exception to this provoking rule. He nowhere tells us what his University taught him or how. The logic of the schools he had no choice but to learn. Molineus, Peter Ramus, Seton, Keckerman were text-books of reputation, from one or another of which every Cambridge man had to master his *simpliciter*, his *quids*, his *secundum quids*, his *quales*, and his *quantums*. Aristotle's *Physics*, *Ethics*, and *Politics* were "tutor's books," and those young men who loved to hear themselves talk were left free to discuss, much to Hobbes's disgust, "the freedom of the will, incorporeal substance, everlasting nows, ubiquitousities, hypostases, which the people understand not nor will ever care for."

In the life of Matthew Robinson,¹ who went up to Cambridge a little later than Marvell (June 1645), and was probably a harder reader, we are told that "the strength of his studies lay in the metaphysics and in those subtle authors for many years which rendered him an irrefragable disputant *de quolibet ente*, and whilst he was but senior freshman he was found in the bachelor schools, disputing ably with the best of the senior sophisters." Robinson despised the old-fashioned *Ethics* and *Physics*, but with the new Cartesian or Experimental Philosophy he was *inter primos*. History, particularly the Roman, was in great favour at both Universities at this time, and young men were taught, so old Hobbes again grumbles, to despise monarchy "from Cicero, Seneca, Cato and other politicians of Rome, and Aristotle of Athens, who seldom spake of kings but as of wolves and other ravenous beasts."¹ The Muses were never neglected at Cambridge, as the University exercises survive to prove, whilst modern languages, Spanish and Italian for example, were greedily acquired by such an eager spirit as Richard Crashaw, the poet, who came into residence at Pembroke in 1631. There were problems to be "kept" in the college chapel, lectures to be attended, both public and private, declamations to be delivered, and even in the vacations the scholars were not exempt from "exercises" either in hall or in their tutors' rooms. Earnest students read their Greek Testaments, and even their Hebrew Bibles, and filled their note-

books, working more hours a day than was good for their health, whilst the idle ones wasted their time as best they could in an unhealthy, over-crowded town, in an age which knew nothing of boating, billiards, or cricket. A tennis-court there was in Marvell's time, for in Dr. Worthington's *Diary*, under date 3rd of April 1637, it stands recorded that on that day and in that place that learned man received "a dangerous blow on the Eye."²

The only incident we know of Marvell's undergraduate days is remarkable enough, for, boy though he was, he seems, like the Gibbon of a later day, to have suddenly become a Roman Catholic. This occurrence may serve to remind us how, during Marvell's time at Trinity, the University of Cambridge (ever the precursor in thought-movements) had a Catholic revival of her own, akin to that one which two hundred years afterwards happened at Oxford, and has left so much agreeable literature behind it. Fuller in his history of the University of Cambridge tells us a little about this highly interesting and important movement:—

"Now began the University (1633-4) to be much beautified in buildings, every college either casting its skin with the snake, or renewing its bill with the eagle, having their courts or at least their fronts and Gatehouses repaired and adorned. But the greatest alteration was in their Chapels, most of them being graced with the accession of organs. And seeing musick is one of the liberal arts, how could it be quarrelled at in an University if they sang with understanding both of the matter and manner thereof. Yet some took great distaste thereat as attendancie to superstition."¹

The chapel at Peterhouse, we read elsewhere, which was built in 1632, and consecrated by Bishop White of Ely, had a beautiful ceiling and a noble east window. "A grave divine," Fuller tells us, "preaching before the University at St. Mary's, had this smart passage in his Sermon—that as at the Olympian Games he was counted the Conqueror who could drive his chariot wheels nearest the mark yet so as not to hinder his running or to stick thereon, so he who in his Sermons could preach *near Popery* and yet *no Popery*, there was *your man*. And indeed it now began to be the general complaint of most moderate men that many in the University, both in the schools

and pulpits, approached the opinions of the Church of Rome nearer than ever before."

Archbishop Laud, unlike the bishops of Dr. Newman's day, favoured the Catholic revival, and when Mr. Bernard, the lecturer of St. Sepulchre's, London, preached a "No Popery" sermon at St. Mary's, Cambridge, he was dragged into the High Commission Court, and, as the hateful practice then was, a practice dear to the soul of Laud, was bidden to subscribe a formal recantation. This Mr. Bernard refused to do, though professing his sincere sorrow and penitence for any oversights and hasty expressions in his sermon. Thereupon he was sent back to prison, where he died. "If," adds Fuller, "he was miserably abused in prison by the keepers (as some have reported) to the shortening of his life, He that maketh inquisition for blood either hath or will be a revenger thereof."1

By the side of this grim story the much-written-about incidents of the Oxford Movement seem trivial enough.

Not a few Cambridge scholars of this period, Richard Crashaw among the number, found permanent refuge in Rome.

The story of Marvell's conversion is emphatic but vague in its details. The "Jesuits," who were well represented in Cambridge at the time, are said to have persuaded him to leave Cambridge secretly, and to take refuge in one of their houses in London. Thither the elder Marvell followed in pursuit, and after search came across his son in a bookseller's shop, where he succeeded both in convincing the boy of his errors and in persuading him to return to Trinity. An odd story, and not, as it stands, very credible; but Mr. Grosart discovered among the Marvell papers at Hull a fragment of a letter without signature, address, or date, which throws some sort of light on the incident. This letter was evidently, as Mr. Grosart surmises, sent to the elder Marvell by some similarly afflicted parent. In its fragmentary state the letter reads as follows:—

"Worthy Sr, — Mr Breerecliffe being wth me to-day, I related vnto him a fearfull passage lately at Cambridg touching a sonne of mine, Bachelor of Arts in Katherine Hall, w^{ch}15 was this. He was lately inuited to a supper in towne by a gentlewoman, where was one Mr Nichols a felow of Peterhouse, and another or two masters of arts, I know not directly whether felowes or not: my sonne hauing noe

p'ferment, but liuing meerely of my penny, they pressed him much to come to liue at their house, and for chamber and extraordinary bookes they promised farre: and then earnestly moued him to goe to Somerset house, where they could doe much for p'ferring him to some eminent place, and in conclusion to popish arguments to seduce him soe rotten and vnsauory as being ouerheard it was brought in question before the heads of the Uniuersity: *Dr. Cosens*, being *Vice Chancellor* noe punishment is inioined him: but on Ash-wednesday next a recantation in regent house of some popish tenets Nicols let fall: I p'ceiue by Mr Breercliffe some such prank vsed towards y^r sonne: I desire to know what y^u did therein: thinking I cannot doe god better seruice then bring it vppon the stage either in Parliament if it hold: or informing some Lords of the Counsaile to whom I stand much obliged if a bill in Star Chamber be meete To terrify others by making these some publique spectacle: for if such fearfull practises may goe vnpunished I take care whether I may send a child ... the lord."1

The reference to *Dr. Cosens*, or *Cosin*, being *Vice-Chancellor* gives a clue to the date, for *Cosin* was chosen *Vice-Chancellor* on the 4th of November 1639.²

Though we can know nothing of the elder *Marvell's* methods of re-conversion, they were more successful than the elder *Gibbon's*, who, as we know, packed the future historian off to *Lausanne* and a *Swiss pastor's* house. What *Gibbon* became on leaving off his *Romanism* we can guess for ourselves, whereas *Marvell*, once out of the hands of these very shadowy "*Jesuits*," remained the staunchest of *Christian Protestants* to the end of his days.

¹⁶This strange incident, and two college exercises or poems, one in *Greek*, the other in *Latin*, both having reference to an addition to the *Royal Family*, and appearing in the *Musa Cantabrigiensis* for 1637, are all the materials that exist for weaving the story of *Marvell*, the *Cambridge undergraduate*. The *Latin verses*, which are *Horatian* in style, contain one pretty stanza, composed apparently before the sex of the new-born infant was known at *Cambridge*.

"Sive felici Carolum figurā
Parvulus princeps imitetur almae