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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
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Cotton Dostoyevsky Kipling Doyle Willis
Baum Henry Nietzsche Dumas Flaubert Turgenev Balzac Crane
Leslie Stockton Vatsyayana Verne
Burroughs Tocqueville Gogol Busch
Curtis Homer Tolstoy Darwin Thoreau Twain Plato
Potter Zola Lawrence Stevenson Dickens Harte
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**The Causes of the Corruption of
the Traditional Text of the Holy
Gospels Being the Sequel to The
Traditional Text of the Holy
Gospels**

John William Burgon

Imprint

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'Tenet ecclesia nostra, tenuitque semper firmam illam et immotam Tertulliani regulam "Id verius quod prius, id prius quod ab initio." Quo propius ad veritatis fontem accedimus, eo purior decurrit Catholicae doctrinae rivus.'

Cave's *Proleg.* p. xlv.

'Interrogate de semitis antiquis quae sit via bona, et ambulate in ea.'—Jerem. vi. 16.

'In summa, si constat id verius quod prius, id prius quod ab initio, id ab initio quod ab Apostolis; pariter utique constabit, id esse ab Apostolis traditum, quod apud Ecclesias Apostolorum fuerit sacrosanctum.'—Tertull. *adv. Marc.* l. iv. c. 5. [Pg iii]

PREFACE

The reception given by the learned world to the First Volume of this work, as expressed hitherto in smaller reviews and notices, has on the whole been decidedly far from discouraging. All have had some word of encomium on our efforts. Many have accorded praise and signified their agreement, sometimes with unquestionable ability. Some have pronounced adverse opinions with considerable candour and courtesy. Others in opposing have employed arguments so weak and even irrelevant to the real question at issue, as to suggest that there is not after all so much as I anticipated to advance against our case. Longer examinations of this important matter are doubtless impending, with all the interest attaching to them and the judgements involved: but I beg now to offer my acknowledgements for all the words of encouragement that have been uttered.

Something however must be said in reply to an attack made in the *Guardian* newspaper on May 20, because it represents in the main the position occupied by some members of an existing School. I do not linger over an offhand stricture upon my 'adhesion to the extravagant claim of a second-century origin for the Peshitto,' because I am [Pg iv] content with the companionship of some of the very first Syriac scholars, and with the teaching given in an unanswered article in the *Church Quarterly Review* for April, 1895. Nor except in passing do I remark upon a fanciful censure of my account of the use of papyrus in MSS. before the tenth century — as to which the reviewer is evidently not versed in information recently collected, and described for example in Sir E. Maunde Thompson's *Greek and Latin Palaeography*, or in Mr. F. G. Kenyon's *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, and in an article in the just mentioned *Review* which appeared in October, 1894. These observations and a large number of inaccuracies shew that he was at the least not posted up to date. But what will be thought, when attention is drawn to the fact that in a question whether a singular set of quotations from the early Fathers refer to a passage in St. Matthew or the parallel one in St. Luke, the peculiar characteristic of St. Matthew — 'them that persecute you' — is put out of sight, and both passages (taking the lengthened reading of St. Matthew) are represented as having equally only four clauses? And again, when quotations going on to

the succeeding verse in St. Matthew (v. 45) are stated dogmatically to have been wrongly referred by me to that Evangelist? But as to the details of this point in dispute, I beg to refer our readers to pp. 144-153 of the present volume. The reviewer appears also to be entirely unacquainted with the history of the phrase $\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\nu\epsilon\nu\eta\sigma\ \Theta\epsilon\omicron\sigma$ in St. John i. 18, which, as may be read on pp. 215-218, was introduced by heretics and harmonized with [Pg v] Arian tenets, and was rejected on the other side. That some orthodox churchmen fell into the trap, and like those who in these days are not aware of the pedigree and use of the phrase, employed it even for good purposes, is only an instance of a strange phenomenon. We must not be led only by first impressions as to what is to be taken for the genuine words of the Gospels. Even if phrases or passages make for orthodoxy, to accept them if condemned by evidence and history is to alight upon the quicksands of conjecture.

A curious instance of a fate like this has been supplied by a critic in the *Athenaeum*, who, when contrasting Dean Burgon's style of writing with mine to my discredit, quotes a passage of some length as the Dean's which was really written by me. Surely the principle upheld by our opponents, that much more importance than we allow should be attributed to the 'Internal evidence of Readings and Documents,' might have saved him from error upon a piece of composition which characteristically proclaimed its own origin. At all events, after this undesigned support, I am the less inclined to retire from our vantage ground.

But it is gratifying on all accounts to say now, that such interpolations as in the companion volume I was obliged frequently to supply in order to fill up gaps in the several MSS. and in integral portions of the treatise, which through their very frequency would have there made square brackets unpleasant to our readers, are not required so often in this part of the work. Accordingly, except in instances of pure editing or in simple bringing up [Pg vi] to date, my own additions or insertions have been so marked off. It will doubtless afford great satisfaction to others as well as the admirers of the Dean to know what was really his own writing; and though some of the MSS., especially towards the end of the volume, were not left as he would have prepared them for the press if his life had been prolonged, yet much of the book will afford, on what he regarded as

the chief study of his life, excellent examples of his style, so vigorously fresh and so happy in idiomatic and lucid expression.

But the Introduction, and Appendix II on 'Conflation' and the 'Neutral Text,' have been necessarily contributed by me. I am anxious to invite attention particularly to the latter essay, because it has been composed upon request, and also because—unless it contains some extraordinary mistake—it exhibits to a degree which has amazed me the baselessness of Dr. Hort's theory.

The manner in which the Dean prepared piecemeal for his book, and the large number of fragments in which he left his materials, as has been detailed in the Preface to the former volume, have necessarily produced an amount of repetition which I deplore. To have avoided it entirely, some of the MSS. must have been rewritten. But in one instance I discovered when it was too late that after searching for, and finding with difficulty and treating, an example which had not been supplied, I had forestalled a subsequent examination of the same passage from his abler hand. However I hope that in nearly all, if not all cases, each treatment involves some new contribution to the question [Pg vii] discussed; and that our readers will kindly make allowance for the perplexity which such an assemblage of separate papers could not but entail.

My thanks are again due to the Rev. G. H. Gwilliam, B.D., Fellow of Hertford College, for much advice and suggestion, which he is so capable of giving, and for his valuable care in looking through all the first proofs of this volume; to 'M. W.,' Dean Burgon's indefatigable secretary, who in a pure labour of love copied out the text of the MSS. before and after his death; also to the zealous printers at the Clarendon Press, for help in unravelling intricacies still remaining in them.

This treatise is now commended to the fair and candid consideration of readers and reviewers. The latter body of men should remember that there was perhaps never a time when reviewers were themselves reviewed by many intelligent readers more than they are at present. I cannot hope that all that we have advanced will be finally adopted, though my opinion is unflinching as resting in my belief upon the Rock; still less do I imagine that errors may not be discovered in our work. But I trust that under Divine Blessing some

not unimportant contribution has been made towards the establishment upon sound principles of the reverent criticism of the Text of the New Testament. And I am sure that, as to the Dean's part in it, this trust will be ultimately justified.

EDWARD MILLER.

9 Bradmore Road, Oxford:

Sept. 2, 1896. [Pg viii]

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

The Traditional Text—established by evidence—especially before St. Chrysostom—corruption—early rise of it—Galilee of the Gentiles—Syrio-Low-Latin source—various causes and forms of corruption.

CHAPTER I.

General Corruption.

§ 1. Modern re-editing—difference between the New Testament and other books—immense number of copies—ordinary causes of error—Doctrinal causes. § 2. Elimination of weakly attested readings—nature of inquiry. § 3. Smaller blemishes in MSS. unimportant except when constant. § 4. Most mistakes arose from inadvertency: many from unfortunate design.

CHAPTER II.

Accidental Causes of Corruption. I. Pure Accident.

§ 1. St. John x. 29. § 2. Smaller instances, and Acts xx. 24. § 3. St. Luke ii. 14. § 4. St. Mark xv. 6; vii. 4; vi. 22. § 5. St. Mark viii. 1; vii. 14—St. John xiii. 37.

CHAPTER III.

Accidental Causes of Corruption. II. Homoeoteleuton.

St. Luke ii. 15—St. John vi. 11; vi. 55—St. Matt. xxiii. 14; xix. 9—St. Luke xvi. 21. [Pg ix]

CHAPTER IV.

Accidental Causes of Corruption. III. From Writing in Uncials.

§ 1. St. John iv. 35-36. § 2. St. Luke xv. 17—St. John v. 44. § 3. Acts xxvii. 14—St. John iv. 15—St. Luke xvii. 37—St. Matt. xxii. 23—and other passages. § 4. St. John v. 4—St. Luke xxiii. 11—St. Matt. iv. 23. § 5. 2 St. Peter i. 31—Heb. vii. 1. § 6. St. Matt. xxvii. 17.

CHAPTER V.

Accidental Causes of Corruption. IV. Itacism.

§ 1. Various passages—St. John xii. 1, 2; 41. § 2. Rev. i. 5—Other passages—St. Mark vii. 19. § 3. St. Mark iv. 8. § 4. Titus ii. 5.

CHAPTER VI.

Accidental Causes of Corruption. V. Liturgical Influence.

§ 1. Lectionaries of the Church—Liturgical influence—Antiquity of the Lectionary System. § 2. St. John xiv. 1—Acts iii. 1—Last Twelve Verses of St. Mark. § 3. St. Luke vii. 31; ix. 1—Other passages. § 4. St. Mark xv. 28. § 5. Acts iii. 1—St. Matt. xiii. 44; xvii. 23. § 6. St. Matt vi. 13 (doxology in the Lord's Prayer).

CHAPTER VII.

Causes of Corruption Chiefly Intentional. I. Harmonistic Influence.

§ 1. St. Mark xvi. 9. § 2. St. Luke xxiv. 1—other examples. § 3. Chiefly intentional—Diatessarons—St. Matt. xvii. 25, 26—Harmonized narratives—Other examples.

CHAPTER VIII.

Causes of Corruption Chiefly Intentional. II. Assimilation.

§ 1. Transfer from one Gospel to another. § 2. Not entirely intentional—Various passages. § 3. St. John xvi. 16. § 4. St. John xiii. 21-25. § 5. St. Mark i. 1, 2—Other examples—St. Matt. xii. 10 (St. Luke xiv. 3)—and others. § 6. St. Mark vi. 11. § 7. St. Mark xiv. 70. [Pg x]

CHAPTER IX.

Causes of Corruption Chiefly Intentional. III. Attraction.

§ 1. St. John vi. 71 and xiii. 26. § 2. Acts xx. 24—2 Cor. iii. 3.

CHAPTER X.

Causes of Corruption Chiefly Intentional. IV. Omission.

§ 1. Omissions a class of their own—Exemplified from the Last Twelve Verses of St. Mark—Omission the besetting fault of transcribers. § 2. The *onus probandi* rests upon omitters. § 3. St. Luke vi. 1; and other omissions. § 4. St. Matt. xxi. 44. § 5. St. Matt. xv. 8. § 6. St. Matt. v. 44—Reply to the Reviewer in the *Guardian*. § 7. Shorter Omissions.

CHAPTER XI.

Causes of Corruption Chiefly Intentional. V. Transposition.

§ 1. St. Mark i. 5; ii. 3—Other instances. § 2. St. Luke xiii. 9; xxiv. 7.
§ 3. Other examples—St. John v. 27—Transpositions often petty, but frequent.

VI. Substitution.

§ 4. If taken with Modifications, a large class—Various instances.

VII. Addition.

§ 5. The smallest of the four—St. Luke vi. 4—St. Matt. xx. 28. § 6.
St. Matt. viii. 13; xxiv. 36—St. Mark iii. 16—Other examples.

CHAPTER XII.

Causes of Corruption Chiefly Intentional. VIII. Glosses.

§ 1. Not so numerous as has been supposed—St. Matt. xiii. 36—St. Mark vii. 3. § 2. St. Luke ix. 23. § 3. St. John vi. 15; xiii. 24; xx. 18—St. Matt. xxiv. 31. § 4. St. John xviii. 14—St. Mark vi. 11. § 5. St. Mark xiv. 41—St. John ix. 22. § 6. St. John xii. 7. § 7. St. John xvii. 4. § 8. St. Luke i. 66. § 9. St. Luke v. 7—Acts xx. 4. [Pg xi]

CHAPTER XIII.

Causes of Corruption Chiefly Intentional. IX. Corruption by Heretics.

§ 1. This class very evident—Began in the earliest times—Appeal to what is earlier still—Condemned in all ages and countries. § 2. The earliest depravers of the Text—Tatian's Diatessaron. § 3. Gnostics—St. John i. 3-4. § 4. St. John x. 14, 15. § 5. Doctrinal—Matrimony—St. Matt i. 19.

CHAPTER XIV.

Causes of Corruption Chiefly Intentional. X. Corruption by the Orthodox.

§ 1. St. Luke xix. 41; ii. 40. § 2. St. John viii. 40; and i. 18. § 3. 1 Cor. xv. 47. § 4. St. John iii. 13. § 5. St. Luke ix. 54-56.

APPENDIX I.

Pericope de Adultera.

APPENDIX II.

Dr. Hort's Theory of Conflation and the Neutral Text.

Index of Subjects .

Index of Passages of the New Testament Discussed . [Pg 1]

THE CAUSES OF THE CORRUPTION OF THE TRADITIONAL TEXT OF THE HOLY GOSPELS.

INTRODUCTION.

In the companion volume to this, the Traditional Text, that is, the Text of the Gospels which is the resultant of all the evidence faithfully and exhaustively presented and estimated according to the best procedure of the courts of law, has been traced back to the earliest ages in the existence of those sacred writings. We have shewn, that on the one hand, amidst the unprecedented advantages afforded by modern conditions of life for collecting all the evidence bearing upon the subject, the Traditional Text must be found, not in a mere transcript, but in a laborious revision of the Received Text; and that on the other hand it must, as far as we can judge, differ but slightly from the Text now generally in vogue, which has been generally received during the last two and a half centuries.

The strength of the position of the Traditional Text lies in its being logically deducible and to be deduced from all the varied evidence which the case supplies, when it has been sifted, proved, passed, weighed, compared, compounded, and contrasted with dissentient testimony. The contrast is indeed great in almost all instances upon [Pg 2] which controversy has gathered. On one side the vast mass of authorities is assembled: on the other stands a small group. Not inconsiderable is the advantage possessed by that group, as regards numerous students who do not look beneath the surface, in the general witness in their favour borne by the two oldest MSS. of the Gospels in existence. That advantage however shrinks into nothing under the light of rigid examination. The claim for the Text in them made at the Semiarian period was rejected when Semiarianism in all its phases fell into permanent disfavour. And the argument advanced by Dr. Hort that the Traditional Text was a new Text formed by successive recensions has been refuted upon examination of the verdict of the Fathers in the first four centuries, and of the early Syriac and Latin Versions. Besides all this, those two manuscripts have been traced to a local source in the library of Caesarea. And on the other hand a Catholic origin of the Traditional Text found on later vellum manuscripts has been discovered in the manuscripts of

papyrus which existed all over the Roman Empire, unless it was in Asia, and were to some degree in use even as late as the ninth century; before and during the employment of vellum in the Caesarean school, and in localities where it was used in imitation of the mode of writing books which was brought well-nigh to perfection in that city.

It is evident that the turning-point of the controversy between ourselves and the Neologian school must lie in the centuries before St. Chrysostom. If, as Dr. Hort maintains, the Traditional Text not only gained supremacy at that era but did not exist in the early ages, then our contention is vain. That Text can be Traditional only if it goes back without break or intermission to the original autographs, because if through break or intermission it ceased or failed to exist, it loses the essential feature of [Pg 3] genuine tradition. On the other hand, if it is proved to reach back in unbroken line to the time of the Evangelists, or to a period as near to them as surviving testimony can prove, then Dr. Hort's theory of a 'Syrian' text formed by recension or otherwise just as evidently falls to the ground. Following mainly upon the lines drawn by Dean Burgon, though in a divergence of my own devising, I claim to have proved Dr. Hort to have been conspicuously wrong, and our maintenance of the Traditional Text in unbroken succession to be eminently right. The school opposed to us must disprove our arguments, not by discrediting the testimony of the Fathers to whom all Textual Critics have appealed including Dr. Hort, but by demonstrating if they can that the Traditional Text is not recognized by them, or they must yield eventually to us [1].

In this volume, the other half of the subject will be discussed. Instead of exploring the genuine Text, we shall treat of the corruptions of it, and shall track error in its ten thousand forms to a few sources or heads. The origination of the pure Text in the inspired writings of the Evangelists will thus be vindicated anew by the evident paternity of deflections from it discoverable in the natural defects or iniquities of men. Corruption will the more shew itself in true colours: —

Quinquaginta atris immanis hiatibus hydra [2]:

and it will not so readily be mistaken for genuineness, when the real history is unfolded, and the mistakes are accounted for. It seems clear that corruption arose in the [Pg 4] very earliest age. As soon as the Gospel was preached, the incapacity of human nature for preserving accuracy until long years of intimate acquaintance have bred familiarity must have asserted itself in constant distortion more or less of the sacred stories, as they were told and retold amongst Christians one to another whether in writing or in oral transmission. Mistakes would inevitably arise from the universal tendency to mix error with truth which Virgil has so powerfully depicted in his description of 'Fame':—

Tam ficti pravique tenax, quam nuntia veri [3].

And as soon as inaccuracy had done its baleful work, a spirit of infidelity and of hostility either to the essentials or the details of the new religion must have impelled such as were either imperfect Christians, or no Christians at all, to corrupt the sacred stories.

Thus it appears that errors crept in at the very first commencement of the life of the Church. This is a matter so interesting and so important in the history of corruption, that I must venture to place it again before our readers.

Why was Galilee chosen before Judea and Jerusalem as the chief scene of our Lord's Life and Ministry, at least as regards the time spent there? Partly, no doubt, because the Galileans were more likely than the other inhabitants of Palestine to receive Him. But there was as I venture to think also another very special reason.

'Galilee of the nations' or 'the Gentiles,' not only had a mixed population [4] and a provincial dialect [5], but lay contiguous to the rest of Palestine on the one side, and [Pg 5] on others to two districts in which Greek was largely spoken, namely, Decapolis and the parts of Tyre and Sidon, and also to the large country of Syria. Our Lord laid foundations for a natural growth in these parts of the Christian religion after His death almost independent as it seems of the centre of the Church at Jerusalem. Hence His crossings of the lake, His miracles on the other side, His retirement in that little un-

derstood episode in His life when He shrank from persecution [6], and remained secretly in the parts of Tyre and Sidon, about the coasts of Decapolis, on the shores of the lake, and in the towns of Caesarea Philippi, where the traces of His footsteps are even now indicated by tradition [7]. His success amongst these outlying populations is proved by the unique assemblage of the crowds of 5000 and 4000 men besides women and children. What wonder then if the Church sprang up at Damascus, and suddenly as if without notice displayed such strength as to draw persecution upon it! In the same way the Words of life appear to have passed throughout Syria over congenial soil, and Antioch became the haven whence the first great missionaries went out for the conversion of the world. Such were not only St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. Barnabas, but also as is not unreasonable to infer many of that assemblage of Christians at Rome whom St. Paul enumerates to our surprise in the last chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. Many no doubt were friends whom the Apostle of the Gentiles had met in Greece and elsewhere: but there are reasons to shew that some at least of them, such as Andronicus and Junias or Junia [8] and Herodion, may probably have passed along [Pg 6] the stream of commerce that flowed between Antioch and Rome [9], and that this interconnexion between the queen city of the empire and the emporium of the East may in great measure account for the number of names well known to the apostle, and for the then flourishing condition of the Church which they adorned.

It has been shewn in our first volume that, as is well known to all students of Textual Criticism, the chief amount of corruption is to be found in what is termed the Western Text; and that the corruption of the West is so closely akin to the corruption which is found in Syriac remains, that practically they are included under one head of classification. What is the reason of this phenomenon? It is evidently derived from the close commercial alliance which subsisted between Syria and Italy. That is to say, the corruption produced in Syria made its way over into Italy, and there in many instances gathered fresh contributions. For there is reason to suppose, that it first arose in Syria.

We have seen how the Church grew of itself there without regular teaching from Jerusalem in the first beginnings, or any regular

supervision exercised by the Apostles. In fact, as far as the Syrian believers in Christ at first consisted of Gentiles, they must perforce have been regarded as being outside of the covenant of promise. Yet there must have been many who revered the stories told about our Lord, and felt extreme interest and delight in them. The story of King Abgar illustrates the history: but amongst those who actually heard our Lord preach there must have been very many, probably a majority, who were uneducated. They would easily learn from the [Pg 7] Jews, because the Aramaic dialects spoken by Hebrews and Syrians did not greatly differ the one from the other. What difference there was, would not so much hinder the spread of the stories, as tend to introduce alien forms of speech and synonymous words, and so to hinder absolute accuracy from being maintained. Much time must necessarily have elapsed, before such familiarity with the genuine accounts of our Lord's sayings and doings grew up, as would prevent mistakes being made and disseminated in telling or in writing.

The Gospels were certainly not written till some thirty years after the Ascension. More careful examination seems to place them later rather than earlier. For myself, I should suggest that the three first were not published long before the year 70 A.D. at the earliest; and that St. Matthew's Gospel was written at Pella during the siege of Jerusalem amidst Greek surroundings, and in face of the necessity caused by new conditions of life that Greek should become the ecclesiastical language. The Gospels would thus be the authorized versions in their entirety of the stories constituting the Life of our Lord; and corruption must have come into existence, before the antidote was found in complete documents accepted and commissioned by the authorities in the Church.

I must again remark with much emphasis that the foregoing suggestions are offered to account for what may now be regarded as a fact, viz., the connexion between the Western Text, as it is called, and Syriac remains in regard to corruption in the text of the Gospels and of the Acts of the Apostles. If that corruption arose at the very first spread of Christianity, before the record of our Lord's Life had assumed permanent shape in the Four Gospels, all is easy. Such corruption, inasmuch as it beset the oral and written stories which were afterwards incorporated in the Gospels, would creep into the

authorized [Pg 8] narrations, and would vitiate them till it was ultimately cast out towards the end of the fourth and in the succeeding centuries. Starting from the very beginning, and gaining additions in the several ways described in this volume by Dean Burgon, it would possess such vigour as to impress itself on Low-Latin manuscripts and even on parts of the better Latin ones, perhaps on Tatian's Diatessaron, on the Curetonian and Lewis manuscripts of the fifth century, on the Codex Bezae of the sixth; also on the Vatican and the Sinaitic of the fourth, on the Dublin Palimpsest of St. Matthew of the sixth, on the Codex Regius or L of the eighth, on the St. Gall MS. of the ninth in St. Mark, on the Codex Zacynthius of the eighth in St. Luke, and a few others. We on our side admit that the corruption is old even though the manuscripts enshrining it do not date very far back, and cannot always prove their ancestry. And it is in this admission that I venture to think there is an opening for a meeting of opinions which have been hitherto opposed.

In the following treatise, the causes of corruption are divided into (I) such as proceeded from Accident, and (II) those which were Intentional. Under the former class we find (1) those which were involved in pure Accident, or (2) in what is termed Homoeoteleuton where lines or sentences ended with the same word or the same syllable, or (3) such as arose in writing from Uncial letters, or (4) in the confusion of vowels and diphthongs which is called Itacism, or (5) in Liturgical Influence. The remaining instances may be conveniently classed as Intentional, not because in all cases there was a settled determination to alter the text, for such if any was often of the faintest character, but because some sort of design was to a greater or less degree embedded in most of them. Such causes were (1) Harmonistic Influence, (2) Assimilation, (3) Attraction; such instances too in their main character [Pg 9] were (4) Omissions, (5) Transpositions, (6) Substitutions, (7) Additions, (8) Glosses, (9) Corruption by Heretics, (10) Corruption by Orthodox.

This dissection of the mass of corruption, or as perhaps it may be better termed, this classification made by Dean Burgon of the numerous causes which are found to have been at work from time to time, appears to me to be most interesting to the inquirer into the hidden history of the Text of the Gospels, because by revealing the influences which have been at work it sheds light upon the entire