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978-1-107-50540-7 - The Life and Poems of William Cartwright

Edited by R. Cullis Goffin

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# THE LIFE AND POEMS OF WILLIAM CARTWRIGHT

EDITED BY

R. CULLIS GOFFIN, M.A.

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TO  
MY BROTHER

BORN : VIZIANAGRAM, INDIA, 4 FEB. 1887,

KILLED : YPRES, BELGIUM, 4 JUNE, 1915.

CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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## PREFACE

READERS of Cartwright will agree that this spirited and once famous writer has been too long neglected. His poems have been arranged, generally speaking, in the order in which they appear in the rare 1651 Edition of Cartwright's Plays and Poems (*v.* Introd. p. xl and xlv). The Songs from the Plays contained in that Edition have also been included here.

In annotating the poems, I have tried to avoid too much "blanching the obscure places and discourse upon the plain." But it is inevitable that such work should appear capricious to some.

I am grateful to Prof. W. P. Ker for suggesting this subject to me as one of promise; and, while he is in no way responsible for what this book contains, for his help and advice in my work upon it; to Dr R. W. Chambers for time always placed ungrudgingly at my disposal; to the Cambridge University Press reader who has set right certain ms. errors; and finally, to my father, the Rev. H. J. Goffin, for his undertaking on my behalf to see the volume through the press. *Gloria filiorum patres!*

R. C. G.

GAUHATI, ASSAM.  
October, 1916.

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## INTRODUCTION

“WILLIAM CARTWRIGHT, the most noted poet, orator and philosopher of his time, was born at Northway, near Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire, in September, 1611 (9 Jac. I), and baptized there on the 26th day of the same month.” So runs the account given by Anthony à Wood in the *Athenae Oxonienses*. But Lloyd had given a different story in his *Memoirs*. He speaks there of “Mr Wm. Cartwright, Son of Thomas Cartwright of Burford, in the County of Oxford, born August 16. 1615.”

There is a note added to Wood’s account to be found in Bliss’s edition of the *Athenae*.

“Although I had no doubt,” says Bliss, “as to Wood’s accuracy, I was induced to write to Burford in order, if possible, to satisfy my readers on this point, and I have been favoured by the Rev. Francis Knollis, vicar of Burford, with a letter on the subject, from which I extract the following: ‘I have very carefully examined the register of Burford, but can find no such name as that of *Cartwright*, and therefore conclude that no family of that name did reside here. I have likewise examined the register of the chapelry of Fulbrook, but without success.’

“Lloyd is not, by any means, a writer to be depended

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on, as Wood well knew, when he gave him the character to be found in another part of this work, and I was in great hopes that I might have proved my author's correctness by an application at Northway; here, however, unfortunately (as I learn by the kindness of the Rev. D. C. Parry) the early registers are lost, but, says Mr Parry, 'I was informed there were strong reasons for believing that persons of that name (Cartwright) did at some time live in the hamlet of Northway.' The earliest register, it seems, commences in 1703, and the name occurs once only during the first twenty years."

The balance of evidence obviously favours Wood even at this point. Masson, in his life of Milton, refers to Cartwright as "the son of a Gloucestershire innkeeper," and Welch<sup>1</sup> too follows Wood. But Mr A. H. Bullen in the *Dictionary of National Biography* only accepts Wood's account as "probably true."

It was Aubrey who was Wood's authority. Aubrey knew the Cartwright family personally. That Northway was the birthplace, "I have from his brother," he says, "who lives not far from me, and from his sisters whom I called upon in Gloucestershire in Leckhampton."

Northway, in Gloucestershire, is a hamlet within the parish of Ashchurch, near Tewkesbury. The registers of Ashchurch are *not* lost. On the contrary, they go back, more or less completely, to the year 1555. Under the year 1611, on the 26th day of December, occurs the entry of the baptism of a William Cartwright, son of William Cartwright. His sister Howes, mentioned by Aubrey, was born four years later.

<sup>1</sup> In his *Alumni Westmonasterienses*.

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Both his father and his uncle, Thexton Cartwright, had been to the university of Oxford. The entries in Foster's *Alumni Oxonienses* are unmistakable:

"*Thekeston C.* of co. Gos. pleb. Ball. Col. matric. 28 June 1604, aged 16; son of Timothy C. of Washborne co. Gos. (and his wife, d. of Sir John Thexton of London), brother of Wm. of same date.

"*Wm. C.* of co. Gos. pleb. Balliol Col. matric. 28 June 1604, aged 18; married Dorothy, daughter of Rowland Coles, of Northway, possibly [*sic*] father of the next named, brother of Thexton, or Thekeston, same date."

The poet's uncle Thexton is not mentioned in the family tree (see p. xiv below); at any rate, here is some evidence of the family learning. Later follows:

"*Wm. C. s. Wm.* of Heckhampton, co. Gos. gent., etc. ...born at Northway, near Tewkesbury"...(here follow the dates and successes of the poet).

Also mentioned is a

"*Tbos. C. s. William*, of Greekeland, co. Gos. gent. Ch. Ch. matric. 21 Oct. 1642, aged 16<sup>1</sup>."

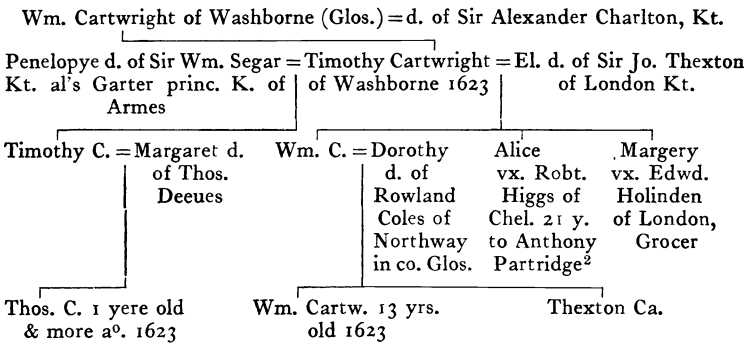
The affairs of William Cartwright the elder were then flourishing. In *Men and Armour for Gloucestershire in 1608*<sup>2</sup> reference is made to him, William Cartwright of Washborne in Gloucestershire<sup>3</sup>, who had two able-bodied menservants. He is further declared to have been then about twenty years of age (*i.e.* to have been born about 1588). The dates thus coincide.

<sup>1</sup> The last named Thomas, who also went to Christ Church, may be a young brother of the poet. And "Greekeland" may be Greet, a hamlet near Washborne.

<sup>2</sup> Sub cap. *Washborne*.

<sup>3</sup> There is another William Cartwright mentioned (sub cap. *Tewkesbury*), of the same age too, a Glover.

The family of the Cartwrights was well known in the neighbourhood of Tewkesbury. In Treddington Church (some two and a half miles south-east of Tewkesbury) are inscriptions to several of their family. Rudder, in his *History of Gloucestershire* (p. 235), gives illustrations of the coat of arms of this branch, and it is almost identical with that recorded by the heraldic visitation of the county in 1623. The genealogical table of the Washborne Cartwrights is there<sup>1</sup> given as follows:



The William last mentioned is evidently the poet. He was born in 1611, and his father's Christian name is the same. His mother, *née* Dorothy Coles, came from Northway, some five miles west of Great Washborne. Her family evidently take recognised rank in that neighbourhood, and their own genealogical tree appears also in the same publication<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Harleian Society Publications, Visitation of Gloucestershire, 1623.*

<sup>2</sup> An account of the marriage agreement between the two Timothy C.'s and Anthony Partridge, who possessed large estates, may be seen in *Glos. Inquis. Post Mortem Chas. 1*, p. 2, No. 97, 2100 d. 7.

<sup>3</sup> And see also *Men and Armour, sub Northway*: "Rowland Cole, 'a subsidy man with three servants, unable in body.'"

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The elder William belongs to a younger branch of the family; Timothy and after him the infant Thomas both stand in the way of his inheritance. So, it seems, he solves the problem of the lack of prospects by marrying Miss Coles, an heiress in a small way. She brings to him as dowry a hundred pounds a year, and, according to Aubrey, property in Wiltshire. This property was ultimately inherited by William the poet. The married couple then live on land belonging to her family in Northway, and here the poet is born in 1611. Wood describes the poet's father as "once a gentleman of fair estate"; "of three hundred pounds a year," says Aubrey.

Now follows an extraordinary change of fortune. Whether it was due to his lack of private means or to subsequent disaster we do not know, but we next hear of the elder William as an innkeeper near Cirencester. This plunge into business was, according to Wood, made in order to retrieve his broken fortunes. But it only lasted "a year or thereabout," for "he declined and lost by it too<sup>1</sup>."

Wood proceeds to describe how the father, nevertheless, although "living in a middle condition, caused that his son, of great hopes, to be educated under Mr Will. Topp, master of the free school there," *i.e.* in Cirencester. Lloyd omits all mention of this part of Cartwright's education, of Topp's name, and of other details; Wood is evidently the better informed. The name of the schoolmaster, however, appears to have been *Henry*, not *William* Topp. Henry Topp is mentioned by Wood, as a Master of Arts of Oriel College. He was appointed to Cirencester in 1622, and appears, from all accounts, to have had a much better

<sup>1</sup> Aubrey.

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record as student than as teacher<sup>1</sup>. The abilities of his young pupil William, however, seem to have won recognition. The boy was about eleven years of age when he entered the school. "But so great a progress did he make in a short time, that by the advice of friends, his father got him to be sped a king's scholar at Westminster, compleating his former learning to a miracle under Mr Lambert Osbaldstone." Osbaldstone had been headmaster of Westminster school since 1625; in all he had been there since 1621. His learning was universally admitted; Cowley dedicated a poem to him, calling him "my very loving Master." After what was, evidently, a brilliant career at Westminster, Cartwright was elected student of Christ Church, and went to Oxford. It is a remarkable fact that to this college was being gradually gathered quite a coterie of aspirants to poetic fame; "Christchurch for poets," says one contemporary. His tutor there was Jerumael Terrent, an old Westminster boy himself. Cartwright's tutor has also been identified, but unreasonably, I think, with the *Thomas Terrent* who contributed excellent Latin verses to the *Jonsonus Virbius*.

Cartwright was a brilliant and most industrious student, "sitting sixteen hours a day at all manner of knowledge," says Lloyd in his *Memoirs*. Jasper Mayne thus addresses him in one of the commendatory poems prefixed to the 1651 collected edition of Cartwright's works:

[Thou] didst run  
A course in knowledge dayly like the Sun,  
And nightly too; For when all other eyes  
Were lock't, and shut, but those that watch the Skies,

<sup>1</sup> Vide *The Victoria History of the County of Gloucester* (Constable, 1907).



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Thou, like Discoverers at Sea, went'st on,  
 To find out new worlds, to all else unknown.  
 Nor would Thy busie Candle let Thee sleep,  
 Till Thou had'st fathom'd the unfathom'd Deep.

Wood, too, says he “went through the classes of logic and philosophy with an unwearied industry.”

During his fifteen years' residence at Oxford Cartwright identified himself with the life of his College and University in all its aspects. He was one of the leaders of the Christ Church students in a protestation to the King against the discipline maintained by the Dean and Chapter<sup>1</sup>. Griffith in his *Praelogium* includes Cartwright among the “numina Oxonii tutelaria<sup>2</sup>.” He took his B.A. the 5th June, 1632, and his M.A. the 15th April, 1635. He entered holy orders, became reader in metaphysics, and, finally, proctor in 1643. Yet “his high abilities were accompanied with so much candour and sweetness that they made him equally loved and admired<sup>3</sup>.” His oratory, notably in his lectures on the Passions, was highly esteemed in Christ Church. “Those wild beasts (the Passions),” says Lloyd<sup>4</sup>, “being tuned and composed to tameness and order, by his sweet and harmonious language,” seemed “but variegated reason.” His Metaphysic School was continually thronged<sup>5</sup>, Oxford at that time being more than ever interested and even concerned in such discussions. Aristotle, under his interpretation, “ran as smooth as Virgil”; his philosophy was “as melting as his plays.” “The Theatre was thin

<sup>1</sup> *Clarendon State Papers (Domestic)*, 1629, Nov. 17, and 1640–1, Feb. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Wood, *Athenae*, III, 454.

<sup>3</sup> From the Preface to the 1651 edition.

<sup>4</sup> The same phrasing is found in Cartwright's poem *To Mrs Asbford*: “Passions like wilder beasts thus tam'd be.”

<sup>5</sup> Moseley corroborates this in his *Preface to the Reader*.

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to his school, and Comedy was not half so good entertainment as his Philosophy.” “Cartwright was the utmost man could come to,” said Dr Fell, not without reason.

Meanwhile, perhaps, the poet was able to revive something of his father’s old rank. An estate was bought at Leckhampton, near Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. Here the Cartwright family were visited later by Aubrey; this is evidently the place meant by the “Heckhampton” of the *Alumni Oxonienses*.

Politics possessed always a great attraction for Cartwright. He remained an unflinching Royalist until his death, and his own personal devotion to his sovereign is displayed equally in his life and in his verse. All this lay in line with his lifelong attachment to Dr Brian Duppa, likewise an old Westminster boy, who became Dean of Christ Church in 1629. Cartwright, no doubt, owed much of his advancement to the friendship and patronage of this eminent divine, who became Vice-Chancellor in 1632, was private tutor to the Prince of Wales, and in close touch with Archbishop Laud. Many of Cartwright’s poems are dedicated to Duppa. The King and Queen, too, were constantly at Oxford, and the life of the Royal family was the great source of inspiration for topical verse-exercises by the scholars. Collections of these academic verse-addresses were made and presented to Royalty whenever occasion offered.

Such a collection was the *Britanniae Natalis*, celebrating the birth of Charles II in 1630, and Cartwright wrote a poem for it in Latin.

Laud, as Chancellor, interfered a good deal with University affairs, and discipline under his authority was strictly enforced. His prohibition of the “Westminster

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supper” held on Fridays by the old boys of that school in Christ Church is typical, and would affect Cartwright<sup>1</sup>. His overshadowing personality is reflected also in the increasing theological quarrels. Cartwright himself was, like Duppa, a whole-hearted Laudian; he hated Puritanism violently; he was a great admirer of Arminius. Both in his plays and in his verses are many and warm references to the theological differences and debates of his day. We can see his familiarity with the technical terms required for these discussions. His entire devotion to Laud, that thorough if tactless archbishop, the “gracious hand who perfected our statutes,” is patent enough from his poems<sup>2</sup>.

Cartwright contributed poems in Latin and English to the ensuing academic collections, as follows:

- |       |                                      |     |                 |
|-------|--------------------------------------|-----|-----------------|
| 1631. | <i>Ad...Iobannem Cirenbergium.</i>   | 1   | Latin poem.     |
| 1633. | <i>Pro Rege suo Soteria.</i>         | do. | 1 English poem. |
| „     | <i>Solis Britannici Perigaeum.</i>   | do. | do.             |
| „     | <i>Vitis Carolinae Gemma Altera.</i> | do. | do.             |

In August, 1636, the King and Queen were entertained by the University. On the 29th they saw Strode's

<sup>1</sup> *Clarendon State Papers (Domestic)*, 1638, Dec. 20, and see also the poem *A Bill of Fare*, and note to l. 49, “For, if this fasting hold,” etc.

<sup>2</sup> There is an interesting note in Aubrey's *Remains of Gentilisme and Judaisme* (ed. Folklore Society from Brit. Mus. ms. 1686-7), p. 69, which illustrates Cartwright's attitude towards Laud. “When I was of Trin. Coll. there was a sale of Mr Wm. Cartwright's (Poet) bookes, many whereof I had; amongst others (I know not how) was Dr Daniel Featly's *Handmayd to Devotion*; which was printed shortly after Dr Heylin's Hist. aforesaid. In the Holyday Devotions he speakes of St George, and asserts the story to be fabulous; and that there was never any such man. Wm. Cartwright writes in the Margent ‘*For this assertion was Dr Featley brought upon his knees before Wm. Laud A-Bp of Canterbury.*’”

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*Floating Island* produced, with “novel stage appliances,” by the students of Christ Church. On the 30th their Majesties witnessed *The Royal Slave*, another “University show” as Ben Jonson called them, written by Cartwright himself. The songs of the play were set to music by Henry Lawes; the “scenic effects,” which were reproduced at Hampton Court, were by Inigo Jones.

Cartwright must have been already known as the author of *The Ordinary*. In his prologue to that play he laments his greenness in the ways of the theatre, as well as in those of vice. Moreover, the style of the play and the peculiar zest with which he tries to atone for this inexperience, betray a youthful ambition. Cartwright has, in all, four plays to his name, comedies and tragicomedies, all printed in the 1651 edition along with the lesser poems. Ward<sup>1</sup> declares them to be “thoroughly rhetorical in manner. The serious dialogue,” he says, “is elevated in sentiment, and occasionally graceful in form; but we miss any real play of passion or depth of pathos springing from a truly dramatic imagination. The comic scenes are almost wholly conventional; for of comic power Cartwright seems to have been devoid. More or less absorbed in the life of his university, though under aspects more important than those which occupied Randolph [at Cambridge], Cartwright must have been without the wider experience of men and manners which in a comic dramatist so often serves as a substitute for originality.”

The play chosen or written for the King’s entertainment was at any rate his most original effort. *The Lady Errant* seems to be founded on an idea taken from Fletcher’s *The Sea Voyage*; *The Siedge* is based on an anecdote

<sup>1</sup> In *English Dramatic Literature*, III, p. 139.

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related by Plutarch; while *The Ordinary* is a confessedly second-hand study of London rascal society.

*The Royal Slave* (there are two editions, 1639, and 1640, both at Oxford) was produced with the same mechanical contrivances as had been used with Strode's *Floating Island*. But Cartwright's play contained much more variety. "It was very well penn'd and acted, and the strangeness of the Persian habits gave great content." "All things went happy," said the Chancellor<sup>1</sup>. According to Evelyn, Strode's play was a little too grave and hard to understand. On the other hand Evelyn declares that "His Majesty and all the Nobles" commended *The Royal Slave* as the best play that ever was acted. One of the student-actors (afterwards to become the famous Dr Busby) performed his part so well that he decided thereupon "to commence actor on the public stage<sup>2</sup>." The University spent altogether more than £800 in preparation for this royal visit<sup>3</sup>; every college contributed to and shared in their Majesties' entertainment<sup>4</sup>. *The Royal Slave* was acted again on September 2nd for the benefit of the University and of strangers. In the following November the Queen asked if she might have the Persian costumes, so that her own players might act the play. The costumes were accordingly sent to Hampton Court, and Cartwright himself went to supervise this professional performance by the King's company. It was again an elaborate pro-

<sup>1</sup> See Wood, *Athenae*, and the *Clarendon State Papers (Domestic)*, 1636, Sept. 4.

<sup>2</sup> See Bray's note to Evelyn, 1, 421. The names of the other student actors were preserved in the Heber ms. 1043 of *The Royal Slave*. But this has since been lost. See *Notes and Queries*, 3, viii, 287, and 5, viii, 447.

<sup>3</sup> See the account in Madan.

<sup>4</sup> Laud's letter to the Vice-Chancellor (1636).

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duction<sup>1</sup>, but apparently the glamour had passed. Though Cartwright wrote a new prologue and epilogue to grace the occasion, “by all men’s confession the Players came short of the Actors<sup>2</sup>.” Cartwright received £40 for his pains, and the precious Persian costumes were carefully preserved, at Laud’s request, from becoming mere stage properties.

We next hear of Cartwright as again contributing his share to further academic collections of loyal verse. His contributions were as follows:

1636.	<i>Coronae Carolinae Quadratura</i> <sup>3</sup> , 1	English, 1	Latin poem.
1637.	<i>Flos Britannicus</i>	do.	do.
1638.	<i>Death Repeal’d...</i>	do.	do.
„	<i>Charisteria...pro Maria</i>	do.	do.
1640.	<i>Horti Carolini Rosa Altera</i>	do.	
1641.	<i>Protelesia Anglo-Batava</i>	do.	do.

In 1640 a second edition of *The Royal Slave* had been published at Oxford.

By this time Laud’s authority was beginning to dwindle. The Long Parliament met, and the opposition in the country to his downright policy became more outspoken. He resigned the Chancellorship of Oxford on the 22nd of June, 1641, and was succeeded on July 1st by Philip Herbert, Earl of Pembroke. It is curious to find Cartwright addressing the newcomer in a poem of welcome and congratulation written in his usual fluent style. This was printed and published as a separate leaflet.

Religious differences were at length merging in bitter

<sup>1</sup> Described in *Clarendon State Papers (Domestic)*, 1637, April 11.  
<sup>2</sup> Wood, *Athenae*.  
<sup>3</sup> Details of these are to be found in the notes to the poems.

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and violent civil strife. Oxford was at the heart of all the new movements. On the 9th of August, 1642, a public prosecution was read there against the Parliamentary “rebels.” The University began to look to her fortifications and her military resources. In a review of all possible recruits for service, Wood describes how “many Scholars appeared.” On the 18th the new contingent was drilled again, and “put into array” in the great quadrangle at Christ Church, always the foremost college among the loyalists. Cartwright, no doubt, was prominent and playing an energetic part. “There were a great number of them Masters of Arts, and Divines also” among these scholar-soldiers, we are told. Cartwright was both, and cherished a worshipful devotion to his King.

Meanwhile Oxford town was not showing herself so surely loyal, and trouble was threatening the University from that quarter. Accordingly a convocation was held and letters read from the King. It was decided to appoint “A Delegacy” to superintend. Out of a total of eight elected to serve, two were members of Christ Church. These were William Stuteville and William Cartwright. The “Delegacy,” popularly known in the University as “the Council of War,” now took command. Reviews and musters were held; drills were organized in various college grounds; £1000 were raised by public subscription.

Lord Say, a Parliamentary captain, approached Oxford with troops and opened negotiations with the town. He quartered his men in Christ Church meadow, and they sneered at “the painted idolatrous windows” of the College. Although on September the 10th several prominent scholars had left Oxford to serve as volunteers under Sir John

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Byrone, Cartwright apparently still remained. We can well imagine his annoyance with these uncouth Parliamentarians. But his position was a dangerous one. Lord Say entered Oxford on September the 14th; the next day hidden treasure was discovered in Christ Church, which had been diligently guarded and searched by the Parliamentary troopers. With Stuteville and John Castilion, another fellow-collegian, Cartwright was put in prison. They were accused of “uttering certain words, and the rather for that they had trained among the Scholars.” They were, however, released soon after, “upon £200 bail a piece taken for them, but not to remain in the University, unless by order from the Lord Say<sup>1</sup>.” King Charles entered Oxford on November the 29th, and the fugitives were then, if not before, able to return, having successfully avoided falling into the hands of the enemy.

In the preceding October, Cartwright had been appointed succentor or subchaunter in the church of Salisbury, under the patronage of Duppa, his good friend still<sup>2</sup>. Cartwright would not accept a resident post away from his University. And Dr Duppa did not wish “to deprive Oxford” of so zealous a servant, or further preferment would undoubtedly have been put in his way.

In this same October the battle of Edgehill took place. It was after this that the King came on to Oxford, and lodged at Christ Church. On this occasion, “at his (the King’s) return from Edgehill fight,” Cartwright preached a special sermon “by the King’s command.”

On the 12th of April, 1643, Cartwright was appointed

<sup>1</sup> Wood.

<sup>2</sup> Dr Duppa had been appointed Chancellor of Salisbury in 1634 and Bishop in December, 1641.



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Junior Proctor by the University. The King's cause was at its zenith, and Oxford was regarded by Royalists, at any rate, as the capital town of England. The University felt itself free to return somewhat to the old habits of life. When the Queen entered Oxford on July the 14th, she was hailed by the students in the normal academic way, and, not a fortnight after her arrival, the congratulatory collection of poems (*Epibateria*) was published. Cartwright himself contributed,—and likewise a certain Thomas Cartwright, also of Christ Church, and possibly his younger brother—a poem apiece.

The battle of Lansdown was fought in July and is noteworthy from the gallant part played in it by Sir Bevill Grenville, celebrated by the publication, a month later, of a set of “Verses” in his honour. Cartwright gave of his best to this Royalist panegyric, and his contribution is perhaps the most spirited of his poems.

Oxford was thronged by the military and political followers of the King. In January, 1644, Parliament sat in the great hall at Christ Church. All its rooms were appointed for official uses. From July onwards the Queen herself had been in residence there.

Cartwright was probably living out of College. His short career was now nearly over. The town of Oxford had always been in a most insanitary condition, and *A true relation of the taking of Bristol*, published early in 1643, declares that “men die dayly there of a Callenture, being a burning fever.” Cartwright's last poem dates from this time—“*November, of Signal Days observed in that month in relation to the Crown and Royal Family*<sup>1</sup>.” It was to be a signal month for the young poet too. The

<sup>1</sup> First published as a broadside, and then reprinted in 1671.

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“Morbus Campestris” raged more fiercely than ever. “Many Soldiers and Inhabitants, some also belonging to the King’s and Queen’s court, with a few Scholars, died thereof.” Cartwright was of those stricken. He succumbed after a short illness, but his case evidently aroused great concern. The King, amongst others, constantly enquired of his health.

It is generally declared that Cartwright died on the 29th of November, 1643. This is Wood’s account, who further states that he “was buried on the first day of December, towards the upper end of the south isle [“north” says Chalmers, followed by Mr Bullen] joyning to the choir of the cathedral of Christ Church<sup>1</sup>.” This is curious, for the entry in the Register of Deaths, preserved in the Vestry at Christ Church, runs as follows: “William Cartwright, Student and Proctor, buried Anno Dmi 1643 December 7th.” The “7th” in the Register is quite unmistakable. But the tablet to his memory seems to have disappeared. It probably stood, if indeed there ever was one, in the *south* aisle originally, near where the memorial to Bishop King was formerly placed. That is, it was in the second bay (from the east) of the South Choir aisle. There is now a grating where his slab or lozenge should be. It is probable, however, that no inscription to his memory was ever composed; certainly, it was not in those troubled days. “Pitty ’tis so famous a bard should lye without an inscription,” declares Aubrey.

<sup>1</sup> The lines

thy famous Colledge has the trust  
Preferr’d to be the Wardrobe of thy Dust

occur in the Introductory Verses by R. Gardiner, prefixed to the 1651 edition. And vide also Wood, *Hist. and Antiq.* III, 508.

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The King insisted on appearing in mourning on the day of the funeral. “Since the Muses,” said his Majesty, “had mourned so much for the loss of such a son, it would be a shame for him not to appear in mourning for the loss of such a subject.” That his King knew and publicly acknowledged his worth and loyalty was the reward Cartwright himself would most have appreciated. “But what’s all this,” says Henry Vaughan<sup>1</sup>,

unto a Royall Test  
*Thou art the Man*, whom great Charles so exprest.

Vaughan evidently felt the sincerity of Cartwright’s homage.

The poems of William Cartwright were collected after his death and published (in one volume with the plays) in 1651 by Humphrey Moseley<sup>2</sup>. Moseley at this time enjoyed almost a monopoly in the matter of publishing good poetry, and appears to have been himself one of the “wits” of the time. The poems appear in this volume after the plays, with a sub-heading “The Ayres and Songs set by Mr Henry Lawes, Servant to his Late Majesty in his Publick and Private Musick.” Lawes himself published many of his airs, and several of Cartwright’s songs, taken mainly from the plays, appear in these. The music of *The Royal Slave*, which added greatly to its popularity,

<sup>1</sup> In his poem prefixed to the 1651 edition of Cartwright.

<sup>2</sup> It is a curious fact that this 1651 volume contains no index to the poems. This is explained by the printer in a postscript: “we shall not trouble you with an Index; for already the book is bigger than we meant it, etc.”—yet “the Bodleian copy contains for fly leaves fragments of an index to all the poems, which shews that one was actually printed and suppressed.” Wood calls attention to this paradox in his *Athenae*.

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had been specially composed by Lawes. There is nothing more natural than that Lawes and Cartwright should have been acquainted; they probably first came together in 1636 in the production of *The Royal Slave* at Christ Church. They both were of “the society of Ben.” Carew, who has much in common with Cartwright, was a courtier too, and Lawes and Carew worked up songs and musical entertainments together in the same way. Lawes had from childhood been in the King’s service, and at this period had reached his highest fame. All the popular poets had agreed in recognising his abilities as a composer, and as an adapter of music to verse.

Information about Cartwright may be gleaned not only from Moseley’s *Preface to the Reader*, which begins his 1651 edition of the poet, but also from the host of commendatory poems which form nearly one quarter of the whole volume. These introductory poems are mainly of a very conventional inspiration, but they bear unimpeachable witness to the success and popularity of Cartwright’s muse. Vaughan the Silurist makes his offering:

Since a Labell fixt to thy fair Hearse  
Is all the mode;

and outside this particular volume, Benlowes, in an introductory poem to his *Theophila*:

For all these [virtues] died not with fam’d Cartwright though  
A score of poets join’d to have it so;

and Shadwell (in *Bury Fair*, Act ii, Scene 1):

I, that was a Judge at Blackfriars, writ before *Fletcher’s* works and  
*Cartwright’s*...and you to say I have no wit,

—all join in the universal tribute (itself becoming a recognised convention) to Cartwright’s renown.

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It is remarkable, therefore, to notice that his biographers, both Wood and Lloyd, insist on the solid merits of his character. He was especially beloved, we are told, of those of the gown and of the court, “who esteemed also his life a fair copy of practic piety, a rare example of heroic worth, and in whom arts, learning and language made up the true complement of perfection<sup>1</sup>.” His was a magnetic personality. “His soul, naturally great and capable, had ...three advantages to fill it; great spirited Tutors, choice Books and select Company; it was his usual saying, That it was his happiness that he neither heard nor read any thing vulgar, weak or raw, till his mind was fixed to notions exact as reason and as high as fancy....To see...a Miracle of Industry and Wit...turning the Axioms of Aristotle, the problems of Euclide, the summes of Aquinas, the Code of Justinian, the Contexture of History, the learning of Rabbines, the Mythology of Gentilism, the Fathers, Councils, Martyrologyes and Liturgicks and Christians; the Poetry, Oratory, and Criticism of the world into a good Man, a great Scholar, a most ingenious Poet and Orator, and an excellent Preacher, in whom hallowed fancies and reason grew Visions, and holy passions, Raptures and Extasies, and all this at thirty years of age<sup>2</sup>.” “All this” was the happy privilege of Cartwright’s acquaintance. But allowing for this somewhat “eastern hyperbolical expression” of contemporary admiration, one sees behind it an outline of the truth—that the poet possessed a charming if not a powerful personality, together with many admirable qualities. He himself quietly acquiesced in the general approbation, and with smiling and self-conscious superiority, criticised “the small poets” of

<sup>1</sup> Wood, *Athenae*.<sup>2</sup> Lloyd, *Memoirs*.

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his day<sup>1</sup>. He studied the popular literary taste, and was as self-adapting as Dryden or Defoe. He could write low-life comedy, personal panegyric, or typical seventeenth century love-elegies, with equal ease, in no case identifying himself with what he wrote. He keeps himself detached, as a cultured amateur.

Troth, I am like small Birds, which now in Spring  
When they have nought to eat, do sit and sing<sup>2</sup>.

“These poems were his Recreation,” says Moseley. He certainly gave up writing indecent verse when he took Holy Orders, but, in characteristic fashion, he tells us that the new life by no means spells for him the banishment of all the cakes and ale—

But being the Canon bars me Wit and Wine  
Enjoying the true Vine,

he says, and one suspects a smile at his own virtue. Lines like

To perish full is not the worst of Fate<sup>3</sup>,

and his easy-tempered, somewhat coarse love-poems seem his more natural self-expression.

Cartwright never troubled himself during his short life to collect his verses for publication, although they appear to have enjoyed a wide manuscript circulation. They were, indeed, “so strangely scatter’d that the Printer had difficulty in getting them together<sup>4</sup>.” Characteristic

<sup>1</sup> In *To John Fletcher (Another on the Same)*, l. 79. However, he seems to have recognised the fact of the shortness of the Poets Day:

There’s difference between fame, and sudden pay.

(To Ben Jonson.)

<sup>2</sup> From *A Bill of Fare*.

<sup>3</sup> *A Bill of Fare*.

<sup>4</sup> *Preface* to 1651 edition.