THE RECENT HISTORY OF THE BEVAN FAMILY

by JOHN S. ANDREWS

R. ANDREWS, Assistant Librarian in the Brotherton Library, Leeds University, is known to our readers for his researches into hymnology. The following article is an offshoot of his research into the hymns of Mrs. Emma Frances Bevan, and recalls to mind several distingushed names in nineteenth-century Evangelicalism.

"Let us now praise famous men . . . With their seed shall continually remain a good inheritance."

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FAMILY connexions, the Provost of King's has assured us, are part of "the poetry of history". In his contribution to the G. M. Trevelyan Festschrift he has studied the growth and intermarriage of a number of prominent British families during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.1 The following article, in an attempt to investigate the fortunes of another such family during the same period, does not include every member who became distinguished nor does it record every birth and marriage: the accompanying genealogical tree is "diagrammatic and selective".2 In the last century this country was still a "religious", even if not a fully Christian one. Religion was a staple topic of conversation and, to many indeed, the mainspring of life itself. This will account for the stress laid in the following survey upon the religious convictions of the people concerned. In certain other respects, too, as will be seen in our conclusions, these people were typical of the intelligentsia of their day.

¹ N. G. Annan, "The Intellectual Aristocracy" (in *Studies in Social History: a Tribute to G. M. Trevelyan*, Ed. by J. H. Plumb, 1955, pp. 243-87).

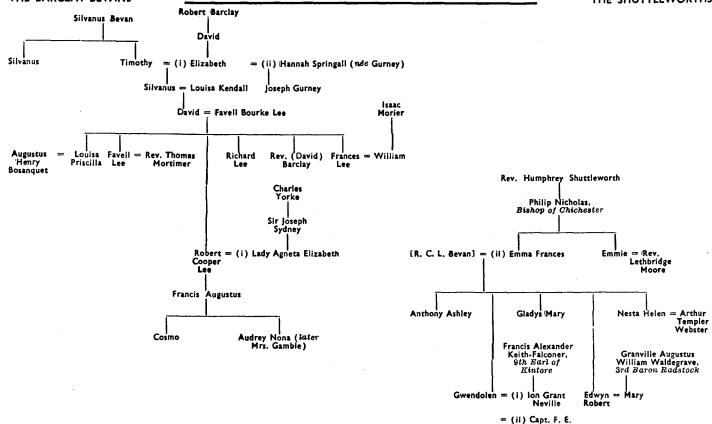
² For information about those members not discussed and for fuller information about some of those discussed see *D.N.B.*, Burke's *Landed Gentry, Who Was Who*, and *Who's Who*, but especially *A History of the Bevan Family* by Mrs. A. N. Gamble, *née* Bevan (1924). These works are not usually further cited below. Except for a brief paragraph Mrs. Gamble does not refer to the Shuttleworth branch of the family.



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THE SHUTTLEWORTHS

Bradshaw



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First we must glance quickly at the earlier family background. The nineteenth-century Bevans were descended from a long line of Welsh burghers.³ Silvanus Bevan (1691-1765), as a youth left Swansea to set up the Plough Court Pharmacy in London where he was later joined by his brother Timothy (1704-86). Timothy married Elizabeth, a grand-daughter of Robert Barclay (1648-90), the author of the great Quaker manifesto, An Apology for the True Christian Divinity.⁴ After Elizabeth's death Timothy married Hannah Springall, by whom he had Joseph Gurney (1753-1814), another famous Quaker apologist.⁵ Joseph Gurney Bevan carried on the Plough Court Pharmacy until his death, when it passed out of the hands of the Bevan family. Today the Pharmacy is well known as "Allen and Hanburys".

It was through Timothy's first wife, Elizabeth, that the present-day Bevans were descended. Her father, David Barclay (1682-1769), was the ancestor of the banking family. The Bank, which later became Barclay, Bevan, Tritton, Ransom, Bouverie and Co., and eventually simply Barclays Bank Limited, was founded at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Three of Elizabeth's sons were named Silvanus; two of them died in infancy. The survivor (1743-1830) married a girl of seventeen, who lived but seven months after marriage. By his second wife, née Louisa Kendall, he had seven sons, of whom the eldest, David (1774-1846) succeeded him at the Bank. David married Favell Bourke Lee (1780-1841), a devout Low Churchwoman of ready, unselfish sympathies.

DAVID BEVAN'S CHILDREN

David and Favell's eldest child, LOUISA PRISCILLA (1800-83),

³ Mr. R. S. Mortimer has kindly drawn my attention to references in the *Bristol Friends' Records* (CCII and CCIV) to deliberations concerning the marriages of Welsh and Bristol Quaker members of the family; see Minute books 2 (1686-1704), pp. 110 f., 185, 240, 252 f., and 4 (1716-27), pp. 10, 22, 24-27a.

⁴ Of Robert Barclay the most recent full-length biography would seem to be that by M. C. Cadbury (Robert Barclay, his Life and Work, 1912).

⁵ In Paul Bloomfield's *Uncommon People: a Study of England's Élite* (1955) a genealogical tree shows the inter-marriages of the Barclays, Buxtons and Gurneys.

⁶ See P. W. Matthews and A. W. Tuke's *History of Barclays Bank Limited* (1926). Background information may be gleaned from Nicholas Lane's article on "The Fathers of English Banking" (*History Today*, III, 1953, pp. 190-9).

married Augustus Henry Bosanquet of Huguenot descent. By nature she was retiring and devoted her time chiefly to her children. Religion was the mainstay of her life; winter and summer she rose regularly at 6.30 for prayer and Bible study.

Of more general interest is David's second daughter (1802-78), named FAVELL LEE after her mother. She too was influenced by the Evangelical Movement. On her conversion in 1827 she threw herself into educational work, founding parish schools on her father's estates and taking an active part in their management. Through her eldest brother, Robert Cooper Lee, she made the acquaintance of his schoolfellow and college friend, Henry Edward Manning, later Cardinal Manning, with whom she corresponded and upon whom she for a time exercised considerable influence. Long after he joined the Church of Rome he used to say that it was she who had first awakened him to unseen realities.⁷ In 1841 she married Thomas Mortimer, an Evangelical in charge of an Episcopal Chapel. After his death she devoted herself to the care of the destitute and afflicted. As an old woman, however, she developed eccentric habits, which made the lot of her protégés unenviable. She once drove her donkey chaise out to sea, the animal being blindfolded and accompanied by several orphan children for whom she was caring. The party was in considerable danger until rescued by fishermen, Her per lamb was also subjected to sea bathing. When she took her parrot to bed with her (as she often did), she compelled it by slaps to sleep on its back.

Although her name is little known now, she wrote some of the most famous children's books in the English language. The first one to appear was the Peep of Day, or a Series of the Earliest Religious Instruction the Infant Mind is capable of receiving (1833). It gave very young children a Christian view of the world from the Creation to the Final Judgment. Today objection might be felt to some of its original pictures; but few subsequent children's books have succeeded so well in finding modes of expression that would impress themselves upon the child's mind. The book went through numerous editions, many of them bowdlerized, in

⁷ According to Sir Shane Leslie, she was Manning's "spiritual mother", and her diagnosis in her personal notebook of his character was "so unique and penetrating as to save reams of biographic research and conjecture"; of the three great women in his life her influence was the most important (Henry Edward Manning: his Life and Labours, 1921, pp. 39-43).

her lifetime and has since been translated into at least thirtyeight languages. Its success encouraged her to follow it with a series of similar books, such as, *Line upon Line* (inspired by Isaiah 28:10), *Near Home* and *Far Off*. In the fourth chapter of *Father* and Son Sir Edmund Gosse lamented that his father, whose religious convictions closely resembled hers, did not think of imparting instruction by some such method as that used in *Line* upon Line. Near Home and Far Off were intended to describe to the young "the world which God made" in the light of "the Book which He wrote". The title of another of her works, Reading without Tears, has over the years inspired many works with similar titles.⁸

Another of David's daughters, Frances Lee (1819-1903), married Admiral William Morier (1790-1864), the son of a Consul-General of the Levant Company, and the uncle of a well-known diplomat.

One of David's sons, RICHARD LEE (1811-1900), was a typical old-time foxhunting squire and, when old, very like Jorrocks in appearance. According to H. O. Nethercote in his *Pytchley Hunt*, *Past and Present*, Richard and his brother Robert Cooper Lee were in their day among the best riders to hounds in the Hunt. After a break when his eyes were affected by cataract, he continued hunting until within a few years of his death. Although without the decided religious views of his brothers and sisters, Richard was a consistent church-goer and a great reader of evangelical sermons. From conscientious motives he avoided theatres and race meetings and, as a result of a rebuke from a close friend, gave up the use of strong language.

According to Mrs. Gamble's History of the Bevan Family, David Bevan's third son David Barclay (1813-98), known as Barclay to distinguish him from his father, was a friend of Henry Manning when at Oxford. Manning's secession from the Protestant faith caused a life-long breach. Barclay went into the English Church as a strict Evangelical. He survived his fourth wife by seventeen years.

Barclay's eldest brother, ROBERT COOPER LEE (1809-90), was educated at Harrow and Trinity College, Oxford, where he was working for his degree when his father had a paralytic stroke. At the age of twenty he was recalled to become partner in the

⁸ See E. R. Bevan, "Peep of Day, a Lawgiver in the Nursery: the Long Reign of Miss [F. L.] Bevan" (The Times, 27th June, 1933, pp. 15 f.).

⁹ (1888), p. 250.

family Bank. He later became in turn senior partner, Deputy Chairman, then Chairman. He married Lady Agneta Elizabeth Yorke, the great-grand-daughter and grand-daughter of Lord Chancellors, the daughter of an admiral, and the sister of the fourth Earl of Hardwicke. Agneta was a small gentle creature, who shared her husband's evangelical convictions. Shortly after his conversion he abandoned worldly pleasures, such as his favourite sport of hunting, to devote himself to he sevice of God. Together with his friend Lord Shaftesbury, he tried to better the conditions of the working classes. He was associated with many religious and philanthropic societies, to which he was a very liberal contributor. He was one of the founders of the London City Mission. In 1851 Agneta died leaving him with four sons and two daughters.¹⁰

Five years after the death of his first wife he married again, this time into an old Lancashire Whig family, the Shuttleworths. Philip Nicholas Shuttleworth (1782-1842), the son of a Vicar of Kirkham, was educated at Winchester and New College, Oxford, of which he later became Warden. He was a friend of Henry Richard Fox, the third Lord Holland. As a youth Shut tleworth acted as tutor to Lord Holland's sons, and it was through the influence of the Fox family that he was appointed Bishop of Chichester. He wrote several works against the Tractarians, such as Not Tradition, but Revelation, and published A Paraphrastic Translation of the Apostolic Epistles. In his death Pusey thought that he saw a "token of God's presence in the church of England". One of Shuttleworth's daughters, Emmie, married a protégé of Favell Mortimer's, Lethbridge Moore, who became Vicar of West Runton, near Sheringham.

Shuttleworth's eldest daughter, EMMA FRANCES (1827-1909), was a good artist and an even more gifted author. She spoke French and German well, and at over seventy would be up every morning at 8.30 to read Hebrew. She first met R. C. L. Bevan when she was living not far from his home, Trent Park, in Barnet. At the time of her marriage to him she was a High Churchwoman; but in Barnet she soon became associated with the "Open" section of the Plymouth Brethren. As an Evangelical Churchman her husband had much in common with her in her new allegiance; but she felt obliged to withdraw from the world to a greater

¹⁰ On R. C. L. Bevan see F. Boase, Modern English Biography (1908), vol. 4; The Times (24th July, 1890, p. 9); and the Illustrated London News (2nd August, 1890, p. 134).

extent than he did. An intellectual, she concentrated on her books, for example, on her life of John Wesley, and became engrossed in the German mystics. In 1858 she published a series of hymns from the German as Songs of Eternal Life in a volume which, from its unusual size and comparative costliness, received less attention than it deserved, for these translations were above average in merit. A number came into farly common use, but almost always without her name; like many Brethren she preferred anonymity. Many of the hymns were published simply over the initials of the houses where she was staying at the time of composition. Similar collections of hers were Songs of Praise for Christian Pilgrims (1859) and Hymns of Ter Steegen, Suso and Others (1895-97). In the later years of her husband's life the family spent the winters in southern France, where she died in 1909.

R. C. L. BEVAN'S DESCENDANTS

R. C. L. Bevan's second son by his first wife, Francis Augustus (1840-1919), followed in his father's footsteps at Harrow, but not at the University. He became the first Chairman of Barclays when it became a joint-stock limited company in 1896. Like his father he devoted much of his leisure to Christian activities and philanthropy, and found inspiration for daily life in prayer and Bible study. Subsequently his son, Cosmo (1863-1935), became a Director of the Bank. Francis's daughter, Audrey Nona, afterwards Mrs. Gamble, compiled a well-written History of the Bevan family (1924).

Besides this grand-daughter of R. C. L. Bevan's, two of his own daughters have been gifted writers. NESTA HELEN, later Mrs. A. T. Webster, has written a number of books, mainly on the French Revolution.¹² They were widely, though not always responsibly reviewed. Referring to one of them Gilbert Murray declared that it showed "considerable research and an original standpoint".¹³ Her autobiography, Spacious Days (1950), has thrown many interesting sidelights upon her own immediate family and upon British social life in general up to and including the First World War. For her kindness in reading my typescript

¹¹ For details of her hymns see J. Julian's Dictionary of Hymnology (2nd ed., 1907) and E. E. Cornwall's Songs of Pilgrimage and Glory: notes on ... certain hymn-writers, part 2 [c. 1930], pp. 31-65.

¹² E.g., The French Revolution (1919); Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette during the Revolution (1937); Secret Societies and Subversive Movements (1924); and World Revolution (1921).

¹³ Proceedings of the British Academy, XXIX (1943), p. 411.

I am much indebted. GLADYS MARY wrote several scholarly religious works.¹⁴

Another of R. C. L. Bevan's daughters, GWENDOLEN, married ION GRANT NEVILLE KEITH-FALCONER (1856-87). He was educated at Cheam, an old-established school about to close down when his father-in-law resuscitated it by a substantial loan. He then went to Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was awarded the Tyrwhitt Hebrew Scholarship and a first class in Semitic languages. After his degree he studied other oriental languages and published a translation from a Syriac version of the Fables of Bidpai. Having taught himself Pitman's shorthand at school he contributed a very full article on "Shorthand" to the ninth edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. He was an ardent bicyclist and in 1882 rode from John o' Groat's to Land's End in just under thirteen days. In 1886 he was appointed Lord Almoner's Professor of Arabic at Cambridge; but, having been devoted to evangelistic work since his schooldays, he soon left Cambridge in order to become a Free Church of Scotland missionary in Arabia. In January 1887 he and his wife settled in Shaikh Othman, a village outside Aden, where after a few months he died of fever. 15 Some years later she married Captain F. E. Bradshaw.

One of her brothers, ANTHONY ASHLEY (1859-1933), named after his godfather, Lord Shaftesbury, was educated at Cheam, then in Lausanne and the University of Strasbourg before entering Trinity College, Cambridge in 1884. In 1893 he became Lord Almoner's Professor of Arabic, the post previously held by his brother-in-law. According to F. C. Burkitt, he was one of the dozen most learned Arabists in the world. He had a sound knowledge of Hebrew and Old Testament literature, Syriac and other Semitic languages, Persian and Sanskrit, besides being fluent in French, Italian, and German. His published work was relatively small; but it was all of the highest scholarship. The story went that he was almost reduced to tears on discovering a misprint in one of his works. He reacted against his early evangelical upbringing, being much influenced by Edouard Reuss,

¹⁴ Viz., Early Christians of Rome (1927); Portraits of the Archbishops of Canterbury (1908; Unto the Perfect Day (1913); (with A. E. Brewin) The Steps of a Disciple (1916).

¹⁵ See R. Sinker's *Memorials of the Hon. Ion Keith-Falconer* (1888). New College Library, Edinburgh, houses a valuable collection of Oriental books from his library.

¹⁶ Cambridge Review (27th October, 1933).

the founder of the so-called "Wellhausen" Old Testament hypothesis, and he became liberal and outspoken in his opinions.¹⁷

His brother EDWYN ROBERT (1870-1943) also went to Cheam. but then to Monkton Coombe, Bath, which school has always been associated with the Evangelical section of the Church of England. In 1888 he gained the Open Classical Scholarship at New College, Oxford, where his grandfather had once been warden. In later life he became an Honorary Fellow of his College. Besides his fellowship of the British Academy he obtained various University honours, being an honorary doctor of both Oxford and St. Andrews. He was a man of varied gifts, a classical scholar and archaeologist, a student of the philosophy of religion, and an observer of contemporary politics. Few, according to Gilbert Murray, so completely combined the roles of scholar, historian, and philosopher. Like Ashley, Edwyn soon renounced a belief in the inerrancy of Scripture; but he did not react so strongly as his brother. As an undergraduate Edwyn used unostentatiously to hold prayer meetings in his rooms. Of Christianity he found the classic statement in Philippians 2:5-11. He was active in, among other societies, the Student Christian Movement. It was in fact through this deep devotion to Christianity that he was drawn to his studies of the Hellenistic Age. In 1896 he married the Hon. MARY WALDEGRAVE, the youngest daughter of the third BARON RADSTOCK of Castletown, who had sent her at the age of eighteen to live in Whitechapel at about the time of the "Jack the Ripper" murders there. There were two daughters of the marriage.18

The Waldegraves were personal friends of the Bevans. The third Baron (1833-1913) was educated at Harrow and Balliol. After graduating he visited the the Crimean battlefields and on his return raised and commanded the West Middlesex Rifles. From 1866 onwards he devoted himself to evangelistic work, visiting various European counties. In St. Petersburg he held drawing-room meetings for the aristocracy, adressing them usually in French. He visited India seven times, addressing meetings there, organizing a famine relief fund, and distributing Bibles among the natives. In Whitechapel he started the Victoria

¹⁷ For more information see D.N.B. (article by S. A. Cook) and The Times (17th October, 1933, p. 16).

¹⁸ For more information see *D.N.B.* (article by Gilbert Murray and Clement C. J. Webb), *The Times* (19th October, 1943, p. 6), but especially Gilbert Murray's obituary of him in *Proc. Brit. Acad.* (XXIX, 1943, pp. 411-20).

Homes for Working Men (the forerunners of the Rowton Houses), and in South London the Victoria Hostel for Women. Like Mrs. E. F. Bevan, he associated with the "Open" section of the Plymouth Brethren, but probably felt freer than she to move outside that Movement. In 1866 another Plymouth Brother, the Earl of Cavan, lent him "The Lodge" at Weston-super-Mare for evangelistic work. According to W. Blair Neatby's authoritative history of Brethrenism, the distinguished social position of its earliest votaries favoured the rise of the Movement. Lord Radstock married Susan Charlotte, a daughter of John Hales Calcraft, M.P., and a grand-daughter of William Montagu, fifth Duke of Manchester. 20

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What conclusions may be drawn from the above outline of family fortunes?

Superficially one might assume that Edwyn and Ashley Bevan were exceptions among the Bevan clan, who had been mostly country gentlemen with banking rather than intellectual interests.²¹ True, neither the Barclay-Bevans nor the Shuttleworths provided such a galaxy of academic attainment as did, for example, the Trevelyans. Yet in addition to Edwyn and Ashley Bevan the families could claim their share of intellectual aristocrats, beginning in the seventeenth century with the Quaker Apologist and coming down in the early nineteenth century to the anti-Tractarian Bishop and also to the writer of children's books. Nearer our own day the translator of German hymns and her daughter, the historian of the French Revolution, have worthily upheld the tradition. Of such as these Annan's generalization would hold good:

Their good manners appeared in their prose [and, in Mrs. Bevan's case, verse]. At its worst it was lucid and free from scholarly jargon; and time and again they produced works of surpassing literary merit. They wrote with a sense of form, of drama, of the possibilities of language; and they wrote not for a scholarly clique but for the intelligent public at large whom they addressed confident that they would be understood.²²

Like many intellectuals, the Bevans could be intimidating to meet. The eccentric Favell Lee Mortimer used to apostrophize her pet lamb in Latin when it disobeyed her instructions.²³ The

¹⁹ A History of the Plymouth Brethren (1901), p. 42.

²⁰ On Baron Radstock see G. E. C.'s Complete Peerage (1945), vol. 10 and the Annual Register (1913).

²¹ Thus The Times (19th October, 1943), p. 6.

²² "The Intellectual Aristocracy", pp. 249 f.

²³ Letter from H. W. Shepheard-Walwyn to *The Times* (1st July, 1933, p. 8).

young Macaulay's remark, "Thank you, madam, the agony is abated", might be matched by young Emma Frances's response to her father's offer of a story-book, "No thank you, Papa, I have my book on pneumatics to take with me". Let In the next generation Gladys used to have long talks with her brother Edwyn on Greek and Latin subjects. Her other brother Ashley was well known in later life for his caustic comments on those who did not attain his own high standards of scholarly accuracy. The daughters were educated as well as the sons. Mrs. E. F. Bevan herself had been highly educated, and she allowed Nesta to leave home to go to Westfield College. The family seemed to take modern languages in their stride. Nesta, for instance, was fluent at an early age in French, German, and Italian.

Almost all the Bevans were well and widely read; in common with many nineteenth-century county families, literature was in their bones. Their ancestors, Quaker and Evangelical, bequeathed then a love of learning, and, as Neatby testified,26 a similar love characterized many nineteenth-century Plymouth Brethren, to which movement Mrs. E. F. Bevan belonged. Mrs. Bevan's austerity never extended to clothes; unlike some of the women described by Annan,27 she and her daughters were always becomingly dressed. And yet the Bevans' response to art was uncertain. They shared something of their contemporaries' insensitivity to fine architecture. Mrs. Webster has commented on the ugliness of Trent Park as a result of the "improvements" made at the end of the Victorian era. In spite of the fact that they appreciated the music of words in poetry, they were, with a few exceptions such as Lady Agneta (R. C. L. Bevan's first wife) and F. A. Bevan, a very unmusical family. According to Mrs. Webster, her mother believed that music was the lowest of the arts because it was the only one that we shared with the animal kingdom.

A certain religious earnestness was typical of many of the Bevans and their relations. In the eighteenth century several Quaker families, such as the Gurneys, the Barclays, and Bevans, had intermarried. As they prospered and mixed with evangelical philanthropists and business men, many left the Friends.²⁸

²⁴ Mrs. Nesta H. Webster, Spacious Days [1950], p. 25. This autobiography supplies many of the facts in this and the next paragraph.

²⁵ Gilbert Murray (Proc. Brit. Acad., XXIX, 1943, p. 411).

Although the Bevans soon ceased to belong to the Society, they inherited and bequeathed a Quaker capacity for hard work and singlemindedness. Several of them either became Evangelicals themselves, as did Favell Bourke Bevan, her daughters, Louisa Priscilla and Favell Lee, and her sons, Robert Cooper Lee and the Reverend David Barclay, or married Evangelicals, as did David Bevan on his marriage to Favell Bourke.

The Shuttleworths came of clerical stock. Philip Nicholas, the Bishop of Chichester, had a vicar for a father. One of his daughters, Emmie, married a vicar; another, Emma Frances, became a member of the Plymouth Brethern. Of Emma Frances's children, Gwendolen married Ion Keith-Falconer, a member of the Free Church of Scotland. In the nineteenth century the Haldanes and Robert Burdon threw up their careers for religious reasons. Keith-Falconer did the same by leaving Cambridge and dying as a missionary in Arabia. Mrs. Nesta Webster, she told us in her autobiography, broke away in her youth from family tradition; but she evidently soon tired of purposeless living, although she never embraced the faith of her parents. Ashley, too, was in no sense an Evangelical; but he probably owed more to his early religious upbringing than he realized. Although even his close friends stood a little in awe of his erudition and his wit, he was hospitable and at ease with humbler folk, a man of unbounded kindness and sympathy. Unostentatious, he was determined to prevent his left hand from knowing what his right one was doing. The Principal of St. David's College, Lampeter, paid tribute to Edwyn's deep personal Christian faith, based on the historical character of the Christian revelation, and called him a layman of whom Anglicans might be proud.29

"One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh". Evangelicalism had faded, but there remained many of the principles that stemmed from it: a sense of dedication, of redeeming the time, and of holding aloof from worldly vanities. Here, indeed, it seemed, was indeed, it seemed, was "an aristocracy, secure, established . . . accustomed to responsible and judicious utterance and sceptical of iconoclastic speculation". It has survived and thrived until now; but will it long do so in a different environment and in a world of changing values? Who can tell?

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²⁹ The Rev. H. K. Archdall in *The Times* (6th November, 1943, p. 7). ³⁰ Annan, *op. cit.*, p. 285.