

NOTE TO USERS

This reproduction is the best copy available.

UMI[®]

LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY

BIOGRAPHER

by Sister Saint Kevin C.N.D. (Hawley)

Thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts
of the University of Ottawa in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts.



*Degree conferred
May 18, 1956
E.S.
Ours.*

Ottawa, Canada, 1956

UMI Number: EC56176

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI[®]

UMI Microform EC56176
Copyright 2011 by ProQuest LLC
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author wishes to thank :

Professor Emmett O'Grady, Ph.D., head of the Department of English, Ottawa University, under whose direction this thesis was prepared;

Notre Dame College, Ottawa for the use of its library and many other services;

Marianopolis College, Montreal for the extended loan of books out of print and difficult to procure;

All those who rendered the author service in any way.

CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

Sister Saint Kevin, C.N.D., Noreen M. Hawley,

Born at Ottawa, July 18, 1912.

Received B.A. from Ottawa University, June 13, 1941

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
	INTRODUCTION	vi
I	ELEMENTS OF BIOGRAPHY	1
	Definition of Biography	1
	History in Biography	3
	Characterization in Biography	11
	Literary Excellence in Biography	17
	Conclusion	19
II	HISTORY IN GUINEY	21
	The Problem of Research	21
	Miss Guiney's Aptitudes for Research	22
	Sources for Monsieur Henri	31
	Presentation of Monsieur Henri	41
	Sources of Robert Emmet	44
	Presentation of Robert Emmet	49
	Sources of Edmund Campion	56
	Presentation of Edmund Campion	60
	Sources of Hurrell Froude	64
	Presentation of Hurrell Froude	69
	Sources of A Little English Gallery	70
	Lady Danvers	72
	Henry Vaughan	74
	William Hazlitt	76
	George Farquhar	78
	Beauclerk and Langton	79
	James Clarence Mangan	82
	The Mock Chatterton	82
	Recusant Poets	91
	Conclusion	93
III	CHARACTERIZATION IN GUINEY	95
	Aim of Miss Guiney	95
	Use of Heredity	95
	Use of Portraits	97
	Use of Details	102
	Use of Incidents	104
	Disclosure of Faults in Subject	108
	Praise of Subject	114
	School to which Miss Guiney Belongs	115
	Conclusion	118

TABLE OF CONTENTS

v

Chapter	Page
IV LITERARY EXCELLENCE IN GUINEY	119
Criticism of Miss Guiney	119
Dramatic Quality	121
Comparisons, Metaphors, Similes	123
Descriptive Quality	125
Quality of Prose	126
Humour	130
Artistic Conception of Work as a Whole	131
Conclusion	134
 CONCLUSION	 137
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 142
 APPENDIX	 146
 ABSTRACT	 147

INTRODUCTION

The work of Louise Imogen Guiney as poet and essayist has been discussed and appraised in several articles and reviews in both Catholic and secular periodicals and in a number of histories of American Literature. It has also been the subject of several masters' and one doctoral dissertation. However, its worth and technique from the point of view of biography has not been the subject of any such detailed study, hence the justification of the present thesis.

Sister Mary Albert, in her dissertation, Louise Imogen Guiney,¹ does devote one sub-section of a chapter to a consideration of the question as to whether Miss Guiney is a biographer or historian, and she concludes that she possessed many characteristics which would qualify her as either. She also declares that Miss Guiney "would rather have subscribed to the modern method in its aim at totality, the depiction of good and evil"² rather than agree with those Victorian and other biographers who held that unpleasant and unedifying traits of character or events in the life of the biographee

¹Sister Mary Albert, Murphy, "Louise Imogen Guiney", a dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of English at Fordham University, New York, 1939, 300 p.

²Ibid., p. 120.

INTRODUCTION

vii

should be suppressed. But her treatment is fairly cursory since her topic did not bear specifically on this angle of Miss Guiney's work.

The aim of the present writer is to show to what extent the latter has fulfilled the requirements of "pure" biography as enumerated by competent authorities and critics in this field, by an objective analysis of her principal biographical books and essays. An attempt will be made to demonstrate that, while she has little in common with those moderns who are the followers of Strodhey and his "debunking" technique, and despite an attitude of subjective emotionalism and hero-worship, as well as a relative incompleteness, still, in brevity, in a flair for the dramatic and concrete, in her ability to make her subjects interesting living personalities, as in a wholesome respect for historic truth, she has a certain affinity to the present-day writers of biography.

In order to clarify the issue, the first chapter will be devoted to the definition of the term biography and to an exposition of its three essential elements: history, characterization, and literary excellence. The pitfalls which the biographer must avoid, the ideal toward which he must strive, together with the principal differences between the "pure" and "impure" biography will be discussed, so that a

INTRODUCTION

viii

definite criterion may be set up, by which it will be possible to judge and assess her success or failure.

The three succeeding chapters will deal in turn with Miss Guiney's handling of each of these elements.

Chapter two will consider her sources, her facts and the degree of objectivity, or lack of it, in her presentation. Chapter three, devoted to characterization, will deal with ways and means employed by the author to depict character. Again, her subjective or objective approach in this matter, her one-sided or total view of the man, her ability to make him live, will be of prime importance. Her aim, and her adherence to the tenets of the school of "pure" biography, or to those of the "pedestal" school of Carlyle and the writers of "earnest" Victorian lives, will be pointed out. Chapter four will contain an exposition of the chief features of her prose style, and some comments on the construction of her biographical works from the artistic point of view.

In the conclusion the writer will review the main points, and hopes that the study will show, that while Miss Guiney is not primarily a biographer, that a personal and emotional attitude in her work would militate against her becoming an expert in "pure" biography, still her search for

INTRODUCTION

ix

truth, a flair for the dramatic, and a lively presentation of character, together with a certain excellence of prose style, exemplify some of those characteristics which are the hall-marks of good modern lives.

Since the majority of her essays are critical rather than biographical only those which have a definite bearing on this topic will be considered primary sources.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ELEMENTS OF BIOGRAPHY

The word biography, itself, is conceded by both Dunn¹ and Nicolson², to have been introduced into the English language by Dryden in 1683, in the dedication to Plutarch's Lives, commonly known as the Dryden translation. It is defined as "the history of particular men's lives."³ Dunn also ascribed to him, the differentiation into annals, history proper, and biographia---concepts which had no distinctive significance until then, because records of men's lives and events of the periods in which they lived, were quite inextricably interwoven without much attempt to disentangle them.

The character sketch, the memoir, and hagiography were in existence, even popular, and Nicolson maintains all the essential elements of biography "were either existent or discovered between 1600 and 1700"⁴ yet the proper development of biography was arrested and sidetracked by two factors.

¹Waldo H. Dunn, English Biography, London, Dent, 1916 p. 77.

²Harold Nicolson, The Development of English Biography, London, Hogarth, 1927, p. 70.

³Ibid., p. 70.

⁴Ibid., p. 38.

THE ELEMENTS OF BIOGRAPHY

2

Thomas Sprat became the father of what is now known as the "discreet" biography, a type which found many imitators, and which came into full flower in the Victorian era. Dryden, who could have initiated the "Strachey technique" almost two centuries before it came into being diverted his talents to other channels, thus the newly-launched vessel, without a master hand at the helm, was driven by the winds and waves of sentimentality and a false idealism, upon the sand banks of elegaic conventionalism.

Dryden's definition has been slightly amplified in The Oxford Dictionary which gives "biography, the history of individual men as a branch of literature."⁵ Professor Nicolson uses this definition maintaining that the three key words, "history", "individual" and "literature"⁶ indicate the three essential elements of biography. For this reason, it is the definition adopted in this thesis.

It will now be necessary to examine these terms separately in order to have a clear understanding of what each connotes in its relation to biography.

⁵The Oxford Universal Dictionary, Third Revised Edition, London, Oxford, 1955, p. 180

⁶Nicolson, op. cit., p. 7

ELEMENTS OF BIOGRAPHY

3

History, in this context, means the truthful record of the acts and events in a real person's life, and of his relations with those among whom he lived---the emphasis being upon the word, truthful. History is of the very essence of biography. The biographer's horizon, like that of the historian's is circumscribed by the actuality of events. He is not free as is the novelist to enhance his story by invention and the creations of his imagination. When he commits himself to the task of life writing, he automatically binds himself to abide by the truth.

The question arises here, as to whether he must tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth. The answer is not a simple yes, or no. Certainly the truth in so far as it is known, or can be ascertained, must be given. However sometimes due to too much, too little, or conflicting evidence, the pure and unadulterated truth is hard to discern. In such circumstances the biographer has no other choice but to sift and weigh the material until all doubts be resolved, or failing a definitive solution, an impartial statement of the equivocal facts or lack of same must be given. This delving after evidence is an arduous task, but one which no competent biographer can afford to shirk or treat lightly. He must leave no stone unturned, no avenue unexplored, which may lead him to the desired goal. If doubt or ignorance still prevail, then he must admit this, not attempting to state

THE ELEMENTS OF BIOGRAPHY

4

what is merely possible or probable as being certain. Of course tampering with the evidence by suppression, addition, or alteration would be a complete travesty of truth.

Old records, manuscripts, letters to and from the biographee, memoirs, diaries, are the primary sources from which the biographer draws his material, to which may be added, recollections and impressions of friends of the subject, if the latter belongs to a contemporary period. Quite naturally, the longer in time the subject is removed from the period of his biographer, the more dependent the latter is upon written records. These he must examine for bias or prejudice. The nearer he keeps to primary sources, the more authentic his biography will be; but secondary sources, if they be reliable, may throw considerable light on a topic. Even biased material can be of use, if the author takes the bias into consideration, and puts the work in its true perspective. References found in writings which may not relate directly to the person whose life is being written, but may bear on historic events in which he played a part or through which he lived, can be of value in supplying omissions, pointing out possibilities or impossibilities, details, or in supporting conjectures.

The scholarly and scientific biography is built on a firm basis of such primary sources. Even what we call

THE ELEMENTS OF BIOGRAPHY

5

the informal biography is informal, not because of the lack of this firm foundation, but because of the method of incorporating it and annotating it. The modern compromise is usually found in the omission of foot-notes, but the inclusion of an appendix of sources, and a detailed bibliography containing all this information.

At this juncture the question of the right of interpretation of facts by the author arises. Not only can this right not be denied, but no biography worthy of the name could be written without it. A mere succession of incidents related as having occurred to a certain individual beginning with birth and ending with death, is not consistent with the definition of biography. The incidents are of interest and value only in so far as they reveal the character of the person and affect or are affected by him. The biographer must use his analytical and psychological insight to penetrate beneath the surface of these external manifestations to extract the personality which lies behind them. The better his gifts of penetration, interpretation, and evaluation, the better biographer he is.

Here however, he is on very dangerous ground, which he may be tempted to exploit. While interpreting facts he must always be on guard lest he read into events his own preconceived ideas, regarding them subjectively, not

objectively. Prejudice for, or against, his subject may cause him to falsify the picture in varying degrees, by over or under emphasis of certain facts, by imputing motives which he cannot reasonably know with certainty. This is where so many biographers have failed. Many of the early hagiographers and Victorians wrote not so much to portray a man but to edify the reader and laud the subject. Virtues, real and imaginary, were stressed, while defects and unsavory incidents were suppressed or toned down to conform to an ideal. Nicolson lays this tradition of untruth at the feet of Sprat as already shown⁷ but he explains its preponderance during the nineteenth century to the influence wielded by Carlyle, founder of the "pedestal school" whose famous dictum became a law:

"The history of mankind," wrote Carlyle, "is the history of its great men: to find out these, clean the dirt from them, and place them on their proper pedestal,"⁸

This insistence on historic truth is the canon which is used to distinguish what is called "pure" biography from "impure". The followers of both Carlyle and Strachey depart from "pure" biography, but in opposite directions. If one group errs by being too complimentary, the other is equally at fault where it aims to tear down and destroy for the mere pleasure of

⁷Nicolson, op. cit. pp. 69-70.

⁸Ibid., p. 11, quoting Carlyle.

THE ELEMENTS OF BIOGRAPHY

7

"debunking". Criticism and satire have their place, provided they are based on objective truth and not subjective imaginings. The difficulties involved are not to be minimized. Nicolson, while stating "any personal thesis on the part of the biographer is destructive of pure biography,"⁹ also admits "I believe that the three essential elements cannot again be combined in their proper proportions, that we shall not have another Boswell or Lockhart."¹⁰ Maurois, while admitting the principle, is less rigorous in his demands, since he thinks that biography is as much a work of art in the depicting of character, as a historical document.

Care for truth implies a complete apparatus of documents; is there not danger that the personality will be buried under such a mountain?

.....
 For in order that the light of personality may shine through, facts must be manipulated; some must be brightened; others shaded; yet, in the process they must never lose their integrity.¹¹

Therefore we may conclude that the good biographer will be as objective as possible while remembering that a human being is not a mere catalogue of acts, nor a time-table of events.

⁹Nicolson, op. cit., p. 153

¹⁰Ibid., p. 158

¹¹Maurois, Aspects of Biography, translated from the French by Sydney Castle Roberts, New York, Appleton, 1929, pp. 36-38

THE ELEMENTS OF BIOGRAPHY

8

The next feature to be considered with respect to the historic basis of the biography is the amount of material to be included. Here again the historian and artist appear to be at loggerheads. The definitive biography should be as comprehensive and intensive as possible, but not all good biography belongs to this category. Boswell's Life of Samuel Johnson, Gosse's Father and Son, Strachey's Portraits in Miniature, are eminent works which present only a slice of life and yet do it successfully. The amount of material which will find its way into the final draft, depends on the type of book the author intends to write, and the relative importance of the material itself. All salient points in a man's life should be given, and enough of the details to draw a true and well-rounded picture of his character. Here again we may refer to Maurois as guide: "Biography, in my view, does not consist in telling all one knows (...) but in taking stock of one's knowledge and of choosing what is essential."¹² Modern biography tends to emphasize what Strachey termed "becoming brevity."¹³

A final point to be discussed regarding history is the relationship between the history of his times and the history of the man himself. Modern psychology has made us

¹²Maurois, op. cit., pp. 62-63.

¹³Strachey, Giles Lytton, Eminent Victorians, New York, Putnam, 1918, p. vii.

THE ELEMENTS OF BIOGRAPHY

9

all aware of the importance of environment on the human personality. Every man up to a certain point is the product of his times, and cannot be unaffected by the problems, customs, mental, political and religious outlook of his own day.

History itself is not a blind and impersonal unfolding of events, it is the result of the thoughts and actions of men. Yet, not all men are affected to the same degree by the historic incidents of the times in which they live. Hence, the biographer must discriminate between the relevant and the irrelevant. The lives of such men as Winston Churchill, Roosevelt, Emmet, and Campion, can scarcely be divorced from the political history of their period; whereas that of Francis Thompson, or Clarence Mangan can quite conceivably be so. In the case of great political figures or rebels, there is always the danger that the man may be lost, snowed under the history, and the reader distracted from the main issue. As Thayer says, "In the life of any statesman the problem of his biographer is to reach a balance between history and biography, between the person and the cause."¹⁴ And Maurois warns;

great historical events bound up with the life of statesmen ought not to be treated in a biography as they are treated in a history (...) history should be seen only in the background and to such a degree as may be necessary for understanding... ¹⁵

¹⁴William Roscoe Thayer, The Art of Biography, New York, Scribner, 1920, p. 124.

¹⁵Maurois, op. cit., p. 61

THE ELEMENTS OF BIOGRAPHY

10

This attitude would seem to be the reverse of Hilaire Belloc's who gives us history through biography. But remembering that Belloc aimed at being more than a mere biographer, and to what extent both history and biography have suffered at the hands of writers who had more prejudice than understanding of the events and persons of whom they wrote, we can appreciate his point of view. One critic says this of him:

In spite of the worth of some of Belloc's ardently expressed opinions, he is undoubtedly at his best as an artist and biographer when he is viewing his subject at intimate range (...) He becomes a contemporary eye witness. The vitality of his characterization is largely dependent on his ability to view at intimate range the figures whom he describes. He is a master at recreating historical atmosphere. His men are not allowed to gasp for breath in a kind of vacuum; they are associated with the throbbing life and stirring movements of their times. (...) No matter against what forces they battle, they are given a vividly reconstructed milieu--their own milieu--in which to live.

.....
By reason of the fact that Belloc is both scholar and poet, he has made a supreme talent of his use of recreative imagination. He possesses the admirable quality of intellectual and artistic restraint, without which poetic intuition is an arch-enemy of biographical truth. ¹⁶

From this it seems clear that Belloc kept his characters alive and did not allow the history to smother them, though its preponderance is high.

¹⁶John Marc Longaker, *Contemporary Biography*, Philadelphia, University Press, 1934, p. 206.

The second essential of biography flows from the next key word "individual". The word must not be taken in its strict philosophical sense, the idea of personality or character being really meant. It is the duty of the biographer to show us the man. While all true biographers, especially Boswell, have done this, Edmund Gosse tells us "the true conception of biography, therefore, as the faithful portrait of a soul in its adventures through life, is very modern."¹⁷ By this, he means that it has become the definite and conscious aim of biographers generally, only since the turn of the century.

The important question here is the how of the matter. The biographer cannot see actually into the mind of his subject unless the latter himself has bared it in conversation or writing. Where these revelations are available, the biographer must make full use of them. But actions sometimes speak equally loud or louder than words. They fall into a pattern which may be read as clearly as any letter. It is up to the biographer to seek out and describe those incidents and situations which portray the man. Details and the ordinary events of life may be the most helpful and

¹⁷Edmund Gosse, Enclopaedia Britannica, Eleventh edition, "Biography", New York, 1910, Vol 3, p. 952.

realistic, as Maurois points out:

The smallest details are often the most interesting. Everything that can give us an idea of what the man actually looked like, the tone of his voice, the style of his conversation, is essential. The part played by the body in helping to form our ideas of the character of our acquaintances should always be borne in mind. For us a man primarily consists of a certain physical aspect, a certain look...¹⁸

The truth of this statement finds ready confirmation. Would Johnson without his huge bulk, his untidy waistcoat, his inveterate tea drinking, and his authoritative manner of making pronouncements, be a living personality to us? Had Boswell carefully drained off these very human traits, his biography, like so many others, would be collecting dust in abandoned garrets, or in the forgotten recesses of libraries.

The same idea is expressed by Bradford:

True human value, real insight into life and character are often given by little things and apparently trivial happenings. A word spoken carelessly, a brief look or gesture, will sometimes tell us more of the history of a soul than elaborate pages of psychological analysis,¹⁹

It is necessary to pause here to qualify. If detail makes things live, too much detail can obscure and kill.

Bradford is well aware of this so he adds:

¹⁸Maurois, op. cit., p. 63.

¹⁹Gamaliel Bradford, Biography and the Human Heart, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1932, p. 6

It is all a matter of choice. The biographer must not overwhelm us with formless, irrelevant, inconsequent gossip. He must know how to go right straight at the pregnant touch which reveals, to pick that out and stress it without overstressing it, and to leave entirely aside the mass of the insignificant (...)²⁰

Since it is human to err, and no man is a paragon of perfection, that biography is suspect which omits or glosses over the weaknesses and frailties of human nature. "The little secret flaws and faults, which we all endeavour to cover and believe peculiar to ourselves, may often be discerned and traced in the great ones of the earth,"²¹. The modern world has no patience with the stuffed effigies which the panegyrics of Victorian propriety would have us believe were men. "The greatness which cannot bear to have its humanity exposed is shallow, petty, insignificant, and unenduring."²²

The interest in biography stems from one source alone and that source is man's interest in man. We have only one life to live, but it can be enriched, sometimes directed, by this contact with others whose achievements, failures, hopes, fears, strengths, weaknesses, may so completely parallel or

²⁰Bradford, op. cit., p. 6

²¹Ibid., p. 14

²²Ibid., p. 30

THE ELEMENTS OF BIOGRAPHY

14

oppose our own. If these facets of a man be hidden, then the life becomes less than worthless.

The aim that the biographer has in mind as he attempts to make his subject relive his life within the confines of a book, is certain to affect the validity and quality of his manuscript. "The most universal, and what can be the most disastrous, is the commemorative instinct."²³ Fundamentally, the writer wants the knowledge of his fellow's deeds and personality to be broadcast, and to live on. Provided he is content to reproduce faithfully and objectively his man, he is within the scope of true biography, but there is always the dangerous tendency to idealize and whitewash. "We demand that the observation of facts and nothing else, shall lead to the expression of general ideas, ...".²⁴ Moreover the undue intrusion of the biographer's own personality and reflections is to be avoided. Of course, there has to be a specific reaction of the writer to his subject, otherwise how can a personality be brought alive on the printed page, but it must vivify, not metamorphose. As Dunn says, "A biography represents the biographer's conception of the subject, just as a portrait represents what the artist has seen in his subject."²⁵

²³Nicolson op. cit., p.110.

²⁴Maurois, op. cit., p. 15

²⁵Dunn, op. cit., p. 176

This leads to a discussion of the writer's attitude towards his subject. Should he be devoid of all feeling, or should he be genuinely sympathetic? Nicolson looks askance at any emotion. "It cannot be sufficiently emphasized that the art of biography is intellectual and not emotional."²⁶

Yet elsewhere he comments in speaking of pure biography:

It insists on absolute detachment from ethical or sentimental considerations, and this detachment in itself becomes the point of view, and tends all too readily to produce the aloof, the patronising, or at best, the affectionately satirical.²⁷

Thayer is of the opinion that the writer should be in sympathy with his subject,²⁸ and Maurois considers that the biography will gain when it satisfies some inner need:

Now let us inquire whether biography (...) can be an (...) opportunity for the expression of strong emotions which the author has felt, whether, like the art forms of which we have just spoken, it can have the benefit of a passion within itself and, in short, whether this way of looking at it is legitimate and does not endanger truth;.....
It will be written with more natural emotion than other kinds of biography, because the feelings and adventures of the hero will be the medium of the biographer's own feelings;²⁹

Practically speaking, lack of all feeling is an impossibility. For the writer must, unless he be a mere hired machine, be drawn one way or another to write the life he chooses. Some

²⁶Nicolson, op. cit., p. 110

²⁷Ibid., p. 142

²⁸Thayer, op. cit. p. 144

²⁹Maurois, op. cit., pp. 117-8; p. 125

riddle, some dramatic possibilities, some current or personal interest, lies at the bottom of his choice; and as he studies, analyses, portrays his man, his admiration, scorn, or love will inevitably be roused. Even our modern critical biographies are explained by Bradford, as being motivated by feeling rather than by purely objective analysis.

It is precisely this deeper instinct of humanity that is at bottom of the current fashion of what are called destructive, iconoclastic biographies. There is an effort to get at the fact of things, to shake the kernel of human truth out of the husk of age-old reputation and glory (...). No doubt, also other elements enter in, besides the pure love of common truth. There is the instinct of smartness and cleverness in the biographer, which, in literature, as in life, show themselves too easily in carping and picking flaws. There is the instinct of envy which tears greatness down, simply because it cannot rise itself. And there is the commercial pest, the unfortunate facility in making money out of scandalous assaults upon the life that the world has been taught to revere.³⁰

Despite these slightly varying pronouncements, there is unanimity in this. The biographer, whatever his personal feelings, must make the greatest effort to keep them in check, in order to present as fair and impartial a picture as possible. They should be carefully regulated to prevent colouring and dominating of facts which would destroy the validity of his portrait. But there has to be the presentation of a living personality, not a mere biological dissection under the inanimate eye of a microscope. This requires great care and caution on the part of the biographer.

³⁰Bradford, op. cit., pp. 27-28

Literary merit is the third essential of good biography. Though last named, it is not least in importance. An author may have satisfied the score by rigid adherence to history and integrity of interpretation; he may have presented a perfectly objective character study; but he may still fail, if his writing is inferior. Style in biography is as necessary as style in essay or novel-writing. It can ever be said that a certain deftness and artistry in the manipulation of the material, in order to weld it into a unified, interesting whole, cannot be foregone. Both Nicolson and Maurois insist upon this.

Nor does mere annotation raise biography to the level of creative art. One looks for construction, for selection, for literary tact; one demands observation, understanding, and a certain excellence of style.³¹

And again:

The second essential is that it shall be well constructed (...) There must finally be a consciousness of creation, a conviction that some creative mind has selected and composed these facts in such a manner as to give them convincing interpretation; that, in a word, the given biography is a work of intelligence.³²

The fact that a whole chapter is devoted to "Biography as a Work of Art" is sufficient indication of the esteem in which the second author holds this aspect of biography, but one or two quotations will be in order.

³¹Nicolson, op. cit., p. 100

³²Ibid., p. 13

THE ELEMENTS OF BIOGRAPHY

18

The fact, then, that the characters of a biography are real does not prevent them from being material for works of art,...

.....
 The biographer, like the portrait painter and the landscape painter, must pick out the essential qualities in the whole subject which he is contemplating. By such a choice, if he can make the choice without weakening the whole, he is very precisely performing the artist's function.³³

There are several specific elements used by the biographer which demand skilful handling. A chronological unfolding of incidents gives a more natural and life-like atmosphere to the narrative; it allows for development in character due, not only to maturation, but to successive influences to which the biographee has been subjected; but there may be times when the artistic judgment of the writer may demand a departure from this method--he should feel free to exercise this judgment. The introduction of conversations and letters may be effected at strategic points in order to bear out traits of character, or points of history. The dramatic value of these conversations and episodes will be recognized and utilized to the full, but not unduly, by the gifted writer. Satire, irony, wit, humour, all have their respective places and roles, with the provision that they do not distort nor mislead.

³³Maurois, op. cit., pp. 48-50

THE ELEMENTS OF BIOGRAPHY

19

A well written biography possesses the same qualities of good prose as any other genre. Lucidity, rhythm, variety of sentence structure, unity and coherence are the trademarks of good craftsmanship; an adequate vocabulary, strong verbs and the judicious use of picturesque or vivid words, are consonant with good diction. Though qualifying adjectives must be used sparingly, in order to keep the biography detached and objective, similes and metaphors may be used to sharpen up comparisons, or to emphasize features. Descriptive and dramatic scenes can add beauty, movement to the biography, give it a touch of realism and concreteness, without destroying objectivity. These, therefore, are the literary qualities we look for in a work which is to be classified as a good biography.

The elements of biography having been discussed at some length, a summary of the criterions by which Miss Guiney's biographical achievement will be measured may now be given.

The primary requisite is historical truth. Thus the sources and research of the author will be examined. The reasons for any inaccuracies or distortions will be looked into and, where possible, explained. The relative proportion between history and characterization will be noted.

THE ELEMENTS OF BIOGRAPHY

20

With respect to characterization, the writer's aim and bias, or lack of such, will be considered. Her ability to produce a flesh and blood person; her treatment of defects as well as qualities, with objective detachment or subjective colouring, her method of letting facts speak for themselves, or the intrusion of her own comments, will form the bulk of the discussion on this topic.

The qualities of good prose as enumerated above will be sought in Miss Guiney's compositions. The artistic conception of each work as a whole, the organization of her biographic material and her use of drama, humour, vivid language, and other literary devices, will be demonstrated.

By applying ~~the~~ foregoing yardstick, the present writer hopes to evaluate Miss Guiney's work as a biographer in the succeeding pages.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY IN GUINEY

The purpose of this chapter, as has already been stated, is to examine the sources upon which Miss Guiney has based her principal biographical works, and the manner in which she adheres to and presents historical truth. For a clearer understanding of this, comparison with other works on the same personages, where possible, will be made; the reliability of the sources will be shown, and any indications Miss Guiney gives concerning them will be recorded. Any deviations in facts or conclusions between Miss Guiney's and the second author's work will be noted with comment, if necessary. The principal aim will be to show, that while Miss Guiney did original research, consulted authorities and works available, she is too subjective and personal in her manner of writing to be considered a biographer in the tradition of "pure biography".

Before plunging in to scrutinize her works, a few pages will be devoted to a study of Miss Guiney's aptitudes and leaning towards historical research and some of her accomplishments in this line. This prelude will bring out her method of work, her painstaking industry in the perusal of old manuscripts, her love for the genuine and for all that pertains to the past.

"Literary scholars are made, not born(...) literary research is frequently dull and laborious."¹ so says the author of The Scholar Adventurer. Despite the truth of these statements which no one would be tempted to deny, the author develops these comments, outlining for us certain characteristics which the true scholar must possess and develop, if he hopes to become the skilled antiquary after years of training and practice. Thus, he affirms:

A devotion to books, then is the primary requisite of a scholar.....
 the literary scholar must have the scientist's deep concern for exactness, for objectivity, for thoroughness, for getting every detail just right.....
 a high degree of ingenuity, patience, logic, and sheer imaginative talent.²

Louise Guiney was one of those persons for whom research became not merely a business, but a veritable passion. And she succeeded in finding enjoyment in it, even while struggling with its problems and boredom.

Born in 1861 and educated near Boston, the Athens of America, she inherited a love of books and literature from her father, which was encouraged by Oliver Wendell Holmes, John B. O'Reilly and the Boston literary set of the period. It was under their aegis that she made her debut into the

¹Richard Altick, The Scholar Adventurer, New York, Macmillan, 1950, pp. 2-3

²Ibid., pp. 13-15

world of letters. Like others of this time she had an overpowering desire to visit England, the land of her literary ancestors. This she did in 1889. A first visit only served to whet her appetite for steeping herself in the atmosphere of authentic sites, and the lore of historic libraries; so she returned several times for pleasure and the business of research, finally taking up permanent residence there in 1907.

Extracts from letters to her friends bear witness to her interests and delight. "I am burrowing every day, not yet in any library, but in old memories and new sensations."³ Her interest in any region or town, apart from its wild native beauty, lay in its associations with the literary or historic past. Such was her appreciation of the town of Dartmouth, Devon:

Did you know (I didn't) that the Pilgrim Fathers lay a week in harbor here, aboard the May-Flower, before setting sail for U.S.A.? I get more poetical nourishment, however, out of that other as-well-authenticated fact that Richard Lionheart got his gilded galleys together in the same waters, anno 1180, and streamed away processionally on his Crusade. The place has a purple-and-gold history and is crowded with ancient architectural survivals.⁴

³Louise Imogen Guiney, Letters of Louise Imogen Guiney, edited by Grace Guiney, New York, Harper, 1926, p. 23.

⁴Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 35

HISTORY IN GUINEY

24

On another occasion she writes:

a gentleman in effigy in the Beauchamp Chapel at Warwick enchained me whole days at his side: 'whyche God assoille', as his own charming epitaph says. He is father to Warwick the King-Maker, and he died in the year 1439 (...) Between him and my beloved old Oxford haunts, I had a joyful ten days of it. We wound up at Lichfield, where the Cathedral is graceful out of all describing, and where Dr. Johnson's heavy figure sits in the pleasant market-place, forever gazing at the house where he was born (...) But give me dirty Coventry, all church-spires and mediaevalism, and book-marks and bicycles!

Nor was she easily taken in, "The antique look of everything here is a piece of glamour; for very few buildings are left of true age and interest, save these noble old Churches."⁶

This revelling in places because of their connection with the past, was not a mere enthusiasm roused by some chance accident of coming across a bit of unsuspected information or masonry. More often it was the desire to examine, to authenticate, to discover, or to extract information that led her to undertake excursions into remote corners. Such was the reason of her expedition to Salisbury:

⁵Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 70

⁶Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 23

HISTORY IN GUINEY

25

I came here exclusively to find Winterslow Hut. Yesterday we tramped to it: a lonely old inn in miles of moorland, whose crests were like a bonfire with poppies; and from which the memory of William Hazlitt has wholly faded away. (...) Another item for you: I found a poor lodging-house person in Seaton, So. Devon, with a full set (12) of Garrington Bowles' first edition prints of Tristram Shandy, 1785, framed on the wall. She said she wouldn't sell,⁷

More fruitful in its final results was the trip to find Henry Vaughan's grave. She and Alice Brown went on a walking tour of the country around Brecon and struck Llansantffread on the anniversary of Restoration Day, May 29:

There is nothing like Siluria (...) I went into it and over it with a single mind to Henry Vaughan (...) found his grave, and, a mile west, the house, 'Newton-on-Usk' (...) but the grave! It occupies an extreme north-east corner of the Llansantffread churchyard, where there is not a thing else of any age or interest whatsoever. The slab of the tomb is broken; the Latin inscription is getting dim; under an old yew tree (...) heaped all about the stone, are dead boughs, nettles, bricks, rotten wreaths, fragments of crockery, dirt, and confusion unspeakable; and the parish coal-shed is so placed against the neighbouring wall that the operating genius with the shovel must stand on Henry Vaughan's burial place, and shower it with slag and soot, oculo irretoro.⁸

This was the starting point of a successful drive launched by her for the restoration of Henry Vaughan's last resting place. It also marked the beginning of a friendship and working partnership with Miss Gwenellian E.F. Morgan, a Vaughan

⁷Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 68.

⁸Ibid., Vol. 1, pp. 76-78

expert, of whom Miss Guiney says:

She is an astonishing antiquary (...) has written much in local journals, too, of Vaughan, his times, and his family; reads his verse with inevitable intelligence and has made more genuine discoveries and verifications, it seems to me, than Grossart, Lyte, Tutin, L.I.G., et al., all rolled together.⁹

These preoccupations are not meant to prove her prowess as an historian, but to show that she possessed those first requisites towards becoming one, namely, a love for the pursuit of these things, coupled with the energy and determination to follow through. Her work on manuscripts is more to the point and deserves attention.

Yes, I work always on Vaughan. My collaborator, Miss Morgan (...) has more to do than I have; and as the biographical researches are curiously difficult, I give a good deal of my time to helping her, even doing periodical grinds at the Br. Museum and Record Office in London.(...) One thing we are greedy to do, and that is to track the whereabouts of the papers etc., of Sir Robert Moray (...) I have never been able to find his will. (...) Henry Vaughan's twin brother, Thomas (ob. 1666) had Sir Robert Moray for his greatest friend; and Henry says, in an unpublished letter to his cousin John Aubrey, the antiquary, which is here in the Bodleian, that T.V. was a very autobiographical sort of person, kept diaries etc. From one small commonplace book of his in the Sloane Mss (...) we have gathered more direct and useful items than from any other one source.¹⁰

In her work with manuscripts, Miss Guiney was in frequent correspondence with Bertram Dobell, the London collector,

⁹Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 87

¹⁰Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 50

HISTORY IN GUINEY

27

rare book dealer, and scholar. Quite a number of her letters are preserved in which are to be found interesting and enlightening comments upon early editions, and manuscript textual problems, of which the following are examples:

I ran the name Polsted to earth, in the Bodleian, in Hasted's Kent, in Berry's Sussex, in Rawl. Ms. B. 429 and in the London Visitation of 1663. In all is a Henry Polsted of London, Merchant, who is also of Stoneham Sussex and of Losely, Surrey: the Lon. Vis. only names among his sons an "Ezekell." He was born, apparently between 1623 and 1630. I have no doubt this is our man, but must trace him further. Perhaps his marriage connected him with Breconshire. I am full of curiosity about the Cambria Triumphans, and wish myself at the Br. Museum this moment, to see it. (...) Thank you so much, too, for the Cowley-Alabaster hint. Like enough surely.¹¹

Again she writes:

Thank you so very much for Strode's lovely poems. I knew him! I know most seventeenth-century English writers and I know nothing else. The Epitaph of this group is better known than the rest (...) Luckily, I have preserved one reference, which you may know, or may not know: to Sloane MS. 1792, in B.M. This contains (signed W.S.) the section, "sleepe, pritty one" and the Epitaphium, "Happy grave". Musarum Deliciae has an epitaph upon the son of Dr. Prideaux, which sounds like Strode, (...) I have written in, in pencil, some variant readings on your p. 4. (...) So long as I shall be in Oxford, you may at any time call on me for excavations among the Rawlinson MSS., or anywhere. The only difficulty in one's way is that there is no indication whatever in any catalogue of the specific contents of a MS. book. There are scores in Rawl. and also Ashmole MSS., which are indicated only as volumes of poetry in handwriting of the seventeenth century, &c. Rather foggy!¹²

¹¹Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 129

¹²Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 80-81

Changes in the meaning of words as they have come down through the centuries has occasioned many a headache to scholars and many weary hours of search and invention. The New English Dictionary, which was in process of compilation at this time, began to fill a deep-seated need for those interested in early literature, and Miss Guiney made frequent use of it:

The Incarnatio sonnet is indeed magnificent. I think you're right about "violet" having had once a broader meaning; as I am off to "Bod." immediately, I shall look it up in the N.E.D. -- (No, I can't; there's no V volume yet; but the Imperial Dictionary will serve.) It is a beautiful word, vi-o-lent qua word. God "shining" beams is an odd use, but perfectly transparent as to meaning, and a figure in itself.¹³

To another friend, she both gives and asks some explanations:

Tell Sir James Murray some day that Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, uses "angel'd" (in Mustapha, Chorus Quintus Tartarorum) in the sense of "angelified" (...) and that Vaughan (in Olor Iscanus, To His Friend) uses it in a sense absolutely unique, so far as I can discover. (...) What he has in mind is the exclusion from Paradise as detailed in Genesis, the angel with the flaming sword, &c., so the "angel'd" here literally means policed; driven out, kept out...¹⁴

In this same letter¹⁵ she asks that the word "revel" be traced to its source, and if it was ever connected with "reveille", if there was an English word "reveil", also the

¹³Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 82

¹⁴Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 173

¹⁵Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 173

significance of "blew aprons" which she supposes Vaughan uses with reference to the military guard. It is to these "individual usages" she attributes the difficulty of editing Vaughan.

Among seventeenth century writings which were submitted to her from time to time, were the long-debated verses of Thomas Traherne. Richard Altick in The Scholar Adventurer¹⁶ gives a very interesting account of the search and final discovery of this author. But a remark in a letter to another friend throws light on the fact that Miss Guiney did not succumb to the generally accepted theory that the said verses were Vaughan's.

I have been much interested in Mr. (Bertram) Dobell's articles, so well-thought-out and well-expressed, in the Athenaeum, concerning the MS. poems which Dr. Grosart was ready to swear were H.V.'s. He copied some of them to show me, as soon as he had examined them; and unlike any other interested critic whose opinion he sought, I held out against that supposed authorship with all my might. So that now one Traherne looms on the horizon, I feel the virtuous glow of whoso should say 'I told'ee so.' The poems are the real thing, don't you think? And stand yet more alone by their fine philosophy than by their quaint music. There were Trahernes in Glamorganshire, in the Silurist's own time, and distantly related to him, I think.¹⁷

¹⁶Richard Altick, The Scholar Adventurer, pp. 302-5.

¹⁷Louise Imogen Guiney, Letters of, Vol. 2, p. 16.

HISTORY IN GUINEY

30

These extracts bear witness to the patience and scientific exactitude with which Miss Guiney carried on her research. They also show that she was a serious scholar, interested, not in pecuniary gain, but in the enrichment of literary truth. There still remains one further characteristic to examine and that is, the imaginative ingenuity and logic necessary at times, to yield the theory which may eventually be proved.

Probably the best example of this is to be found in her work on Saint Fritwell's Well. She discussed this theory with Dr. Henry Bradley, chief editor of the New English Dictionary:

I wonder if you would possibly think the theory (...) holds water that Fritwell might be Frithuswith's Well, I have one and a half very special reasons for thinking this, which no one has so far brought into play: I got them from old MS. Latin lives of S. Frideswide

 Now my bold geographical guess is that Bentona is Bainton, sometimes spelled Beanton, at present a mere hamlet in Stoke Lyne parish, ('Stoke' is itself a minor argument, is it not?) and that Frithuswith's Well may be at Fritwell, between three and four miles away from the 'ton'. Fritwell Church belongs to Christ Church; the much discussed carving on the tympanum, with its symbolical tree and the attendant wild boars, harmonises well with her legend. It all seems to me a hazardous, but by no means crazy guess. No one of the other presumable 'Bentonas', except Bampton, ever stood in a forest tract, and none of them ever had any ancient connection with Ch. Ch. (...).
 You comfort me greatly by thinking that my Bentona-Fritwell theory may be a good working hypothesis.¹⁸

¹⁸Louise Imogen Guiney, Letters of, Vol. 2, pp. 180-83

HISTORY IN GUINEY

31

Having shown Miss Guiney's aptitude for historical research, the validity of her biographical works which form the basis of this study, will now be examined.

In point of time, Monsieur Henri,¹⁹ was her earliest biography, hence we shall treat it first. His reputation as a military leader has fluctuated with the years, as have the reputations of most of the leaders of the war in La Vendée. This is due mostly to the fact that the history of this little war, within the more embracing French Revolution, has been preserved in memoirs written by relatives of those leaders or interested parties; hence family pride and jealousy, together with regional vying, has played an unmistakable role in colouring the narratives to the advantage of one side or the other.

In the preface to Monsieur Henri Miss Guiney explains her sources:

So little concerning the French provincial struggle of the eighteenth century has found an echo in our language (...) Madame de La Rochejaquelein's beautiful memoirs²⁰ still serve as the basis for whatever may be said on the subject; (...).....
to Monsieur le curé and monsieur le vicaire of Saint-Aubin-de-Baubigne, who, for the sake of the immortal Red Handkerchief, unknown to English Literature, brightened my frosty travels in the old Bocage, to Mademoiselle de Chabot, Henri's young kinswoman and annalist whose ardent researches have verified many of the data I give (...) my faithful and ever affectionate thanks²¹

¹⁹Guiney, Monsieur Henri New York Harper, 1892, pp. viii-139.

²⁰Mme. la Marquise de La Rochejaquelein, Memoirs de Paris, 1889.

²¹Guiney, Monsieur Henri, preface.

Throughout the narrative Miss Guiney quotes or refers to such chroniclers and military leaders as Kleber, Jomini, Sempre, all Republicans and foes, whose records would hardly have been written with a view to boosting the rebel faction. Yet they did not hesitate to express their admiration for the strategy and daring conduct of Henri.

Biganne,²² in his introduction and notes to his translation of the original Memoirs, quotes authors from both sides, argues the pros and cons, with what this author considers logic and common sense, and gives the reader a reasonable exposition of the whole story. Essentially Miss Guiney and he agree, but some minor differences may be mentioned.

In contradiction to her statement "the immortal red handkerchief unknown to English Literature"²³ he informs us that The Memoirs of the Marquise de La Rochejaquelein were translated into English by Sir Walter Scott in 1816, from the only version then known to the public, that of the Baron de Barante.²⁴ However, since the Memoirs deal with the whole,

²²Cecil Biganne, Memoirs of the Marquise de La Rochejaquelein, edited and translated from the original edition, published in accordance with her autograph manuscript by her grandson, with an introduction and notes, London, Routledge, 1933.

²³Guiney, Monsieur Henri, preface

²⁴Biganne, op. cit. p. xv

HISTORY IN GUINEY

33

Henri's part was not sufficiently emphasized, and he himself not delineated as an individual hero. It seems inconceivable that she would not have been aware of Scott's work, though her knowledge of French was such that she would not have consulted it as an authority. Of the other authors quoted by Biganne,²⁵ only two were in print before 1892, the year of Miss Guiney's publication, and both were favorable to the de La Rochejaquelein leadership, as was the unpublished Beauvais manuscript.

Concerning the memoirs Biganne says:

The book at once took its place as 'the Gospel of La Vendée', and for over half a century its authority as history remained practically unchallenged. Quoted, copied, amplified by every historian of the Vendean war, it was not until after 1870 that the reaction set in, a reaction, which may now, perhaps, be thought to have gone too far.²⁶

What exactly was this reaction, and what were the charges hurled at the Marquise's work? Again we have the answer in Biganne's quotation from Desormeaux:

It can no longer be contested today, writes a distinguished Vendean historian, H. Baguenier Desormeaux, that the daughter of Donissan, wife of Lescure and later of Louis de La Rochejaquelein, the cousin and sister-in-law of Henri whom she regarded with the tenderest affection, was influenced by the memory of these heroes and a few others, to be guilty of certain involuntary injustices to Vendean who were not so near to her heart.²⁷

²⁵See appendix for list

²⁶Biganne, op. cit., p. xxii

²⁷Ibid., quoting H. Baguenier Desormeaux, Niot., 1901, p. xxii

Abbe Bossard is not so mild in his statements:

The general attempt at elimination, to the advantage of her relatives and friends, that the Marquise pursued to the detriment of the other leaders of La Vendée.... This evident determination to neglect and oust whomsoever over-shadowed the glory of her friends and relations...is apparent throughout the memoirs, alike in judgments on individuals and in the recital of events. "The part played by the Vendéans of Anjou dwindles into insignificance; Bonchamps and D'Elbée fade into the background...henri, by the victory of Les Aubiers, saves the army of Anjou, which for over a month had held its own against all the forces of the Republicans;²⁸

Bigenne²⁹ agrees that there is truth in these charges, and in his notes indicates where the aberrations occur. He also gives data where doubt or confusion still exists. However, he attributes the misrepresentations to ignorance rather than wilfulness and, conditions being what they were, this would not be surprising. This writer inclines to the belief that, although, on the whole, the Marquise did not deliberately falsify facts, her expression:

I...only wished to write what I remembered perfectly, and it is solely from ignorance that I often pass over in silence, or merely refer to, exploits and actions or persons, in every respect deserving of praise.³⁰

suggests that there were other facts equally worth remembering

²⁸Ibid., pp. xxii-xxiii, quoting Abbe Bossard from Revue des Facultés de l'ouest, June 1901, and in "Introduction" to the Memoirs of Bouthillier de Saint-Andre,

²⁹Ibid., pp. xxiii-xxvii.

³⁰Ibid., quoting Donnissan de La Rochejaquelein, p. 1.

HISTORY IN GUINEY

35

Certainly, while she mentions the other leaders, we get a much more detailed description of the actions of Lescure and Henri, than we do of them. Moreover, her attitude towards D'Elbée is critical in a way that savours of partiality. Suffice it to say, that any historian or biographer using her Memoirs as a basis, would be obligated to examine these things carefully and critically, in order to avoid bias.

Since Miss Guiney did use them, it becomes our duty to see in what she has followed and in what differed from the Marquise.

So far as the actual account of the war goes, Miss Guiney tells much less. She envisions the revolt as a whole; she telescopes many of the battles by mentioning them in a group and passing some general comment on them so that any student of the Vendean war would have to consult a more lengthy and detailed work. In fact, to follow her work with understanding, some knowledge of the frame of reference of the struggle is really necessary. This, in itself, is not a bad thing, since the biographer must not allow history to overshadow the subject. Since much of the chronicle is taken up with persons and events which do not have direct bearing upon Henri, she has seen fit to omit them, while she has tried to incorporate all the incidents which have been preserved concerning him. Her reason she states in the

preface:

But in so treating it, I bore in mind that excision is the best safeguard against decay, that time throws away as rag and bobtail the political specifications thought to be precious, and that we must at once, and in the noble sense, romanticize such dry facts as we mean shall live.

It is always the character of the man which vitalizes the event; what did or did not happen, is, ultimately, of minor importance beside the spectacle of a strong soul. A background may be blurred for the sake of a single figure. I tried therefore to paint a portrait.³¹

The word "blurred" here refers to this cutting down, or speeding up of the action. She does not enter into any discussion concerning disputed points, not even to explain in what or why she differed from the Marquise. She herself terms her method "high-handed"³² and Professor Nicolson would probably agree. She evidently made her choice as to what she conceived to be the true story and sailed straight ahead. Unfortunately she concurred in some erroneous, or dubious, statements of Madame de La Rochejaquelein, as, for example, when she writes:

Cathelineau, the first and, next to Charette, the ablest commander-in-chief of the Vendéans, having been mortally wounded before the gates of Nantes, D'Elbée, by skilful policy at Chatillon, had himself appointed to the succession. It was the work of an obstinate cabal. Bonchamp, by every claim, deserved the election.³³

³¹Louise Imogen Guiney, Monsieur Henri, p. vi

³²Ibid., p. vi

³³Ibid., pp. 77-78

HISTORY IN GUINEY

37

Biganne³⁴ repudiates the charge that D'Elbée was guilty of taking any unfair advantage, but he does mention that there was some haste and irregularity in the election which could account in part for the Marquise's contention. This does not excuse her attitude towards his ability as a general which was one of scorn, and which reduced him to a "cipher".³⁵ In contradiction Biganne gives us the following note:

other Royalist writers who enjoyed personal relations with D'Elbée, while the Republican generals Turreau and Hoche alike do justice to his military talents. There can be no doubt that, far from being a "mere cipher" he played, thanks in part to his great influence over Cathelineau, a predominant part in the early stages of the revolt.³⁶

Miss Guiney does not discuss this question in particular and in her final summing up she has words of praise for all these men who suffered and fought so valiantly against great odds, but in her description of him one senses a slight undertone of less than whole-hearted approbation, a faint echo or influence of the marquise:

Gigot D'Elbée, late of the Dauphin cavalry, was forty years of age, already white-haired, of small and compact build. Possessed of many virtues, he was not a striking nor an engaging character; his conceit, fortunately, harmed neither himself nor others. It was he who read sermons to his men, who carried with him the images of his patron saints, and who, above all, talked so much and so well of the wisdom which directs us, that the roguish congregation in camp fastened on him the nickname of "La Providence."³⁷

³⁴Biganne, op. cit., p. xxv

³⁵Ibid., p. 82, quoting Madame de La Rochejaquelein

³⁶Ibid., p. 304

³⁷Guiney, Monsieur Henri, p. 35

The question of dates and numbers is a minor but thorny problem. Scarcely ever do Vendean and Republican figures agree. This is partly comprehensible since the Republic had issued a new calendar which the "Vendeans" refused to use. Thus Miss Guiney writes: "And they stormed up together against Les Aubiers on the seventeenth of April, 1793, as if in the first bustling act of a bright drama."³⁸ Biganne puts this battle on the thirteenth.³⁹ Each side was anxious to magnify the damage they had inflicted on the other and to minimize its own losses, and there were so many sections under various commanders that even they do not agree in their reports. To illustrate,⁴⁰ La Marquise puts the number of dead in one battle at "seventy" with a large number of wounded and two guns abandoned; Quetineau⁴¹ reports thirty killed and fifty wounded, to the Vendeans 400-500 dead; another Republican leader lists 130 killed and wounded, and three guns lost. Miss Guiney does not quote figures too frequently, but she repeats the Vendean estimates without making any reference to the fact that there is a great deal of uncertainty and disagreement with respect to them. In this particular work she seems to have relied too exclusively on partial sources.

³⁸Guiney, Monsieur Henri, p. 14

³⁹Biganne, op. cit., p. 303

⁴⁰Ibid., 65-66

⁴¹Ibid., p. 303

HISTORY IN GUINEY

39

The final item to be considered is Henri's military ability. Again we quote Biganne:

It is the fashion nowadays to belittle the military talents of La Rochejaquelein. These may sometimes have been over-rated: a marvellous leader, it is doubtful whether he had in him the makings of a great captain. Yet the young man, scarcely more than a boy, who, in Kleber's words 'Bravely won his spurs' at the battle of Laval, to whose 'coolness and foresight' the Republic owed a defeat that cost it ten thousand men, and who, in the opinion of the best general matched against him, 'directed an action with great ability' is scarcely to be dismissed with a few disparaging words.⁴²

Miss Guiney does not claim that he was a military genius, in fact she says:

His military career was less one of thought and command than of manual killing and sparing; and in that particular he belonged with the ancient world, with Gideon and Hector.⁴³

And in another place she sums him up thus:

Virtually, what did he amount to? What testimony of his is left? To the man of facts who asks questions, the answers are: Nothing and None (...) His interest to us now is that he blazed with genuine fire, and played no tricks with his individuality.⁴⁴

In the description of his actual leadership, she recounts deeds of daring and courage, his intuitive shrewdness and judgment, his shrinking from a command he felt incapable of imposing, and his chagrin at carrying out a policy which

⁴²Biganne, op. cit., p. xxvii

⁴³Guiney, Monsieur Henri, p. 69

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 135-136

HISTORY IN GUINEY

40

would, and did, only end in disaster. She describes him:

It is to be observed, that throughout the campaign in Brittany, no blunder has ever been imputed to Henri. He guessed at a science to which others had made the painful approximation of study. His own vision was so clear, so free of prejudice, that he saw at once what was to be done. His sagacity, when things were left in his own hands, was simply amazing, for we do not expect sagacity from dare-devils. But he had a mistaken humility which forbade him to apply his great force of will, when the question arose of over-ruling age and numbers. His fear that he should not know how to silence those who opposed him proved but too accurate (...) his steadfast conviction was against the expediency of trying to reach Granville at all. When (...) an unique opportunity arose to retrace the march and re-establish head-quarters in the Bocage (...) none would listen to him. Throughout this unhappy time, (...) there came to him a growing prudence and calm (...) He learned to cover a retreat, to reap the full fruit of a victory. He forbore his old impetuous charges but rode close to his column clearing up the confusion, hindering the bravest from advancing alone, and holding the disciplined musketeers together.⁴⁵

The qualities which she stresses were voiced in comments made by the same Republican leaders already quoted, to whom may be added Stofflet, Gibert, and the marginal comments of Napoleon. Miss Guiney states these latter without qualification, but Biganne⁴⁶ gives the story as found in Souvenirs de La Comtesse de la Bouère, and Journal d'une femme de cinquante ans, which sounds plausible enough. Since both these memoirs were

⁴⁵Guiney, Monsieur Henri, pp. 87-88

⁴⁶Biganne, op. cit. pp. xxviii-xxx, quoting, Souvenirs de la Comtesse de la Bouère, mémoires inédits publiés par Mme. La Comtesse de la Bouère, belle-fille de l'auteur, Paris, 1890, also Journal d'une femme de cinquante ans, 1770-1815, publiés par son arrière-petit-fils le colonel Comte Aymar de Liedekerke-Beaufort, Paris, 1925

HISTORY IN GUINEY

41

published after Miss Guiney's they serve to corroborate her data and vouch for it.

One blunder Henri did make. Guiney does mention it, but does not censure Henri as he deserves, nor does she deal justly with Charette. After the catastrophic retreat, Henri and his men set out to join Stofflet and Charette who were still combating in the Bocage. The latter was annoyed, not without reason, says Biganne,⁴⁷ at the unfair division of spoil among the various sectors of the armies. He received Henri coldly, but when the soldiers were mustering he said to him, "You will follow me?" Guiney describes Henri's reply and the consequences which ensued as follows:

Henri made a foolish and haughty answer: 'I am accustomed to be followed!' and turned away. Here was an instance of the jealousy and disunion which had affected the chiefs of the insurrection. Though Henri was the legitimate commander of all the forces of the main army, Charette had a rather ignoble precedent in his favour, in as much as his little legion of the Marais had never fused in the main army; and a long despotism, pure enough in its purpose, had made him averse to any compromise(...) Could the two have agreed to march together on the capital, the counter-revolution, Napoleon declared, would have set in nearly twenty years sooner.⁴⁸ (underlining ours)

This paragraph illustrates fairly well how the author has infused a subjective coloring into the recital of facts. The use of the word "foolish" immediately lessens the fault

⁴⁷Biganne, op. cit., p. 317, note 10.

⁴⁸Guiney, Monsieur Henri, pp. 102-103

so far as Henri is concerned, while "ignoble" and "despotism" put Charette, if not entirely in the wrong, at least in an unfavourable light. She does not make any reference to the cause of the coldness, a question on which there was considerable misunderstanding and disagreement; we must conclude therefore that she was unaware of the connection or considered it unwarranted. At any rate this is an instance where the bias of her sources has not been rectified.

In the final analysis we may say that she has not presented a completely impartial story, though the aberrations are not too frequent and have been brought to light through the publication of material which was not available in her day. As a mark of her good faith we may refer to the fact that she expressed the hope to rewrite this story, and that her own copy was found covered with marginal notes-corrections that she wished to embody in her final version.⁴⁹

That Henri did exert an influence out of proportion to his years and military knowledge, is generally acceptable and explainable. His qualities were just those that appealed to these peasants who formed the core of the Vendean revolt. Simple, brave,-but independent, untrained and undisciplined in the art of war-they were the despair at times of leaders who relied for obedience in the field upon personal loyalty.

⁴⁹E.M. Tenison, Life and Works of Louise Imogen Guiney, New York, 1923, p. 43.

HISTORY IN GUINEY

43

It is not hard to see how this youthful Henri, "when he flashed down the front on his wonderful white horse,"⁵⁰ caught the imagination and the hearts of his followers in life, and became the hero and the symbol of their cause, in death.

It is this Henri that Louise Guiney has depicted for us. The deeds she has recounted are not false, but in her mode of telling she has shared the enthusiasm and delight of his admirers, thus investing the story with an atmosphere of high adventure and romance, very far removed from the "detached" and almost wary attitude that is demanded of the writer of "pure biography." That she made an earnest effort to consult original sources, that she tried to be less partial than the marquise, cannot be denied; but finding in Henri those qualities which she admired, she allowed her personal feelings to set the mood of her narrative, and every now and then she rhapsodizes:

It was the first slight sign of his consecration to a cause. He had spoken famous words, hardly to be matched in history; words which have travelled far and wide and proclaimed his spirit where his name is utterly unknown. Yesterday he was a carpet-knight; now like "gallant Murray" in the song

"His gude sword he hath drawn it
And hath flong the sheath awa'."⁵¹

Towards the end of her story she again lets her fertile imagination and eloquent pen burst into high-flowing eloquence:

⁵⁰ Guiney, Monsieur Henri, p. 40
⁵¹ Ibid., p. 2

HISTORY IN GUINEY

44

It is difficult to account for the halo which gathers about such heads, and stays, to make of a sometime aimless intelligence a vision of extreme force and charm to the youth of his own land. Nor ought we try to account for it. Henri de La Rochejaquelein is one with whom statistics and theories have distant dealings. He is a fond incongruity, a compliment to human nature almost as great as it can bear. He has precisely the look, language, and physical radiance of the demigods; we infer how, from his counterparts, the early myths rew.(...) Such a one makes a jest of values; he has the freedom of every city, he need pay no taxes; he cripples criticism; he can do without a character; theology itself will not exact faith and good works from him.(...) Among the serious war-worn leaders of the insurrection, he stands, a fairy prince, with a bright absurd glamour. Never was anybody more like the fiction of an artist's brain. He is all that children look for in a tale, and he has no moral. He is the embodiment of "l'inexplicable Vendée."⁵²

In such passages the essayist is running away with the biographer. The subjective element far outweighs the objective.

So far as length is concerned, "becoming brevity" has been observed. His early life is limited to a few details, both because Miss Guiney wished to deal with him above all in his role as a Vendean leader, and his early life was fairly uneventful in itself. Despite the amount of history involved, it is not disproportionate since it was the major factor in developing his character and the sole cause of his career.

Let us now turn our attention to Robert Emmett,⁵³ not the next in order of publication, but a work very similar in

⁵² Ibid., pp. 133-136

⁵³ Louis Imogen Guiney, Robert Emmet, A Survey of His Rebellion and of His Romance, London, David Nutt, 1904

HISTORY IN GUINEY

45

theme and style to Monsieur Henri. In the prefatory note she calls it an "unscientific monograph", a sort of little historical descent", founded upon "all the accurate known literature of the subject, and also largely on the Hardwicke MSS."⁵⁴

The latter had only recently been made available to the public, had not, in fact, yet been catalogued, and Miss Guiney had intended being the first to incorporate this material, including Emmet's last two letters, in book form as a kind of epitaph for the hundredth anniversary of his execution. Unfortunately, some parts appeared in the Cornhill Magazine, while her work was in press, and MacDonagh's book⁵⁵ came out at about the same time.

With respect to facts she, MacDonagh, and Postgate⁵⁶ cover about the same ground, but they do it in a much more detailed and argumentative way. They really present a case while she tells a story. Of course, there are instances where she brings in some considerations, as where she denies the tale of Sarah's being seen on the day of the execution,⁵⁷ but on the whole she proceeds directly, working quotations and letters into the thread of the work. Unless further reading

⁵⁴ Guiney, Robert Emmet, p. vii

⁵⁵ Michael MacDonagh, The Viceroy's Post Bag, London, John Murray, 1904, pp. v-466.

⁵⁶ R. W. Postgate Robert Emmet, London, Secker, 1931

⁵⁷ Guiney, Robert Emmet, p.

HISTORY IN GUINEY

46

is done on the subject, the reader may find many statements gratuitous. An example of such a statement is found in her description of his being "lured" back to Ireland by the inducement that "revolutionary hopes were ripening fast",⁵⁸ and in her acceptance of the theory that the whole thing was engineered as a trap by the British Government:

Alas! There is no documentary proof forthcoming for it yet, but it is painfully probable that his little after-glow of a rebellion was long fostered, for reasons of their own, by great statesmen, and that their secret knowledge of it arose from Irish bad faith; that, in short, he was let dream his dream until it suited others to close the toils about him. The two or three highest in authority in Dublin, Lord Hardwicke chief among them, were kept ignorant as himself. Emmet was really victim and martyr.⁵⁹

She enlarges somewhat upon this towards the end:

There is a great unwritten chapter of perfidy behind his lonely ineffectual blow struck for national freedom. Any one who has studied well these events of 1803, and weighed well the astonishing confidential information about the historical papers at Dublin Castle, which was given not long ago to Dr. Thomas Addis Emmet, of New York, by Sir Bernard Burke, and incorporated in The Emmet Family, can hardly doubt that revelations on that subject are yet to come which will lengthen the story of Mr. Pitt, Lord Castlereagh, Mr. Under-secretary Marsden, and their dealings with Ireland.⁶⁰

Postgate⁶¹ deals quite thoroughly with this whole question. He does not dismiss it as impossible nor improbable, but since the letter from Pitt is not in existence now, and the

⁵⁸Guiney, Robert Emmet, p. 20

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 10

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 92.

⁶¹Postgate, op. cit., pp. 186-188.

HISTORY IN GUINEY

47

proof of its former existence depends only upon the memory of an elderly curator, and the trustworthiness of the report of a descendent of the Emmet family, it may be that the "unwritten chapter" will remain forever unwritten. The only other evidence to be found is indirect and is in Emmet's own statement during his trial:

'My Lords, let me here observe that I am not the head and lifeblood of this rebellion. When I came to Ireland I found the business ripe for execution: I was asked to join in it.' And again: 'I have been charged with that importance in the efforts to emancipate my country as to be considered the key-stone of the combination of Irishmen, of, as it has been expressed, the life and soul of this conspiracy. You do me honour overmuch. You have given to the subaltern all the credit of the superior. He turned half-smiling to the presiding judge. There are men concerned in this conspiracy who are not only superior to me, but even to your own conception of yourself, my lord.'⁶²

The supposition that Emmet had some inkling or knowledge that the resurrection was the work of those desirous of destroying the republican faction, finds support in Postgate's comment "But it is quite certain that at one terrible moment Russell and Emmet decided that they had been trapped into their action by a Government plot";⁶³ Also in Dr. Madden's report of his visit to Hope, the weaver, who admitted Emmet had said he had been invited by "those in high places," but he refused to give any names honoring his pledge to Emmet.⁶⁴

⁶²Guiney, Robert Emmet, pp. 34-35 quoting his trial

⁶³Postgate, op. cit., p. 187

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 185

HISTORY IN GUINEY

48

It must be admitted that all this evidence is inconclusive, though the devious ways then employed to obtain information and to convict men, is entirely in accord with such proceedings. MacDonagh has this to say:

Nevertheless, the trial of Emmet casts a black shadow over the otherwise brilliant lustre of the Irish bar. The end of the eighteenth century and the opening of the nineteenth is regarded as its most brilliant period. Surely, it is also its most infamous! In its ranks at that time were men of imperishable renown, and pitiable creatures, self-seeking and base.⁶⁵

Two mysteries seem to have come nearer solution in the time that has elapsed since MacDonagh and Guiney wrote, one is the almost certain discovery of the informer's name, McNally; and the other is the equally probable, but not incontestable discovery of the whereabouts of Emmet's body. Both stories are too long to be retold here but are well given by Postgate.⁶⁶

McNally's work as a spy in Government pay, became known only after his death and even then was scarcely credited. But the letters contained in the Hardwicke Papers, and quoted by both MacDonagh and Postgate convict him roundly. Moreover, the chief secretary's memorandum that it was "a thousand times better that Emmet should escape than they should "close forever a most accurate source of information"⁶⁷ shows how jealously guarded the secret of his identity was.

⁶⁵MacDonagh, The Vice-Roy's Post Bag, p. 398

⁶⁶Postgate, Robert Emmet, pp. 317-320

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 274-5 quoting Hardwicke MSS

HISTORY IN GUINEY

49

Guiney does not quote the letters but she indulges in a scathing denunciation of him and Dr. George Trevors:

When enclosed in his cell, Emmet became the object of apparent concern and affection on the part of two acquaintances: the accomplished advocate and litterateur Mr. Leonard McNally, and Dr. Trevor, Superintendent of Prisons. If those persons had stepped out of an ancient epic or some fancied tragedy to show what human genius could do by way of creating hypocrites, no plaudit ever yet given could be worthy of the play. They were both moral monsters, paragons of evil, beyond the Florentine and Elizabethan imagination. How they played with the too noble and trusting creature in their hands, how they tricked him with illusory plans of escape, and beguiled him into inditing documents which were promptly handed over to headquarters, need not detain us, though it supplies a long thrilling chapter in the humanities. Emmet's first move was to empty his pockets of coin for the gaoler, under the man's promise that he would carry in person a communication to Miss Curran. The recipient was not that distracted maid, but the Attorney-General.⁶⁸

Had she been aware that further suspicion would point McNally out as the informer, to what lengths would not her indignation have moved her!

In this paragraph we have much the same emotional handling of persons as seen in Monsieur Henri. There is the underlying strata of historic fact, but it is dressed and served with the condiments of intense personal sentiment. The power of suggestion in the words "too noble and trusting creature", "tricked", "illusory", "beguiled" opens the gates of pity in the reader as surely as it discovers the feelings of the writer, while such terms as "monsters" and "paragons of evil" rouse ire against the deceivers. This does not mean

⁶⁸Guiney, Robert Emmet, p. 35

that the one and the others are not deserving of such sentiments, but the method of awakening them is contrary to the dictates of "pure biography". A simple straight-forward lining-up of facts would render justice to each side even more effectively. We have a similar delineation of Curran's character by the employment of a quotation whose source is not given, "ugly, copious, full of wit and ardour and fire," the Curran of "fifty faces and twice as many voices", of Byron's lasting admiration".⁶⁹ Her own words describing Sarah's father are less vehement:

Incomparably genial when he chose, to strangers, he visited his resentments in private upon his children, her children, especially upon his son Henry, who stood in lifelong dread of him. The one little daughter of his inordinate love, Gertrude, had died by accident at twelve years old.

.....
 There are several historic instances of a like fatherliness in fathers, a century ago, Mr. Curran doubtless felt outraged in every fibre, and not more indignant at the independent conduct of his meek domestic vassal than at the astounding ignorance in which she had contrived to keep him. Yet there were powerful pleas for compassion in such a case, inherent in his own history.(...) Mr. Curran had earned a right, he may have thought, to his opinion of women. The memory of his calamity may well have operated to make him both excessively exacting as to female behaviour and pitiless towards any supposed violation of it.(...) Moreover, an Irish father is as likely as not to cherish spacious ideas of his own governing prerogative.(...) Again, his attitude towards Emmet may have seemed to him no exaggerated hatred, but the mere tribute of virtuous scorn.⁷⁰

That he was harsh, and unforgiving is borne out by his subsequent conduct towards Sarah, which MacDonagh attributes

⁶⁹Guiney, Robert Emmet, p. 17

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 19; p. 44-46

HISTORY IN GUINEY

51

to his fear that "her relations with Emmet would spoil his chance of promotion to the bench".⁷¹ He had apparently suffered from no such fear when he had so ably defended the rebels of 1798. Guiney essays to be just when she says:

Like all the best Irishmen of his blazingly brilliant day, he was for Parliamentary Reform and Catholic Emancipation, and against the Union.(...) But though his convictions seemed close enough to Emmet's there was wide variance in their bearing and momentum.(...) Both men vehemently desired the framing of fresh good laws, and the unhampered operation of existing good laws, for Ireland. To Curran, incorruptible as he was, England was an excellent general superintendent and referee to set over the concerns of other nations, provided that she could be got to abstain scrupulously from undue interference, and hold tenure under more than nominal corporal withdrawal. Poor Emmet's ideal of Irish independence was remote enough from this. He had read somewhere that his country used to be a proud kingdom, and not a petted province. Surely, Curran, in his later years, when he "sank"(the word is Cloncurry's, and used of his friend) to office, could have no patience with a Separatist son-in-law. But the Master of the Rolls continued to be a great man, and Emmet, at twenty-five ceased to be a fool.⁷²

Respecting Emmet himself she quotes the judgment pronounced on him in The Life and Times of Henry Grattan, but adds "for what it is worth". "Robert Emmet was devoid of caution, foresight and prudence: ardent, spirited, and impetuous.. He was an enthusiast, he was a visionary".⁷³ She does not seem to be in complete agreement. She does tell us:

⁷¹MacDonagh, The Vice-Roy's Post Bag, p. 399

⁷²Guiney, Robert Emmet, pp.47-48

⁷³Ibid., p. 71, quoting Henry Grattan and His Times. The Life and Times of Henry Grattan.

Emmet had studied with enormous industry, and arranged with masterly precision, directing, among pikes and powder in his dingy depots, each needful move and counter-move for a concerted rising; he thought it strange that in every conceivable way, major and minor, the whole scheme simultaneously miscarried."⁷⁴

Postgate⁷⁵ also dwells on his study, his ingenious manufacture of weapons and his attention to detail. But both accuse him of too much secrecy and a readiness to assume that others were animated by the same spirit of disinterested patriotism he was. As Guiney says:

If one could believe him as free as he believed himself, one might regret that he maintained too perfect a secrecy, and counted too much upon the elasticity of Irish impulse.(...) He leaned overmuch, not on human goodness but on human intelligence in making opportunity: and it failed him.⁷⁶

In one particular he was lacking in prudence and caution, and that was, in his remaining after the debacle to see Sarah, instead of fleeing at once. Even had he destroyed her letters, as she had asked, he probably would never have been convicted. Guiney describes it thus: "But the insistent beat of his own heart was to see his beautiful Sarah again.(...) It was a mad deed."⁷⁷ Postgate puts it less romantically, "The love of a woman at one essential moment--if not twice--clouded his judgment and ultimately brought him to his death."⁷⁸

⁷⁴Guiney, Robert Emmet, p. 22

⁷⁵Postgate, op. cit., pp. 202-209

⁷⁶Guiney, op. cit., p. 22

⁷⁷Guiney, op. cit., p. 31

⁷⁸Postgate, op. cit., p. 215

HISTORY IN GUINEY

53

So while it is not in this sense that Grattan's biographer was probably accusing him of imprudence, it is very applicable. One must admit that only a very ardent affection could have induced a young man burning with love of country and desire to see her free, to run the risk and pay the forfeit Emmet did. The best vindication is found in his letter to his brother, "I am just going to do my last duty to my country. It can be done as well on the scaffold as in the field."⁷⁹

Two more points need be mentioned, one is Dr. Thomas Emmet's character. Guiney inclines to be more complimentary in her appraisal of him than Postgate. His kindness, skill are mentioned by the latter, but he also adds "in political and philosophical matters, (he was) often a rash, dogmatic and melodramatic person."⁸⁰ Guiney calls him "a man of clear brain and incorruptible honour. (...) The boys and girls were brought up to think first of Ireland and her needs. (...) it would have been enough to seal the young Emmets for fanaticism."⁸¹

The other point is the inclusion of strong epithets in the speech from the "dock". The speech is a master-piece and inspiration, but has been much tampered with. Postgate

⁷⁹Guiney, Robert Emmet, p. 61, quoting Hardwicke, manuscript 35, 742f. 197

⁸⁰Postgate, op. cit., pp. 12-15

⁸¹Guiney, op. cit., pp. 1-6

HISTORY IN GUINEY

54

informs us that Dr. Madden found no less than eleven versions of it. The difficulty lies in the fact that "enemies have cut out what they did not desire to have preserved, friends have 'improved' it by additions of their own."⁸² Miss Guiney does not give it verbatim, except for its closing paragraph, but she makes this remark:

Emmet has been misrepresented in one important particular. He had a fine understanding of the uses of irony; but it is to his praise that he was also scrupulously, persistently, and invincibly courteous. To know him is to know that sentences such as those figuring in some reports of his speech, about "that viper", meaning (Mr. Plunket), (...) are, as attributed to him, all but impossible. The truth seems to be that his admirers finding him unaccountably lacking in invective, and the vituperative power of the Gael, have amended between them, this evidence of his undutiful shortcomings.⁸³

The general tone of the speech would lend weight to this assumption. Moreover, Postgate assigns the insertion of the offending remark to McNally's son, who, on one occasion had heard Emmet speak of Plunket as a viper.⁸⁴ That he could be fiery and eloquent, is shown not only by his last speech, but by the reputation and influence he had acquired among his fellow students at Trinity College in Dublin, and for which he eventually had to withdraw. But his zeal came from love of country, not from hatred of individuals. This is clearly proved by his letter to the Chief Secretary⁸⁵ in which he

⁸²Postgate, op. cit., p. 290

⁸³Guiney, op. cit., pp. 51-52

⁸⁴Postgate, op. cit., p. 327

⁸⁵Guiney, op. cit., pp. 93-94 quoting Hardwicke MS 35, 742, f. 196

HISTORY IN GUINEY

55

thanks the Present Administration for its courtesy to him, and admits its mildness in the general conduct of its affairs, an acknowledgment required of him as a man, and not derogatory to his principles as an Irishman. If further testimony is needed, his last words as he mounted the scaffold, "My friends, I die in peace, and with sentiments of love and kindness to all men,"⁸⁶ are abiding witnesses to the constructive rather than destructive attitude of his mind.

In retrospect we can say that the historic basis of Guiney's Robert Emmet, is really sound but has not been handled in a sufficiently cool, logical, step-by-step fashion. Miss Guiney does not attempt to prove her thesis, though it is more provable than disprovable. It is highly probable that her use of the words "unscientific monograph"⁸⁷ were directed towards warding off the necessity of writing in this vein, but from the point of view of biography this is not sufficient. As in Monsieur Henri, she lapses into general flights of fancy which may lend artistic balance and round out poetic justice, but have no place in biography. The following is quoted to illustrate:

To mark the look of this Robert, hungry for the heroic, the look of this Sarah, mystical as twilight, is but to forecast casualties(...) To be an Emmet at all meant to get into trouble for advanced ideals. To be a Curran meant to have a keen intelligence always besieged hard, and eventually overcome by melancholia, (...) Emmet and the young creature of his adoration were hardly used; but fate chose not ill for them.⁸⁸

⁸⁶Guiney, Robert Emmet, p. 70

⁸⁷Ibid., p. vii

⁸⁸Ibid., pp. 100-101

Of his actual accomplishment she has no illusion:

With none of the celebrities of his own nation can he, in point of actual service, compare; but everyone of them, whether known to ancient folk-lore or to the printed annals of yesterday, is less of a living legend...⁸⁹

Her final verdict on him, "To be unbiased and Irish is to love Robert Emmet; to be generously English is to love him; to be American is to love him anyhow,"⁹⁰ has found fulfillment in at least one English heart, that of Robert Southey whose poem sings his praise and vindicates his cause.⁹¹ We may regret his fate but few today would berate Robert Emmet for having loved "not wisely but too well."

Edmund Campion,⁹² the third in Guiney's triumvirate of young martyrs to a cause, was written for a series of books, edited by the Reverend Dom Bede Camm, O.S.B. She⁹³ tells us that she has leaned heavily on Mr. Richard Simpson's Edmund Campion, Jesuit Protomartyr of England, but has supplemented or contradicted that "splendid but biased narrative" with information based on the researches of the Reverend John Hungerford Pollen, S.J., and citations from Parsons and

⁸⁹Guiney, Robert Emmet, p. 11

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 103

⁹¹Robert Southey, "Robert Emmet" in English Romantic Poets, American Book Co., New York, 1933, 785-786

⁹²Louise Imogen Guiney, Blessed Edmund Campion, Benziger Brothers, New York, 1908.

⁹³Ibid., prefatory note (ix)

HISTORY IN GUINEY

57

Allen. When dissatisfied with the existing translations of the latter she has rendered them anew. It is significant that Evelyn Waugh, in the preface to the second edition of his work had this to say:

The alternatives were either a drastic revision of Richard Simpson's excellent work, which had long been out of print and had been corrected in many particulars by subsequent research, or to attempt an entirely new book. I chose the latter, but Simpson's strong foundations support my structure, and it is to him that I owe the greatest debt. (...) I was privileged to use the copious collection of notes and documents (...) for what would have been, had he lived, the definitive biography.

There is great need for a complete scholar's work on the subject. This is not it. All I have done is select the incidents which struck a novelist as important, and relate them in a single narrative.

It shall be read as a simple, perfectly true story of heroism and holiness.⁹⁴

It is not strange then to find that both works relate exactly the same story, differing only in the manner and the amount of history and detail given. There are two spots however, in which there are divergences, not serious enough to affect the main narrative, but of sufficient import to be mentioned. The one deals with Bishop Goldwell's defection, the other with details of Campion's arrest.

When the party bound for England came to Rheims, Miss Guiney⁹⁵ tells us that the old Bishop fell ill of a fever, and having heard rumours of it, the Pope was unwilling to

⁹⁴Evelyn Waugh, Edmund Campion, London, Longmans, 1935, preface to second edition, (Penguin publication) p. 7

⁹⁵Guiney, Edmund Campion, pp. 85-86

HISTORY IN GUINEY

58

imperial such an important personage. The Bishop then wrote asking the Holy Father to listen to no objections but anoint three or four new Bishops at once. He then touchingly assured His Holiness that they would be quite ready to live poorly like the early Bishops of the Church. Nothing was done and the upshot was the the Bishop was recalled to Rome, where he died.

Waugh's account shows the Bishop to be somewhat less magnanimous, and the Holy Father less concerned about his person:

When they reached Rheims and caught up with Bishop Goldwell and Dr. Morton they found that what had been fun to them had become a very grave matter to the Prelate(...) It had seemed easy enough during the wave of enthusiasm at Rome to volunteer for the expedition; (...) but the weeks of jogging along through waterlogged high roads, (...) nearer to those sufferings which had sounded so edifying when read aloud in the refectory, had affected a serious derangement of the bishop's system. (...) he took to his bed and began writing to the Pope to express his doubts, whether he were precisely the best person for the work in hand. (...) he wrote twice, mentioning his willingness to go anywhere (...) but suggesting an alternative plan. Why should not one or two of these courageous young priests be made bishops? (...)

To make matters worse, before there was time for a reply, plague broke out in Rheims, and the Bishop's agitation became frantic. Accordingly he settled matters for himself and returned to Rome without permission, where he was greeted by a somewhat cold reception from the Cardinal of Como.⁹⁶

These two versions differ essentially in the precise amount of detail given by Mr. Waugh as contrasted with the vagueness of Miss Guiney. He mentions two letters, she only one; his

⁹⁶Waugh, op. cit., pp.79-80

HISTORY IN GUINEY

59

allusion to the Bishop's frantic departure, contrasted with her laconic "the upshot, in any case, was that the good Bishop was recalled to Rome", leaves us in the dark as to whether she thought it immaterial or unwise to lay open the whole matter. Her cursory treatment of the problem suggests that her information was less full than his, or that she was glossing over it. She is more interested in the final result which she states thus:

Nobody on the Catholic side believed that the new sad order of things in England was going to last(...) for thirty weary years the poor flock struggled on without any qualified prelate to supply their crying spiritual wants and hold them together.⁹⁷

The second divergence relates to the discovery of the Jesuit's hiding-place. Miss Guiney describes it this way:

The men-at-arms had been fooled too often, and were angry with Eliot(...) On going down stairs again he struck his hand upon the wall over it. 'We have not broken through here!', he said. A loyal servant of the Yates, who was at his side(...) went deadly pale while Eliot's eye was still on him. The latter called, in triumph for a smith's hammer, and banged into the narrow cell. And thus was Father Edmund Campion taken.⁹⁸

Waugh gives the credit of observing a chink of light in the wall to "Jenkins" who revealed the hiding-place with a crowbar. He then quotes "The said Jenkins then called very loudly, and said, 'I have found the traitors!'"⁹⁹ The two stories need not be mutually contradictory. Since

⁹⁷Guiney, Edmund Campion, p. 86

⁹⁸Ibid., pp. 134-135

⁹⁹Waugh, op. cit., pp. 138-139

HISTORY IN GUINEY

60

neither writer has tied himself down to giving every detail, the words and actions of the two searchers could have been sequential or almost simultaneous. Eliot could have remarked upon the wall and demanded the hammer while Jenkins applied the crowbar to pry the wall-boards away, thus first catching sight of the prisoners. Certainly Eliot claimed the full glory, or ignominy of capturing Campion, and reaped the reward in more ways than one.

The real differences between the two books dealing with Campion, lies essentially in method and mood. Waugh devotes several pages in each section to an exposition of the historic or political conditions which are relevant to the full understanding of, not only Campion, but the whole spirit and activity of the times. In this he concurs to a point with Belloc's theory that the man must be shown against the background of his age. Thus he discusses the state of Education in the Universities,¹⁰⁰ the influence and temper of the papacy and the character of the Popes who reigned in Peter's Chair;¹⁰¹ the attitude and legislation of Elizabeth and her ministers as it went through different phases; the position of Catholics with respect to the Government, and

¹⁰⁰Waugh, op. cit., pp. 17-21

¹⁰¹Ibid., pp. 40-41; 54-55

HISTORY IN GUINEY

61

their allegiance to the Queen in things temporal versus the demands of conscience; finally, the express aims of the missionairies, their method and the limits within which they were to confine their work.¹⁰²

Miss Guiney does less of this; she does not discuss the Papacy at all from the human or political point of view. While she mentions the foundation at Douai and its removal to Rome, she does not go into such detail concerning its internal troubles as does Mr. Waugh. She tends, on the whole, to condense purely historic matter into small space. She alludes throughout to statutes passed, difficulties encountered, but she does not develop the whole genealogy of the incident or legislation arguing from cause to effect. A few extracts will make these observations concrete:

Mary's troubled reign had covered the five most susceptible years of his youth, and restored to the country, despite its legal excesses, a definitely Catholic tone. Things were soon to change. War by statute against the Mass was first declared in 1559. Edmund Campion had left Oxford by the time that St. John's, deprived of President after President by the Royal Commissioners, was swept clean of all the dons who favoured, or in any degree tolerated, the jurisdiction of the Apostolic See which safeguarded the doctrine and honour of the Blessed Eucharist.

.....
The early summer of 1571 was ill-starred, various startling events had conjoined like tidal waves to lift the misbehaving English Government up to its highest pitch of alarm.¹⁰³

¹⁰²Waugh, op. cit., pp. 87-89; 94-98

¹⁰³Guiney, Edmund Campion, pp.4-5;p. 35

HISTORY IN GUINEY

62

Whereas Waugh gives a fairly detailed account of the several acts passed against Catholics showing the gradual increases in severity and repression,¹⁰⁴ Louise Guiney, wraps them up in a pungent little paragraph:

There is this to be said, however: that the Marian courts dealt out death to heretics and malcontents, and candidly stopped there, and were not inspired to any cruelty more subtle; whereas Good Queen Bess not only dealt out death much more liberally, but invented poison for all the springs of life. Her statutes, terribly oppressive from the first, ended in what Burke calls the most hateful code framed since the world began: Penal Laws which, especially from 1585 on, struck without mercy at Catholics in their rights of worship, property, inheritance, education, travel, professions, public service and private liberties of every kind. Another point to be noted in passing is that Queen Mary persecuted her subjects for changing their religion. Her more ingenious sister persecuted them for not changing it!¹⁰⁵

To sum up the historic events in this fashion has one disadvantage in a work of this kind. Mr. Waugh introduces his account with this pertinent observation:

It is still generally believed in England that Elizabeth's anti-Catholic legislation was remarkable for its leniency, and that in an age of savage intolerance she and Cecil stood out as unique examples of enlightenment and moderation. It may, therefore, be convenient to approach the English Catholics by means of a summary of their legal position.¹⁰⁶

By not giving such a summary Miss Guiney leaves her reader in the same state of ignorance and prejudice as before. Unless

¹⁰⁴Waugh, op. cit., pp. 87-90

¹⁰⁵Guiney, Edmund Campion, pp. 37-38

¹⁰⁶Waugh, op. cit., p. 87

he does some original research, he will consider her statements unwarranted, or at least, insufficiently supported, and dictated by mere prejudice. Moreover, her taking sides, by her persistent use of adjectives, and other qualifying words or phrases such as, "candidly", "hateful", "without mercy", "ingenious", without first giving the matter a thorough airing, clouds the reader's ability to form his own opinion, and is likely to rouse emotion but not enlighten his mind.

The biographer must not only state truth, as we have said, but must do it dispassionately and he must do it in such a way that the reader is aware of an objective presentation. In order to accomplish this, it seems necessary when dealing with a controversial historical figure to bring in more rather than less of the historic background. But Miss Guiney might have done well even with her lesser amount of history, if she had laid aside her emotional broadsword. A rapier can be used with less ill effect, but such trenchant blows as shown above are too powerful.

So far as Campion's own life is concerned, she gives us a full account without such details as a list of his English itinerary. She keeps close to her sources quoting snatches of dialogue in quaint Elizabethan spelling. Extracts from Campion's own letters, works, and defense at the conferences and trial, give a sense of reality and life to it. What incidents she can give of his youth prepare us for

the beginning of that career which opened so brightly. Despite the observation made above concerning the use of adjectives and qualifying phrases, the book as a whole is milder in tone than the preceding lives. Her tendency to indulge rhetorical flights of fancy is less evident, she keeps closer to the direct thread of her narrative, and her own personality is kept farther in the background. Her closing paragraphs, still eulogistic, are more restrained:

Blessed Edmund Campion was "a religious genius", with a creative spirituality given to few, even among the canonized children of the Fold. But in his kinship with his place and time, his peculiar gentleness, his scholarship lightly worn, his magic influence, his fearless deed and flawless word, he was a great Elizabethan too. (...) He is sure of justice at last. In the Church, that name of his will have a never-dying beauty, though it is not quite where it might have been on the secular roll-call...¹⁰⁷

If Waugh's book is not the definitive and scholarly biography, still less is Louise Guiney's nor was it meant to be. Neither does it qualify as a "pure biography", but it does show some advance towards this goal over Monsieur Henri and Robert Emmet.

Hurrell Froude,¹⁰⁸ published earlier than Edmund Campion, is, in the author's words, "this unconventional yet homogeneous volume",¹⁰⁹ It consists mainly of extracts and

¹⁰⁷Guiney, Edmund Campion, p. 182

¹⁰⁸Louise Imogen Guiney, Hurrell Froude, Memoranda and comments, Methuen, London, 1904, xii-449 p.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. xv

HISTORY IN GUINEY

65

is divided into two sections. While working on it she wrote to a friend:

You know more than two-thirds of it is a reprint: not only R.H.F.'s own stuff, but of everything of moment ever written of him, friendly or unfriendly.¹¹⁰

The first part is devoted to his life as seen from his Journal and correspondence the whole connected by a slight thread of comments by Miss Guiney. Of the sources she says:

The epistolary matter in the first section of this volume is drawn from material already in print: chiefly from Part 1 of The Remains of the Reverend Richard Hurrell Froude M.A., Fellow of Oriel, published by the Rivingtons in 1838, and incidentally, from John Henry Newman: Letters and Correspondence to 1845, published by the Longmans in 1890:....¹¹¹

So far as the externals of his short life go, there is little to record and that little is told directly or indirectly in his letters to Keble, Newman, and to a few others, Williams, Christie, his father, and brother, William. Nor is there anything controversial in it. The whole value and interest lies in the spiritual drama taking place in his mind and soul which he laid bare in his journal, notebooks, and these letters. It is here too that we see his relation to the Oxford Movement, a fact that his early death has often caused to be by-passed. Miss Guiney, by a judicious selection of extracts, sometimes further developed by her own thoughts on the matter, or those of others, has given us a full picture of both his personal struggle and

¹¹⁰Guiney, Letters, Vol. 2, p. 63

¹¹¹Guiney, Hurrell Froude, p. xi

HISTORY IN GUINEY

66

its far-reaching effects. It is in the second section of the book, which is entirely a compilation without any comments from Miss Guiney, that we see the reactions of those representing different modes or degrees of thought concerning the status of the Anglican Church. Her method of proceeding is this:

concerning its second section a few remarks may be called for. That section actually had, from the first, in the Editor's intention, the right of way. It is quite independent, not called into auxiliary play as a mere illustrative collection of 'pieces justificatives'. Many of these essays and reviews have authority; a few have great literary beauty; The Editor's work which could not vie with them, has borrowed almost nothing from them, and thus preserved two integrities(...) The process of making excerpts, at best, has something (...) of danger. Where that process cannot be avoided, it is well, at least, if its lever be not a preconceived theory. An Editor, not of Froude's own religious communion should scruple all the more to interfere in any wise with witnesses. Such lines or pages as are here scored out(...) are not deleted to favour any special plea, but are either, somewhat irrelevant to the subject(...) or a repetition(...) Where aught of moment is involved, the fullest and clearest expression of it is (...) allowed(...) e.g. Dean Church's apologetics concerning Froude's 'Romanizing' will be found more satisfactory to the uneasy than the paler defense in the first Preface to the Remains...112

The publishing of The Remains had caused a furor in Anglican circles due to Froude's very outspoken, even harsh, treatment of the Protestant Reformers, and his criticism of attitudes and practices in the English Church. Newman and Keble came under sharp censure from many for permitting the publication of material which was so personal, in many cases written from one friend to another. Two quotations will show

112 Guiney, Hurrell Froude, pp. xiii-xiv.

HISTORY IN GUINEY

67

Miss Guiney's breadth of treatment:

Froude was brimful of irony, and always ready to surprise and even shock men of slower temperament(...) The Editors of The Remains were under a temptation, which they construed into a necessity, to reproduce him as he had really been, to the very words and the life(...) Upon the whole they were right; for no one ever charged, or could now charge, on Froude, that his expressions had brought anyone to Rome, or could doubt that Froude himself was Anglican to the last...¹¹³

From the opposing camp the following is taken:

The volumes themselves (The Remains) are highly valuable to every practical student of the human character, because they exhibit an individual in his true colours, and afford evidences of what the human mind (even with all the advantages of natural talent and education) may be brought to, when not guided by the Light which is from above...¹¹⁴

The important part played by Froude in getting the Movement under way is attested by those who knew:

Little as his pen did, short as his life was, those who can recall the time feel the influence of his mere presence to have been essential to the original impulse which set all going. They cannot imagine the start without his forwarding, impelling look and voice...¹¹⁵

While Miss Guiney discusses these two questions concerning Froude, she is more preoccupied with the personal traits which were responsible for them. In this book she

¹¹³Guiney, Hurrell Froude, p. 391, quoting Rev. T. Mozley, Reminiscences Chiefly of Oriel College and The Oxford Movement, London, Longmans, 1882

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 407, quoting Peter Maurice, A Key to the Popery of Oxford, London, Baisler, 1838.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 408, quoting Letters and Correspondence of John Henry Newman, edited by Anne Mozely, London, Longmans, 1890

HISTORY IN GUINEY

68

comes closest to objectivity because she lets characteristics be seen in incidents which are related in the diary or correspondence, and although she does make her own comments there are opinions of others besides her own. She can be scathing or complimentary in her remarks, but the documentary evidence is so heavy that her personal opinions have the weight of corroboration and do not appear to be based upon mere emotionalism, in other words, the approach is more intellectual.

Was the Oxford Movement just the brain-child of a few over-enthusiastic zealots, as many Anglicans believed? Miss Guiney leaves the reader in possession of data from both sides but her own position is clear, and she does bring out Froude's sincerity and impatience with any "modus vivendi" based on unworthy compromise or befuddled thinking. She shows he was not afraid of consequences, nor did he hesitate to express what he thought with "gusto". To illustrate we shall examine a few quotations dealing with his asceticism and practice of self-examination, two aspects of his spirituality abhorred by his opponents as indicative of his "romanizing" tendencies:

Sacred as these pages are(...)they prove how very far he was from being a mere intellectual theoriser(...) His strife for perfection(...)will serve to show his sincerity and thoroughness.116

116 Guiney, Hurrell Froude, p. 12

HISTORY OF GUINEY

69

Miss Guiney's excerpts cover several pages, so we shall content ourselves with a few characteristic fragments:

I must fight against myself with all my might, and watch my mind at every turning(...)I mean to save what I can by denying myself indulgences, in order to have where-with I may honour God and relieve the poor.

.....
I must be careful to check high feelings (as) they are certain to become offences in a day or two, and must regulate my practice by faith, and a steady imitation of great examples...

.....
Made good resolutions about behaviour when I go home. Never to argue with my father, or remonstrate with him, or offer my advice(...)must try at home to be as humble and submissive, and complying, as I can; and here as resolute and vigorous, till I get to be the same in all places and all company...

.....
I will brace myself and keep my attention on the alert on this(...)expedition, by a vow about my food: I will¹¹⁷ make my meals as simple as I can, without being observed.

The principal criticism to be levelled at this work is its bulk and disjointed character. The quotations are so numerous and lengthy they destroy the artistic unity of the whole work. They are not smoothly incorporated into it. On the other hand, they are what constitute its validity and value. Whether this faulty construction should be laid primarily to the author's account or to the publisher's is a moot question. The quotation already given, from her letters seems to indicate a lack of freedom.^{117a}

¹¹⁷Guiney, Hurrell Froude, pp.13-21, quoting The Remains of the Reverend Richard Hurrell Froude, M.A. Fellow of Oriel.

^{117a} See page 65.

HISTORY IN GUINEY

70

At any rate in this instance, the fault lies in the right direction, since they add objectivity to the analysis and give a better rounded out picture of both Froude and the reaction to the Movement. We may conclude, therefore, with this verdict. Hurrell Froude is more objective, less effusive than the preceding biographies studied; it approaches nearer to an historic document while not sacrificing revelation of character; it is also less unified, and therefore lacks artistry, her own word "chaotic" serving best to describe it. The matter holds the interest of the serious reader, but it requires perseverance to cover it. This is, no doubt, due to its nature and helps convey the deep spiritual struggle of its inaugurators towards the light, which in turn reflects their sincerity and profound religious convictions.

A Little English Gallery,¹¹⁸ as its name implies, is a collection of pen portraits which originally appeared in such magazines as, The Atlantic Monthly, Macmillan's, The Catholic World, and Poet-Lore. In her preface Miss Guiney has a long list of English Rectors and descendents of the biographers "through whose courtesy and patience the tracer of these unimportant sketches has been able to make them(...)life-like¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁸Louise Imogen Guiney, A Little English Gallery, New York, Harper, 1904, 1-291 pp.

¹¹⁹Ibid., Prefatory Note.

HISTORY IN GUINEY

71

Her most frequent references are to Donne, Walton, Antony à Wood, and various Mss. of the Bodleian and other English libraries. At the beginning of this chapter a slight glimpse of Miss Guiney's painstaking methods of research was given. Two quotations from letters may show her preoccupation with seventeenth century figures.:

I got quite a heartbreaking blow last week, on hearing that Prof. Saintesbury is almost on the point of bringing out a big book of Minor Carolian Poets: a thing I have dreamed of since I was a kiddy at school; a thing I have always believed I was for. I suppose his men are my men: Cartwright, Quarles, Habington, Stanley, Fanshawe, Sherburne, Crompton, Rochester, etc, the golden lyrists who have not come, as Herrick, Carew, Vaughan, and Marvell have done, into their inheritance.¹²⁰

At a later date she was in direct communication with Professor Saintesbury:

I was immensely interested in Prof. Saintesbury's programme, and have heard from him directly. His plan being extra-lyrical, is a larger one altogether than my cherished notion of nearly a score of years, which it may even do away with.¹²¹

Actually this came true, since even her big Vaughan has not been published to date. Illness and the necessity of earning a livelihood delayed it so that at her death it had not appeared, but the preface to her Letters would seem to indicate that her literary executors have not totally abandoned the plan of publishing.

¹²⁰Guiney, Letters, Vol.2, p. 16

¹²¹Ibid., pp. 109-110

HISTORY IN GUINEY

72

To return to her volume of essays, Lady Danvers whose story is told in the first essay¹²², lays claim to fame principally as "John Donne's dear friend, and George Herbert's Mother." Miss Guiney paints her as a beautiful, accomplished woman celebrated for her "benevolence" and severity in bringing up her seven children. Herbert enshrined her in his second elegy of the "Parentalia", and Donne eulogized her in the funeral sermon which he preached. She had befriended him on two special occasions: first, when his marriage with the niece of Lady Ellesmere, Anne Moore, cost him his place and his purse, and again, some time after his wife's death when he and his family were in great want. Miss Guiney lays at her door not only these services, but the greater one of inspiration and encouragement when he was "astray in the slough of doubt and dissipation".¹²³

Research into old registers and papers allows Miss Guiney to give us a detailed account of family alliances, births, deaths, and with these a glimpse of the whole Herbert family. Thus "Holy George", the peppery, truant, and frequently impecunious Edward, Baron Castleisland, and her less famous other children pass in review as well as her "ne'er-do-well" and "feather-brain" second husband, Sir John Danvers

¹²²Guiney, A Little English Gallery, pp.3-51

¹²³Ibid., p. 19

HISTORY IN GUINEY

73

and Donne himself of whom she says "He was not a poet of Leigh Hunt's innocent temperament, who could accept benefits gladly and gracefully from any appreciator."¹²⁴

Quotations from Donne's poetry and letters, a letter from Lady Danvers to her son Edward, some extracts from George Herbert's works, add interest and vitality to the sketch. However Miss Guiney's treatment is too similar to Walton's in its mildness, and there is one instance where she quotes the latter without any hesitation or question, showing an apparent lack of perception or malice.

Edward was married at the age of seventeen to his cousin, Mary Herbert, an heiress enjoined to marry a Herbert or lose her estate. As the groom was still in attendance at Oxford, his mother, we are told, moved there where she kept him

so much under her own eye as to see and converse with him daily; but she managed this power over him without any such rigid sourness as might make her company a torment to her child, but with such a sweetness and compliance with the recreations and pleasures of youth as did incline him willingly to spend much of his time in the company of his dear and careful mother.¹²⁵

Professor Nicolson's judgment of Walton¹²⁶ as being too gentle in his judgments, would also apply here to Miss Guiney.

¹²⁴Guiney, A Little English Gallery, p. 19

¹²⁵Ibid., pp. 12-13, quoting Walton's Life of George Herbert.

¹²⁶Nicolson, Op. cit., pp. 64-68

It is at least conjecturable that Lord Edward's prolonged absences from home later and apparent indifference to his mother's plea, "I send you little Florence letter to see what comfort you may have of your deare children. Let them, my Dear Sonn, draw you home & affoorde them your care..."¹²⁷ may have been partially due to the over-zealous care of his "dear and careful mother."

The essays on Vaughan, Farquhar and Hazlitt, contain much literary criticism, but Miss Guiney also uses their work as a guide to interpretation of character, in the vagaries of which all three are rich. Since the essays are concerned with the men as writers, she does not attempt to make a full catalogue of incidents. She summarizes Vaughan's life, thus:

In his own person, Henry Vaughan left no trace in society. His life seemed to slip by like the running water on which he was forever gazing and moralizing (...). What we know of him is a sort of pastoral: now he was born, the son of a poor gentleman, in 1621, at Newton St. Bridget, in the old house yet asleep on the road between Brecon and Crickhowel; How he went up to Oxford (...) how he took his degree (just where and when no one can discover) and came back, after a London revel, to be the village physician, though he was meant for the law (...) to write books full of sequestered beauty; to watch the most tragic of wars, to look into the faces of love and loss, and to spend his thoughtful age on the bowery banks of the river he had always known.¹²⁸

She does mention the great change that was wrought in him:

¹²⁷ Guiney, A Little English Gallery, p. 30, quoting from the Herbert Papers, a script of May 12, 1615.

¹²⁸ ibid., pp. 55-56.

HISTORY IN GUINEY

75

Circumstances had their way with him, as with most poets. He knew the touch of disappointment(...) not only in life, but in his civic hopes and in his art. He broke his career in twain, and began over, before he had passed thirty(...) Religious faith and meditation seem so much part of his innermost nature, it is a little difficult to remember that Vaughan considered himself a brand snatched from the burning, a lawless Cavalier brought by the best of chances to the quiet life, and the feet of the moral Muse. He suffered most of the time between 1643 and 1651...¹²⁹

Despite his royalist sentiments for which he sustained some privations, Vaughan took no part in the civil war which tore England asunder. This was a preservation for which he thanked God later in his writings, but Miss Guiney offers what seems to be a satisfactory, or at least plausible explanation:

It is greatly to be feared that Vaughan, despite all the abstract reasoning which arrays itself against so babyish and barbarous a thing as battle, would have swung himself into a saddle as readily as any, had not 'God's finger touched him.' A comparison of dates will show that he was bed-ridden, while his hot heart was afield with the shouting gentlemen whom Mr. Browning heard in a vision(...) This is the secret of Vaughan's blood-guiltlessness. Of course, he thanked Heaven, after(...) he would have thanked Heaven for anything that happened to him...¹³⁰

His dislike of democracy, Puritanism and yet his basic interest in politics, Miss Guiney points out.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Guiney, A Little English Gallery, pp. 57-58.

¹³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 69

¹³¹ *ibid.*, p. 66

The essay on Hazlitt is similar in its mingling of biographical details and literary criticism. Miss Guiney lays stress on his non-conventional type of education which she considers to have played an important part in the ultimate temperament he displayed, but she also stipulates that by nature he would have rebelled against any formal curriculum. "In wilful and mellow study of what chance threw in his way his strength grew, and his limitations with it."¹³² His moods, his friends, his ventures in painting and writing, his "erratic levees among coffee-house wits and politicians, his slack dress, his rich and fitful talk, his beautiful and fierce head"¹³³ and his unhappy love affairs are among the facts she mentions. Of his married life she says:

Mr. Hazlitt, albeit with an affectionate friendship for Mary Lamb, with a mother, a sister, a dynasty of sweethearts, and two wives, was notoriously unlearned in women.

.....
His domestic experiences, indeed, had been nearly as extraordinary as Shelley's. Sarah Walker, of no. 9, Southampton Buildings, is a sort of burlesque counterpart of (...) Emilia Viviani (...) His inner calamities seem somehow subordinated to exterior workings¹³⁴.

Unlike many modern authors Miss Guiney does not concern herself with any Freudian analysis of these facts, and despite a frank avowal of his shortcomings, ranks herself with Lamb,

¹³² *ibid.*, p. 239

¹³³ *ibid.*, p. 253.

¹³⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 244; pp. 250-251

Coleridge, Hunt, Patmore, as a friend and admirer. Moreover she credits him with being a good parent. One human duty he fulfilled perfectly for "he loved and reared his son".¹³⁵

As a final verdict on him Miss Guiney says:

It is very difficult to be severe with William Hazlitt, who was towards himself so outspokenly severe. Every stricture upon him, as well as every defence to be urged for it, may be taken out of his own mouth.¹³⁶

It might be well to remark here that Miss Guiney had some correspondence with Mr. Clement Shorter concerning the writing of a life of Hazlitt for the English Men of Letters Series. She finally declined but two quotations may be enlightening regarding her ideas of such a work:

I do not think(...)I can work over my old essay; it is too congested for the purpose.

.....
I have dreamed of doing a biographical Hazlitt book for almost twenty years!(...)Mr. Birrell has used all the important or useful data in Mr. Carew Hazlitt's various books; and what little original research he has put in is really excellent in its way.

.....
What do you think of an interpretative biography(...) which shall worry but little over outward facts and feed itself(...)directly from Hazlitt's intensely autobiographic pages?¹³⁷

These remarks would lead to the conclusion that Miss Guiney did not consider her "little essay" a finished biography, but the germ of such. It does present an arresting picture

¹³⁵ibid.,p. 249

¹³⁶ibid., p. 267

¹³⁷ Guiney, Letters of p.80; p. 99; p. 102.

of an erratic genius and shows that Miss Guiney has an intimate knowledge of her subject, but it is distinctly personal in tone thus invalidating it as "pure" biography.

The same criticism, but to a lesser degree, can be applied to her essay on George Farquhar¹³⁸, serving-boy, supposed student, theatre-goer, actor, dramatist, husband, and father. She details his struggles with poverty in order to maintain his wife and two daughters, his dramatic success which did not save him from penury and an early death, but it is as a dramatist she appraises him, saying:

Many critics(...)have allowed him least mention of the four, but he is, in reality, the best playwright among them(...)He had Vanbrugh's exuberant vivacity, Congreve's grace, Wycherley's knack of climax.¹³⁹

Miss Guiney disagrees with those who see in his fops and dandies the dramatist's personality. "Fortune, fashion, foolhardiness, impudence, were not the stars which shone upon Farquhar's nativity."¹⁴⁰ The Cambridge History of Literature agrees with most of her judgments¹⁴¹, especially those regarding his humaneness in life and in his drama, though the

¹³⁸Guiney, A Little English Gallery, pp. 121-170.

¹³⁹ibid., pp. 130-131

¹⁴⁰ibid., p. 151.

¹⁴¹C. Whilby, in The Cambridge History of English Literature, edited by Sir A.W. Ward and A.R. Waller, Cambridge, University Press, 1934, vol. viii, pp. 169-173.

HISTORY IN GUINEY

79

author does not rate his achievement over that of the other Restoration dramatists. She too admits that he is not a poet, lacks imagination, and could not equal Congreve's scholarly elegance of proportion, nor consummate diction, but in his personal gallantry, humour, ability to perceive what was going on around him and recreate it on the stage, both essays agree that he contributed something new to comedy. So far as Miss Guiney's essay is biographical it brings to life this somewhat shadowy figure whose name the student meets for a few fleeting pages in histories of English Literature.

The pages devoted to Topham Beauclerk and Bennet Langton¹⁴² hold much interest for the modern reader who has already met them in Boswell. Their singular friendship with each other and with Johnson has been immortalized by this greatest of biographers. "They were his (Johnson's) favourites"¹⁴³ says Miss Guiney, to which Boswell's record bears witness. In fact, Miss Guiney has abstracted all that pertains to these gentlemen from his Life of Johnson and put it in one continuous narrative. To round out the narrative however, she has supplied details concerning the ancestry, marriage, family life and connections of both, and given them a prominence which they do not have in the great biography. She

¹⁴²Ibid., pp. 173-227

¹⁴³Ibid., p. 174

HISTORY IN GUINEY

80

quotes or refers to Miss Hawkins' Memoirs, Miss Burney's Diary, Forster's Life of Goldsmith, Henry Best's Personal and Literary Memorials for details of character or anecdotes. Her statement concerning Beauclerk's death "Nor shall we know how the catastrophe affected Bennet Langton; for all the most interesting papers relating to him were destroyed when the old hall at Langton-by-Spilby was burned in 1855"¹⁴⁴ attests her desire to do original research. Moreover, her informative and interesting comments on "Lady Di", Lady Rothes, the account of both wills, and remarks culled here and there from letters or gossips give, a very substantial and broad picture of "Beau's" and "Lanky's" families and friends.

One episode reported in Miss Burney's Diary she repeats concerning Beauclerk's home life. It was the remark passed by Edmund Burke that his widow must have experienced relief at his death since he had so ill-treated her. She adds:

The statement does not seem to have been gainsaid by any of the company; nor was Burke liable to slanderous error. So severe a comment(...)resting, even as it does, wholly on Miss Burney's veracity, ought, in fairness, to be incorporated(...)On the other hand it is pleasant to discover that Beauclerk, in his will, made five days before the end, bequeathed all he possessed to his wife and reverted to her the estates of his children, should they die under age.¹⁴⁵

This is one rather outstanding example of objective statement

¹⁴⁴Ibid., p. 207

¹⁴⁵Ibid., p. 208, quoting Miss Burney's Diary

HISTORY IN GUINEY

81

by Miss Guiney which demonstrates her ability to be impartial and her desire to be just, though more frequently she presents her own conclusions to the reader.

In order to judge her method of presentation more accurately, it will be enlightening to compare the same incident as recounted by Boswell and by Miss Guiney.

One Sunday, when the weather was very fine, Beauclerk enticed him, insensibly, to saunter about all morning. They went into a church-yard, in the time of divine service, and Johnson laid himself down at his ease upon one of the tomb-stones. 'Now, Sir, (said Beauclerk) you are like Hogarth's Idle Apprentice'.¹⁴⁶

This is Miss Guiney's version:

Who can forget the Doctor's visit to Beauclerk at Windsor, when, falling into the clutches of that gamesome and ungodly youth, he was beguiled from church-going of a fine Sunday morning, and strolled about outside, talking and laughing during sermon-time, and finally spread himself at length on a mossy tomb, only to be told, with a giggle and a pleased rub of the hands, that he was as bad as Hogarth's Idle Apprentice.¹⁴⁷

The difference in approach is quite evident. In the first we are witnessing Johnson and Beauclerk--Boswell is nowhere in sight. By some magic carpet we have been transported to a spot where we can see and hear for ourselves. The simplicity and directness of Boswell's almost bald statements, with the slight hint contained in the words "enticed" and

¹⁴⁶James Boswell, Life of Johnson, London, Oxford University Press, Third Edition 1799, reprint 1938, Vo. 1, p. 165

¹⁴⁷Guiney, A Little English Gallery, p. 224-225

HISTORY IN GUINEY

82

"insensibly" tells all that is necessary but nothing more. The scene is clear-cut, the principals act out their parts, and the curtain falls. Such is the Boswellian method.

In the second extract we are getting the incident second-hand, we are listening to Miss Guiney's spirited account, and through it we sense her affectionate and ready forgiveness for this gay, prank-loving, not too orthodox youth. She cannot be accused of not bringing her characters to life, she rather infuses her own vitality into them, and constantly hovers around them like a solicitious clucking hen. It is for this reason that biographees rarely stand completely away and independent of her, and herein she contrasts with Boswell. Of course, we must in fairness, admit that she could not plagiarize; that, of necessity, she had to redress what she borrowed, but unfortunately from the point of view of biography, it is usually by the addition of this subjective element that the material is redressed.

Two other essays we shall mention which are mainly critical but also contain a large proportion of biography. The first is "The Mock Chatterton"¹⁴⁸ a study of Thomas Dermody, and the second, a study of another Irish poet more

¹⁴⁸Louise Imogen Guiney, "The Mock Chatterton", in The Catholic World, Vol. 97, issue of April 1913, pp. 16-44

HISTORY IN GUINEY

83

beloved of Miss Guiney, James Clarence Mangan, Poems and A Study.¹⁴⁹ Although both display many of the characteristics already seen in her work, they provide interesting comparisons and contrasts in their lives and characters. Both were Irish poets, both had to contend with hard home conditions and poverty from their youth, both went to Dublin, both became addicted to baneful influences, the one to alcohol, the other to opium, neither married, neither had a university education, yet both acquired an astonishing fund of scholarship. Here the resemblances cease.

Dermody's adventures and quick-wittedness as related by Miss Guiney, are quite extraordinary, only matched by what she terms his "excessive preoccupation with his own genius and his own fate".¹⁵⁰ The recital of the many persons who befriended the homeless, precocious boy; the devices he used to secure their sympathy and help; the abrupt and often ungrateful way he betook himself off to new experiences and friends, or returned, after long intervals, to former patrons; his accomplishments in Greek and flare for poetry at a very tender age, unfold like some tale from Dickens. While Miss Guiney quotes Dermody's chief biographer, Grant Raymond,

¹⁴⁹Louise Imogen Guiney, James Clarence Mangan, His Selected Poems and a Study, Boston, Lamson Wolfe, 1897.

¹⁵⁰Guiney, "The Mock Chatterton" p. 21

and Mr. Churtin Collins the anthologist, of early Irish poems, she is directly opposed in her estimate of his character to these gentlemen's opinions. Louise Guiney is usually sympathetic to her subject, but in this case the medal is reversed. In one place she states "the flaw is fundamental"¹⁵¹ and from beginning to end she looks on him with a jaundiced eye. Even the deed recounted by his biographer whereby he gave his only two shillings to a poor old woman left with five hungry-looking grand-children, she attributes, not to pity or charity, but his inability to keep money:

But a knowledge of Dermody's character, which was all of a piece from childhood, brushes the bloom clean off the deed. He could not by the law of his being held on to those slippery coins. He was never charitable, he was simply non-pre-hensile: the prime moral necessity for him was not to share nor even to spend, but to shed and scatter.¹⁵²

At least the fact that he did give it to someone in need was a redeeming feature. But none of Dermody's escapades, which were astonishing, to say the least, not even an illusion to him, is allowed to pass without some qualifying word. A list can be selected at random: "His dizzy professional eminence", "the elfin diplomat", "pre-Bryonic exposition of past miseries", "good-natured (...) connoting the absence of any moral backbone whatever", "uppish little boy",

¹⁵¹Ibid., p. 43

¹⁵²Ibid., p. 18

¹⁵³Ibid., pp. 17-44

HISTORY IN GUINEY

85

The title of the essay itself is indicative of the general tenor and comes from Dermody's comparison of himself with that unfortunate youth. There are spots, however, where Miss Guiney's sense of justice requires her to give Dermody his meed, as may be seen in the following:

He saw service in France, Holland, Germany, and strange to say, behaved decently except for frequent drunks; moreover, he was several times wounded(underlining ours)

.....
Tom relapsed into lowest Bohemia. One must not be unjust to him: this time it was partly owing to disappointment caused by the deprivation, without cause, of his regimental pay...¹⁵⁴

The underlined words betray Miss Guiney's distrust and prejudice, but she does tell the truth and not too begrudgingly.

Her pen is also somewhat less severe when discussing Dermody as a writer. She does not admire his work but she appreciates what good qualities are to be found in it. In speaking of his poem "The Triumph of Gratitude", she writes:

The blank verse balances itself most neatly, with an adjective(and generally the quite inevitable adjective, too!) apportioned to every other noun(...) it is a matter of astonishment both how faultless it manages to be, and how it says absolutely nothing.¹⁵⁵

The sarcastic flavour of the above will deceive no one, and the final judgment practically destroys the commendation, yet the two aspects of his work are admitted by her. Two

¹⁵⁴Ibid., pp.38-40

¹⁵⁵Ibid., p. 29

HISTORY IN GUINEY

86

other quotations will explain why Miss Guiney nurtures such animosity against Dermody and further inform us concerning his inherent ability and his weaknesses:

Dermody had it in him to become a really perceiving and independent critic, had he also had it in him to do one stroke of work. But his kind of poetry--has it not had its day? Its striking perfection of manner, a perfection as of very best whale-bone or crinoline, will not save it. It has no space, no infinity, no visions, such as belong by right to the Gael; no love...¹⁵⁶

It was Dermody's perpetual appealing to others for help, his self-pity, and lack of real industry that alienated her sympathy. Because he represented the antithesis of those qualities which she admired in others: strong principles, whole-hearted devotion, high ideals in the writer respecting his craft, and work, she gave vent to her spleen. This does not excuse her as a biographer; it accentuates her subjectivism. This will be seen in the following:

One of his several self-enamored elegies(...) has seriousness and some beauty(...) what vitiates it is its false characterization(...) Place beside it the similar utterance of a poet also Irish, also ultimately a wreck(...) the difference is not so much literary as moral. Clarence Mangan said what was true.¹⁵⁷

Miss Guiney as an individual is entitled to her opinion. It is even probable that many people would find Thomas Dermody

¹⁵⁶Ibid., p. 43

¹⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 31-32

HISTORY IN GUINEY

87

reprehensible in his principles and way of acting, but in biography as in law, it is not ethical to pronounce judgment before a fair hearing. Miss Guiney has given all the facts in the case, she has not violated truth, but she has quite definitely given them from a very prejudiced and subjective angle. The essay is far from being a detached and objective presentation. Historically, the data is correct but it is highly colored.

Mangan fares better. The difficulties of tracing¹⁵⁸ his work she enumerates in the opening paragraph of her study where she decries that such works as The Dictionary of National Biography, Poets of the Century, by Miles, a new edition of Lyra Elegantiarum, Allibone's Dictionary of Authors have but recently admitted him, while in Murray's The Prose and Poetry of Ireland, he is not to be found. The sources she used are described thus:

The search after him has always been difficult. During his lifetime he published only a collection of translations(...) a large mass of work, good, bad, indifferent, lay hid in old newspaper files, whence some of it has been(...)rescued by John McCall(...) bearing a New York imprint, and prefaced by John Mitchell's beautiful memoir(...) the Rev. C.P. Meehan brought out a small(...)reprint(...)better than Mitchell's. The text in all these books is in an imperfect condition. Beyond them, Mangan's work was not accessible in any form until(...) the Library series brought out by Mr. Duffy and Mr. McCarthy:¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸Guiney, James Clarence Mangan, pp.3-4
¹⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 4-5

These early biographers are quoted quite freely by her although she sometimes disagrees with them. While his ancestry is almost impossible of discovery, his immediate family circle and unhappy childhood is clearly described. She follows him in his occupations, literary pursuits, aberrations to the final sad denouement. Two things commonly held by his biographers she calls in question.

The first is the claim made by Mitchell that the encouragement and then sudden rejection of Mangan by the girl he loved, was responsible for the warping of his life. A second version of it is that his student and fiancée, Margaret Hayes, was stricken with consumption and died leaving him heart-broken. These assumptions are based on certain poems published and republished, addressed to variously-named heroines. Miss Guiney states that Mangan did become interested in a young lady, but this was not at the bottom of his woes. She bases her refutation on the nature of the poems "clearly written out of no(...)grief(...)but a very black Byronic mood circa 1832-33"¹⁶⁰ and a letter from Miss Duffy:

Margaret, not Frances Stacpoole, was the name of the lady(...)my father says you are right(...)his blighted-love episode was not so overwhelming (...)as it has been represented(...)Mangan repeatedly took my father to visit Margaret, and her mother and sister¹⁶¹.

160 *ibid.*, p. 14

161 *ibid.*, p.16

The second charge she disclaims is his being an alcoholic in early life; his addiction to opium she upholds. "It is plain (...)he was going the dark way of the opium eater"¹⁶². The misconception she attributes to three causes:¹⁶³Mangan's own foolish denial of the drug habit in a complaint against William Carleton; Father Meehan's statement that he never knew Mangan to touch the drug; O'Daly's letter charging Mangan's writing was extremely irregular due to his drinking habits, bolstered by a later comment that the different-coloured inks in which the Munster poets were written indicated the public-houses where they were composed. These allegations were contradicted by Dr. Sigerson in a lecture before the Irish Literary Society:

the specimens here shown prove that Clarence Mangan wrote a clear, legible, elegant hand; manifest in his earliest and latest manuscripts. The writing in these versions of the Munster poets were all in black ink. Very possibly, they were written in various public-houses, for Dublin offered little open hospitality, while there were no free libraries(...)In Paris, and in London, many writers have used the coffee-houses ...Mangan's handwriting does not present the signs ¹⁶⁴ of one whose nervous system is shattered by alcohol

She carries the argument further by appealing to the testimony of an American Doctor to whom she had written about

¹⁶² *ibid.*, p.19

¹⁶³ *ibid.*, p.22

¹⁶⁴ *ibid.*, quoting Dr. George Sigerson, F.R.U.I., pp, 22-23.

the matter. She quotes part of his reply:

How vain it is to try to see in Mangan the fiery sensual besotted look of the alcoholic victim! Opium, too, explains his strange manner of life to any medical mind, which alcohol certainly does not.¹⁶⁵

Mangan's and Father Meehan's denial of the opium habit, she attacks on the grounds that "the opium practice is never admitted by its victims; secretiveness is its sign-manual."¹⁶⁶ Moreover, while Father Meehan was a friend, "he knew him rather late."¹⁶⁷ The poem in which Mangan himself speaks of falling into "the gulf and grave of Maginn and Burns"¹⁶⁸ she attributes to poetic license or his turning to alcohol in a vain attempt to break off the other habit. He did finally fall a prey to alcohol, but she maintains that due to his spent physical forces the slightest quantity of spirits was sufficient to affect him thus exposing him to the accusation of imbibing too freely. Of one thing, she says we are sure, he did struggle, though unsuccessfully, against these evil influences, "His occasional regularity of living, and his deepening religiousness, show that some powerful influence was at work within him".¹⁶⁹ She suggests it might have

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 23, quoting an unnamed doctor.

¹⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p.22

¹⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p.22

¹⁶⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 23-24, taken from "The Nameless One"

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p.25

HISTORY IN GUINEY

91

been Margaret Stacpoole for his attempted reform and the years of his love affair would seem to concur. Perhaps she had conditionally refused him until he corrected himself.

While Miss Guiney's arguments are far from being impregnable, they show thought and industry and a desire to establish what she believes to be the truth. She could also be accused of trying to prove a thesis. So far as putting all the evidence and reasoning before the reader goes, this is entirely in accord with the principles of biography. She would have accomplished her objective, however, without incurring the above censure, had she merely stated both sides of the case without showing her preference so definitely.

A few words must be said about *Recusant Poets*¹⁷⁰ a volume published post-humously, the manuscript of which received some final editing other than the author's. While only Miss Guiney's name appears on it, the work was a collaboration with the late Reverend Geoffrey Bliss, S.J. of Stoneyhurst. This is explained in the preface where due recognition is given both. It received high praise in all the Catholic periodicals for its historical research. While it is primarily a collection of poems it contains a short biographical sketch prefixed to each author's selections which

¹⁷⁰Louise Imogen Guiney, *Recusant Poets, with a Selection from Their Work*, London, Sheed and Ward, 1938, xv-420p.

explains its connection with the present study. The first volume, which is the only one printed so far, ranges, chronologically, from St. Thomas More to Ben Jonson. "Profession of the Catholic Faith", (constantly or after conversion, or in a few instances, before falling away), has been made the password to this "Chorus Vatum"¹⁷¹ whose sources may be gleaned from the following:

The major part of our material is necessarily drawn from uncommon, sometimes from unique books, or even from unpublished sources. Excerpts and hints from bibliographies and histories of old curious literature have been traced back to their manuscript originals where these exist. The works of the great antiquaries and bibliographers and, most of all, the late Joseph Gillow's Bibliographical Dictionary of the English Catholics (a most valuable work, still lamentably incomplete by no fault of its compiler(...)) formed the starting point of a search(...) The various histories of the English Martyrs have been much to our purpose more especially Father J. H. Pollen's documents in the Catholic Record Society's series(...) Many hints have been gratefully taken from Father H. Thurston's papers in the same magazine. (The Month)

.....¹⁷²
 Forgotten names are many here, and familiar names few.

The preface written by Miss Grace Guiney explains the co-editorship of the two authors, and makes one remark of some import to the subject:

Several chapters have had to be written from materials (...) only partly assembled. Moreover, the march of scholarship has put new bibliographical and textual knowledge, not available to the Editors, at the service of later students. Such knowledge has now been embodied in the text(...) ¹⁷³

¹⁷¹Guiney, Recusant Poets, p. 2

¹⁷²Ibid., pp. 1b-2

¹⁷³Ibid., pp. vii-viii

HISTORY IN GUINEY

93

Because the finished product is not completely Miss Guiney's a detailed discussion will not be given. It may be remarked, in passing, that the biographies are curtailed, and are confined mostly to details of family connections, fates of the various members during the penal times, outstanding incidents of their lives and references to their writings. Some traits of character are mentioned, but the biographies tend generally to be scholarly and brief, with a goodly number of foot-notes and references to biographical material where such exists. The poems themselves show something of the temper and character of what Miss Guiney terms "the recusant mind," while also conveying something of the writer himself. Extracts from letters also add some warmth and vitality where they are quoted. It may safely be said that the whole treatment is on a much more objective, dispassionate level and with no intrusion of the author's personality. At the same time they lack some of the vivacity and drama of the longer essays.

In bringing this chapter to a close, it may be summed up thus. Having examined the sources of the principal biographical works of Miss Guiney, and her method of using them, it has been found that she has made an honest attempt to go to originals, and consult authorities or persons who might have knowledge pertinent to her subject. She has brought her own intuition, judgment, and psychological insight, to bear on this material and has striven to present

HISTORY IN GUINEY

94

the subject as she saw it. She has not tampered with facts. She has quoted letters, to, from, or about the subject and speeches when they were available. She has kept her subject in the foreground while supplying the background of history necessary to such lives as those of Monsieur Henri, Robert Emmet and Edmund Campion.

On the other hand, as has been pointed out several times, the subjective and emotional element is too strong to allow her work to qualify as "pure biography" as defined by Mr. Harold Nicolson and laid down as the norm of this study. She does not leave room for the reader to form his own opinion of the man, and in cases where there is a debatable, or somewhat inconclusively proved thesis, she takes it upon herself to decide which side she favours and argues in its favour. We do not say she completely invalidates her story, but she allows her personal feelings and convictions to dominate it. She has likewise followed certain authors used as primary sources, namely, the Marquise de La Rochejaquelein and Isaac Walton too closely in spirit and matter.

CHAPTER III

CHARACTERIZATION IN GUINEY

In her preface to Hurrell Froude Louise Guiney quotes a section from Father Tyrell, S.J., which expresses her own views concerning biography. We reproduce it here in part as a guide to her aims while examining what she has done:

The art of biography has accustomed those who read to expect(...) as the word implies, the portrayal of a life, of a process: the record of the growth and unfolding of a soul and character. This it is which interests the subjective temper of our day(...) Thus we have come to care less for a full inventory of the events which make up a man's life, or for the striking nature of these events in themselves, than for such a judicious selection and setting of them as shall best bring out and explain that individuality which is our main interest. We care less for what a man does and more for what he is(...)¹

In the opening chapter of this study the need for a truthful and convincing portrait of the biographee was pointed out, together with the devices to be used. Among these were mentioned details of physical appearance, mannerisms, dress, incidents, and the like. It is now our duty to see how Miss Guiney used these concrete aids to characterization.

While she does not explicitly state so, Miss Guiney is a strong supporter of heredity as a major contributing factor to a person's make-up. She diligently explores the lineage of her subjects as being the source of many outstanding traits of character.

¹Guiney, Hurrell Froude, p. xiii.

CHARACTERIZATION IN GUINEY

96

Turning to Henri de La Rochejaquelein, we find her delving into his ancestry and pointing out its bearing on his subsequent career:

He came of fighting stock. Among the ancestors of his name there were Crusaders, two warriors slain under Francis I, at Pavia, (...) Henry's father, the Marquis Henri-Louis-Auguste, died of the opening of an old scar (...) Henri, the second child and eldest boy, was intended for the military profession.²

There is a similar treatment in Robert Emmet:

Temple Emmet, was named for his two paternal grandparents(...) The mention of the prolific wide-branching and extraordinary family of Temple as forebears of the younger Emmets(...) has never been played for what it is worth; no annalist has tracked certain Emmet qualities to this perfectly obvious ancestral source(...) The Temples were, and are, a race of subtle but somewhat austere imagination, strongly inclined to republicanism, and to that individualism which is the norm of it(...) we cover a good deal of ground in remembering that Robert Emmet, the patriot, came of the same blood as Sydney's friend, Cromwell's chaplain, and Dorothy Osborne's leal and philosophic husband. ³

Hurrell Froude's forebears were likewise scrutinized and their qualities weighed:

His inheritance was richly varied: of mental currents possible (...) there could hardly be a more spirited blend(...) never to get an illusion, never to lay down arms while there are 'cant and shams' to fight---all that is very Devonian; (...) His ancestral Speddings (...) had imagination, and a love of letters, and were ironic and opinative (...) They had (...) a strong turn for science (...) the less bookish Froudes, (...) were restless and romantic lovers of the open air and of the sea.⁴

²Guiney, Monsieur Henri, p. 3.

³-----, Robert Emmet, pp. 2-3

⁴-----, Hurrell Froude, p. 2.

CHARACTERIZATION IN GUINEY

97

She attributes his religious spirit, poetry, fire and penetration as well as his stature, colour, and delicate constitution, to his mother; His love of boats and nature, to his father.⁵ On Nicholas Dermody's hapless head, she lays the initial blame for his son's subsequent doubtful conduct, and treatment of those who befriended him.⁶

At this point the old problem of heredity versus environment could be debated, but there is no call for it; Further examples could also be cited, but the foregoing are sufficient to show that Miss Guiney was a firm supporter of inherited tendencies and did an admirable job in tracing family characteristics.

A second device she uses whenever available is a commentary on portraits as indicative of traits of character. Her descriptive comments may read more into the picture than is actually there, but there is often a high degree of alignment between mental and physical traits, and the impression is made more vivid and lasting by the analysis. On the other hand, it increases the emotional content which may war against objective biographical description and colour it. Two excerpts will suffice to illustrate Miss Guiney's method.

⁵Guiney, Hurrell Froude p. 56

⁶-----, The Mock Chatterton, p. 16

The first will be taken from Robert Emmet:

We have no portrait of Emmet which antedates his trial. Three artists in good repute ~~sketch~~ sketched him that day(...) Petrie's drawing serves as the basis of the only well-known engraved pictures(...) The Petrie Emmet is somewhat heavy and glowering, and distinctly wry-necked(...) Comerford, (...) and Brocas, as effectively, have given us a face to look at which one instinctively believes in. It is stamped with concentration and resolve, but has in it something serene and gentle and sweet, and it harmonizes with all we can learn of Emmet's physical appearance from the printed page. He was about five feet seven inches in height, wiry, slender, erect, healthy, full of endurance, quick of movement. His dark eyes were small and rather deep set, and sparkling with expression; his nose was straight and thin, his mouth delicately chiselled. He had the powerful chin and jawbone never absent from the bodily semblance of a strong-willed personality. The fine pendulous hair bespoke the enthusiast, but it was not worn long save over the forehead, which was noticeably broad and high. What gave a faunlike idiosyncrasy to the whole countenance was the slight upward curve of the perfect eyebrows(...)⁷

Whether science would endorse the above is a moot question, nevertheless certain physical traits are associated in general with psychological characteristics, and whether we trust it or not, we do associate personality with appearance. The difficulty lies in the fact that different people read different ideas into portraits. Such is true in this case, for Postgate says of Robert:

His chief characteristic seemed indeed to be silence and obstinacy; his lips were a trifle too thin, and, pressed close together,, too frequently announced a secretiveness that distressed his father.⁸

⁷Guiney, Robert Emmet, p. 59

⁸Postgate, op. cit., p. 38

CHARACTERIZATION IN GUINEY

99

Miss Guiney does not deny this trait in Emmet, but she does not show it in quite this light either. She writes:

If one could believe him as free as he believed himself, one might regret that he maintained too perfect a secrecy(...)He had been careful to avoid what he thought the error of the United Irishmen in(...)confiding knowledge of preliminaries to innumerable persons...⁹

She looks upon it as a course of action he felt constrained to pursue rather than a habitual way of acting. Elsewhere she writes, "He was always rather grave than gay".¹⁰ It does seem wholly reasonable, however, to believe that the young rebel was taciturn by nature and that circumstances and the atmosphere in which he grew up, developed this tendency.

There was one exception in this habitual non-committal mien:

Sometimes in debate(...)Robert Emmet forgot his silence and diffidence, and spoke with an eloquence which secured him a wide influence upon his fellows. His whole face and figure seemed to change as he rose to speak; his expression, which had been lifeless, became tense and his eyes brilliant;¹¹

Since the portrait described by Miss Guiney was done during his famous speech from the dock, this explains the animation in the eyes and the bearing. An interesting comparison is afforded by the police description given when the search was begun:

⁹Guiney, Robert Emmet, p. 22.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 12

¹¹Postgate, op. cit., pp. 113-114.

CHARACTERIZATION IN GUINEY

100

A small wiry young man, with a sallow, slightly pock-marked face, gray, heavy-lidded eyes, small and searching, with a prominent, straight, and thin nose. His lower lip protruded slightly.¹³

So far as the details go they do not materially differ from those presented by Miss Guiney, yet how different the impression. With respect to the matter of his complexion, she does mention it in somewhat oblique fashion, "His one serious early illness was small-pox, which left his complexion slightly roughened."¹⁴ Thus we see that Miss Guiney has a tendency to idealize, or at least put the best construction on things. She does not distort the truth, but softens it, and yet we cannot deny that she breathes life and personality into the person. The features take on a purpose and vitality that become part and parcel of the man.

Her comments on the two portraits of Froude are restricted more to physical traits. Of the unfinished painting by William Brockedon A.R.A., she says:

The painting was unfortunately abandoned while in its half-chaotic condition(...)the portion of the hair growing so wilfully on the large shapely head, remarkable then and always for its even convexity, are a mere disordered wash; and it was difficult to fix(...) a vision of the beautiful boy, with his melancholy and his racial fire.¹⁵

¹³Postgate, op. cit., pp. 109-110.

¹⁴Guiney, Robert Emmet, p. 12

¹⁵-----, Hurrell Froude, p. xvi

CHARACTERIZATION IN GUINEY

101

The reason for the painting's remaining unfinished and a revealing light on Froude's juvenile temperament, are contained in the following statement which also has a touch of Miss Guiney's customary sense of humour:

Brockedon was a patient person, by all accounts. Perhaps wild little Master Froude, for all his innocent looks, may have been, in the immortal words of Pet Marjorie 'whot human nature cant indure (sic)',¹⁶

The second sketch done by Miss Maria Giberne, is commented on as follows:

She groups and labels him with other 'conspirators' at a historic moment, in the one Oxford Common Room which 'stank of logic'. Something in the too quiescent gestures of the graceful person 'on the box' as well as in the nature of the circumstance, make one suspect that the whole was drawn not on the spot, not from memory, but from hearsay at the time...¹⁷

A more arresting portrait and character analysis is found in her discussion of John Hazlitt's miniatures of William at five and thirteen, and his self-portraits:

A lank, odd, reserved youth, (...) (possessing) a most interesting face, with the magnificent brow almost belied by shifting eyes, and the petulance of the mouth and chin; but a face prepossessing on the whole from the clear marble of his complexion, remarkable in a land of ruddy cheeks. His lonely and peculiar life lent him its own hue; the eager look of one indeed a sufferer, but with the light full upon him of visions and dreams. (...) ¹⁸

¹⁶Guiney, Hurrell Froude, p. 5

¹⁷Ibid., p. xviii

¹⁸Guiney, A Little English Gallery, pp. 246-247.

Portraits of the other biographees are reproduced, and details of personal appearance frequently coupled with judgments on character, abound. Henri is said to be "tall and comely (... (with) wheaten-yellow hair, healthful color, animated eyes, (and) English rather than French"¹⁹ in physique. Lady Danvers, with "the blond head, the half-imperious carriage, the open hand"²⁰ she likens to Dante's Beatrice, while poor Sarah Curran, in Anne Devlin's words was "not very tall... slight(...)her complexion dark, her eyes large and black(...)"²¹

We might remark here, that Miss Guiney maintains that the Romney portrait is not olive-skinned and that the eyes are really Irish violet-gray, but appear dark. Bennet Langton, she describes as "a mild young visionary, scrupulous, tolerant, and generous in the extreme(...) with a face as sweet as a child's (...) six feet six inches tall, slenderly built and slightly stooping."²² His friend young Beauclerk resembled Charles II with "his manners, his taste, literary learning, (...)rich clothes, equipage(...)immense gayety and grace"²³ which Johnson so admired and liked. There is a distinctly

¹⁹Guiney, Monsieur Henri, p. 8

²⁰-----, A Little English Gallery, p. 40

²¹-----, Robert Emmet, p. 32

²²-----, A Little English Gallery, p. 181

²³-----, ibid., p. 179

CHARACTERIZATION IN GUINEY

103

feminine note in these last two descriptions which we do not find in Boswell despite the concordance of ideas.

There is both humour and pathos in the picture of Mangan:

Never were clothes so married to a personality; they were as much a part of Mangan as his shining blue eyes, or his quiet rapid monk-like step. He had a brown caped cloak in which he seemed to have been born; and the strange antique hat aforesaid, fixed on his yellow silken dishevelled hair, is set down, to our great satisfaction (in the preface to O'Daly's Poets of Munster) as a broad-leafed, steeple-shaped, and presumably built on the Rudibras model! Steoped, but not short; wan, thin, and bright; powdery with dust from the upper shelf; equipped with the scant toga precariously buttoned, the great goggles, and the king-umbrella of Great Britain and Ireland,--such was Mangan, so ludicrous and so endearing a figure that one wishes him but a thought in Fielding's brain, lovingly handled in three volumes octavo, and abstracted from the hard vicissitudes of mortality.²⁴

These extracts sufficiently bear out the contention that Miss Guiney did incorporate pen-portraits of her subjects liberally interspersed with judgments on the temperamental and psychological traits of character, mannerisms and general outlook on life which help the reader to visualize the person whose story is being told and catch something of his spirit.

²⁴Guiney, James Clarence Mangan, pp. 52-53

CHARACTERIZATION IN GUINEY

104

At the same time they are undoubtedly done in sympathetic vein, even where faults or foibles are exposed. However, Miss Guiney quite clearly considers that her duty as biographer is to study her subject, and then give her findings to others. She does not fear truth, but neither does she feel it necessary to be detached and solely intellectual in her presentation.

The use of incidents is another device whose employment, while exemplifying certain traits, gives life and colour to her biographies. Thus we learn that Henri, despite his youth, shared the deep faith of his compatriots, and as he galloped into the fray and thought himself unobserved, "he took occasion to make the sign of the cross; the bigger the danger the bigger the gesture, according to tradition."²⁵ His pricking and effective answer to those who complained of being without powder, never varied: "well, my children the Blues have plenty of it"²⁶ Henri "zigzagging in the teeth of the enemy" and throwing his hat into the breach in a wall asking, "who will get it for me?"²⁷ becomes something more than a word on the printed page.

The story of his first entrance into the struggle is told concisely, yet underscores the motive which was the

²⁵Guiney, Monsieur Henri, p. 77

²⁶Ibid.: p. 37

²⁷Ibid.: p. 111

CHARACTERIZATION IN GUINEY

105

mainspring of the whole campaign:

Early in April the name of Rochejaquelein was called to be drawn for the militia. On the track of this announcement followed a secret message brought by a young peasant named Morin.

"Sir, will you draw to-morrow for the militia, when your farmers are about to fight rather than be drafted? Come with us. The whole countryside looks to you; it will obey you."

The peasant boy had some spell besides eloquence, for Henri's thinking was over.

"Tell them that I will come," he answered (...). That night accompanied by one servant, a guide, and the tremulous chevalier(...) provided with a brace of pistols and carrying a stick, Henri mounted his horse and waved farewell.²⁸

In Robert Emmet Miss Guiney recounts one episode of his youth which she terms "characteristic and well worth recording for it illustrates both his power of mental concentration, and his still courage in facing the untoward haps of life alone."²⁹ It revolved around his interest in chemistry, which resulted in his swallowing some poison. Robert instead of seeking help or advice, consulted his father's medical books, found the antidote, then went out to the coach house where he had seen some chalk, and took it. Although he suffered violently all night, he wrestled with a difficult algebra problem, and solved it. The whole incident came out next morning when he appeared at breakfast looking very ill, his face the colour of an orange.

²⁸Guiney, Monsieur Henri, pp. 11-12

²⁹-----, Robert Emmet, p. 12

CHARACTERIZATION IN GUINEY

106

Postgate concurs in Miss Guiney's judgment of this incident but he adds something to it:

It had not occurred to him that it would be justifiable to rouse the household over a matter concerning his health and comfort; it seemed more suitable, no doubt to so self-contained a boy, that he should himself privately put right a disaster that affected himself alone. It is doubtful whether pride or humility was his chief motive; it is certain that both in its secretiveness and its courage it was an action typical of Robert (...).³⁰ Emmet.

Motives are always hard to judge so we shall not attempt to decide the issue. Perhaps other constructions could also be put on this action, but it would be difficult to deny the evidence of courage, resourcefulness, and independence.

Details concerning the youth of Campion are scanty, but his attendance at Christ Hospital is authenticated, and Miss Guiney describes one incident showing his outstanding record as a scholar:

Here the small Edmund, full of life and laughter, banded and belted, ran about in now extinct yellow petticoats, and one of the earliest pairs of those historic yellow stockings. He was thirteen, and quite famous already in the school-boy world of London for his learning and attractive presence and speech, when Queen Mary Tudor, (...) entered her city in state. Out of many hundred eligible youngsters it was he who was chosen to stand up before her on a street platform, under the shadow of the old St. Paul's Cathedral, and shrilly welcome her in the Latin tongue.³¹

³⁰Postgate, op. cit., p. 40

³¹Quiney, Edmund Campion, pp. 2-3

There are several instances recorded by her showing his wit and gaiety; one example will suffice:

When rallied on his highly inelegant appearance (he had refused new clothes when he started from Rome for Rheims) he remarked with the gay spirit so like that of another 'blissful martyr', Sir Thomas More, that a man going forth to be hanged need trouble himself little about the fashion'.³²

Hurrell Froude, consisting largely of extracts from his journal and letters, contains continual references to incidents upon which he turns a searching scrutiny to examine his motives and lay bare his character. Among other defects he accuses himself of being inclined to over-ride other people's opinion:

Just now riding home from Denbury, I got arguing with my father about the little chance anyone has of doing good, in a way rather inconsistent with our relative condition; yet, when I thought I was going rather too far, could hardly convince myself that, at any particular moment, it was incumbent on me to stop.³³

In another place she comments on these arguments with his father:

Hurrell's implicit differences with his 'knowing, quick, and handy' father, so many of whose best qualities he shared, hinged laughably often on such things as the culture of trees, and(...)management of boats.³⁴

³²Guiney, Edmund Campion, p. 79

³³-----, Hurrell Froude, p. 19

³⁴-----, ibid., pp. 23-24

CHARACTERIZATION IN GUINEY

108

A final excerpt from the essay on Dermody is given to complete this exposition of Miss Guiney's use of incidents:

Once when he put forth a grimy hand towards a Greek dramatist, the alarmed owner, suspicious of so much lore in a hungry-looking gamin, hurried up from the cellar entrance to rescue his property. Having come to scoff, the man remained to pray; for he ended by inviting the accomplished infant ^{to} dinner and then engaging him as tutor for his son.³⁵

These examples have been chosen because they give a fair illustration of the way in which Miss Guiney vitalizes both the event and persons taking part in it.

One of the great tests of a biographer, as has already been pointed out, is his readiness to admit defects in his subject. We shall now take a look at Miss Guiney's behaviour in this respect. We might remind ourselves here, that Miss Guiney belonged to the last twenty years of the last century as well as to the first twenty of this one, an era of varied and strong influences which had its effect on her work and outlook. This aspect of her life is well described by Stephen Parrish in his thesis,³⁶ where he shows she had a sort of dual allegiance. He says:

³⁵Guiney, "The Mock Chatterton", p. 20

³⁶Stephen Maxfield Parrish, Currents of the Nineties in Boston and London. Fred Holland Day, Louise Imogen Guiney, and their circle, a thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy Harvard University, 1954.

Miss Guiney was, in two ways, a pivotal figure in Boston's nineties.....
 (She) succeeded better than anyone else of her generation in linking the two halves of cultural Boston. But she did something more: she linked the genteel tradition with the rising aesthetic tradition that came to full flower in Boston's nineties.³⁷

She was conservative in many ways, but could not stand any Victorian smugness nor self-righteousness. This aesthetic side of her character found expression in a powerful description which has crystallized for posterity her distaste of all Victorianism:

That money-saving, gillie-adoring, etiquette-blinded, pudgy, plodding, unspiritual, unliterary, mercantile, dowdy, sparkless, befogged, continuous, Teuton lady is not, in one's line of life, a necessary.³⁸

But to return to the point in question, Miss Guiney did allow something short of perfection in her subjects. Henri was "a boy, rash and romantic"³⁹ he was "no scholar"⁴⁰ he had a peculiar fear of squirrels,⁴¹ but the only legitimate stricture on Henri's behaviour is that he did not compel obedience off the field.⁴²

³⁷Parrish, op. cit., pp. 15-17

³⁸Guiney, Letters of, op. xiv-xv

³⁹-----, Monsieur Henri, p. 132

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 69

⁴¹Ibid., p. 54

⁴²Ibid., p. 83

Campion too had his weak side:

Nevertheless Campion's temptation to conform was very great. We must remember that many of his first impressions and memories were Anglican(...)He knew now, in manhood, that to change about, and forsake the state religion for the only Church(...)would be to see the ruin of his happy career.⁴³

While praising the "style, crisp, arresting, bright with idiom" of his History of Ireland, she made this remark, "Campion did not know the Celts, their laws, nor their literature; he never came nearer to them than through chronicles written in scorn of them, or the daily table-talk of the English"⁴⁴

Hurrell Froude's troublesome childhood is clearly seen in his mother's letter⁴⁵. She cites his temper, his delight in teasing others, his obstinacy and gloom, his lack of consideration and his impatience. Some of this persisted in his later life in his unceremonious dealing with men and things and his harsh language in which the Anglican clergy found only "effrontery"---not altogether without reason "because his slang, it may as well be admitted, constitutes a defect of character."⁴⁶ His hatred of negroes and dislike of

⁴³Guiney, Edmund Campion, pp. 14-15

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 31

⁴⁵Guiney, Hurrell Froude, pp. 6-9

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 216

CHARACTERIZATION IN GUINEY

111

The Council of Trent as well as certain aspects of Roman Catholicism,⁴⁷ are freely exposed.

Even her seventeenth century favourites are not blameless:

Vaughan was none too godly to be a thorough hater(...) With 'the charity which thinketh no evil' he loved almost everything, except the Jesuits, and his ogres the Puritans(...) He kept his snarls and satires, for the most part hedged within his prose, the proper ground of the animosities. When he put on his singing robes, he tried to forget, not always with success, his spites and bigotries. For his life, he could not help sidelong glances, stings, strictures between his teeth, thistle-down hints cast abroad in the neatest of generalities.⁴⁸

Her admiration for Hazlitt's genius does not make her blind to his shortcomings, nor does she hesitate to catalogue them:

He was so much at the mercy of an excitable and extra-sensitive organization that an accidental failure to return his salute upon the street(...) plunged him into an excess of wrath and misery. Full at other times of scrupulous good faith and generosity, he would under the stress of a fancied hurt, say and write malicious things about those he most honored.

.....
With all this fever and heaviness in Hazlitt's blood he had a hearty laugh, musical to hear.

.....
Yet with all his lofty and endearing qualities, he had a warped and soured mind, a constitutional disability to find pleasure in persons or in conditions which were quiescent. He would have everyone as mettlesome and gloomy as he was himself.⁴⁹

⁴⁷Guiney, Hurrell Froude, p. 168; p. 101

⁴⁸Guiney, A Little English Gallery, pp. 65-66

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 253-254; 257; 268

CHARACTERIZATION IN GUINEY

112

"Beau" and "Lanky" come in for their share of fault exposure. The latter's weaknesses as pointed out by Johnson were that he was "a worthy fellow, without malice, though not without resentment", and could not live within his means.⁵⁰ Beau, livelier by nature, indulged in "unresting sarcasm" and succeeded in annoying even Johnson at times.⁵¹ Miss Guiney applies the epithet Anthony Wood applied to Marvell, to him, "a pestilent wit". She likewise reproduces Mrs. Piozzi's scribbled marginal note "O Lord! how I did hate that horrid Beauclerk!" Her own comment was:

Pointed his speech was, always, and reminds one of a foil, but without the button; a dangerous little weapon, somewhat unfair, but carried with such a consummate flourish that those whom it pricks could almost cheer it.⁵²

We have seen her discussion of Mangan's failing, for which Miss Guiney has pity rather than censure. She calls him "an odd moody child", and further on:

he began now to pour forth impotent complaints and promises(...)one marvels how his(...)friends endured him at all.....
Paul Verlaine is his only parallel, were it not that Mangan had no such intense moods of religious mysticism and none of bestiality.⁵³

⁵⁰Guiney, A Little English Gallery, p. 218; p. 190

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 194-195

⁵²Ibid., pp. 194-195

⁵³Guiney, James Clarence Mangan, p. 9; 25-27

Thomas Dermody earned Miss Guiney's sovereign contempt for such major flaws of character as his constant self-pity, his irresponsible methods of shirking any real work, his ingratitude towards the many who helped him, and the abuse of opportunities offered him. Beginning with the title "The Mock Chatterton", which she chose because of his own comparison of himself to that unfortunate youth, a comparison which she held completely invalid, she continues in that vein to point out the ruses and shams, the begging letters and flattering verses by which he attained his objectives. At the same time she gives him credit where she feels it is due. Of his poetry she says, "It is a matter of astonishment how faultless it manages to be, and how it says absolutely nothing"⁵⁴ and speaking of his couplets, some are as "smooth as Pope's."⁵⁵ It is not an unqualified compliment, but at least she gives it.

From these examples we see that Miss Guiney did not fear to face the human weaknesses of her subjects. They are not all black and white, some are merely grey in spots, but the present writer considers it sufficient to absolve her from the charge of writing "earnest lives". Her very choice of subjects and tone of the narrative coupled with these

⁵⁴Guiney, "The Mock Chatterton" p. 89.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 18-19.

CHARACTERIZATION IN GUINEY

114

avowals, segregates her from the typically earnest biographer described by Miss Woolfe:

The Victorian biographer was dominated by the idea of goodness. Noble, upright, chaste, severe; it is thus that the Victorian worthies are presented to us. The figure is almost always above life-size in top-hat and frock-coat, and the manner of presentation becomes increasingly clumsy and laborious.⁵⁶

Miss Guiney admired goodness and did not hesitate to portray it, as we have seen in Monsieur Henri and Hurrell Froude and in others, but she was not dominated by it. This does not mean that we are placing her in the category of "pure" biographers.

If Miss Guiney did not withhold some uncomplimentary truisms regarding her subjects, neither did she stint her praise nor the telling of their qualities: Froude, "that beautiful and bright spirit, hated cant and sham!" Mangan was "giving all he could, and asking nothing, genial and gentle to all that lived;"⁵⁷ Hazlitt "shared the groaning of the spirit after mortal welfare with Swift and Fielding, with Shelley and Matthew Arnold, with Carlyle and Ruskin(...). Besides this intense devotedness(.no.)flaw will ultimately show"⁵⁸

⁵⁶Virginia Woolfe, quoted by Haurois in Aspects of Biography, p. 16.

⁵⁷Guiney, James Clarence Mangan, p. 27.

⁵⁸-----, A Little English Gallery, pp. 290-291

CHARACTERIZATION IN GUINEY

115

No remote mystic was Edmund Campion, but a man of his age, with much endearing human circumstance about him and in him. Caring for nothing but the things of the soul, he had yet caught the ear and the eye of the nation. The tidings of his end meant much to many of the great Elizabethans: not least personal was it, perhaps, to the lad Shakespeare, whose father had been settled as a stout Recusant by the Warwickshire ministrations of Parsons.⁵⁹

We have already quoted Miss Guiney's encomium of Henri and Robert Emmet, so it is not necessary to labor the point further. Miss Guiney quite definitely inclines towards the complimentary, though always in a spirit of real sincerity. Her enthusiastic and generous nature, her personal interest in her subjects generally, guides her pen showing their good points to advantage. Moreover, it is evident, that Miss Guiney's method, whether in bringing out good points or bad, is the method of comment. Even in her use of comments, and we have seen that she uses them with effectiveness, the trait it is designed to show is nearly always pointed out in a manner direct rather than indirect. This leads us once again to the conclusion that Miss Guiney does not maintain a sufficiently detached attitude nor keep far enough in the background to satisfy the requirements of "pure biography".

We may here decide another question, does Miss Guiney belong to the "pedestal school"? Does she believe that heroes

⁵⁹Guiney, Edmund Campion, p. 181

must be held up for the edification and admiration of the reader? Two quotations would seem to point in this direction:

Stress must be laid on heroes; they are the universal premise. Like Emerson's stars, they 'light the world with their admonishing smile, 'they warn us if we will not adore, at least not to deny that they shine forever.⁶⁰

But to die prodigally at twenty five, and to be enshrined with unwithered and unique passion in Irish hearts; to go down prematurely in dust and blood, and yet to be understood, felt, seen, forever, in the sphere where 'only great things last,' is perhaps as enviable a privilege as young men often attain.⁶¹

Miss Guiney would agree that the great men of the world make history, but it is thoroughly doubtful whether Miss Guiney and the world would agree on who are the great men, and precisely what makes them great. Henri and Robert Emmet, Froude and Campion, and obscure characters such as Langton, Vaughan, Farquhar, are not in that sense great, nor for that matter, great at all. So in order to attempt a solution it will be necessary to look into Miss Guiney's aim in writing these lives.

Miss Guiney wrote both Monsieur Henri and Robert Emmet as commemorative lives. The first, as we have already quoted from her preface⁶² to make his story known to English

⁶⁰Guiney, Monsieur Henri, p. 136

⁶¹-----, Robert Emmet, p. 11

⁶²See page 30.

Literature; the second as a type of epitaph on the hundredth anniversary of the latter's execution, when hitherto secret papers were made available. She looked upon them as heroes, not for what they accomplished, which amounted to little, but for the single-heartedness with which they espoused their respective causes and the "prodigal" giving of their lives rather than betray it. Their bravery, even rashness, their integrity, was what constituted them heroes in her eyes---not what a man does, but what he is. We must make one observation here. Miss Guiney did not admire Victorian propriety, hence she would not consider white-washing necessary. She liked her men "smooches and all"⁶³ as she said of Hazlitt, and had little regard for the popularity of her works. "I am driven to do what I do in letters,"⁶⁴ she wrote to Clement Shorter, to explain her financially unprofitable digging among obscure seventeenth century, or recusant writers. No, she desired to portray them as she honestly considered them to be, but it is here, that an emotional and high flowing approach coupled with her aim puts the two lives named above, in the pedestal school.

The other lives were not written as commemorations. Their subjects, with the exception of Camion, were not heroes in the accepted sense, and their delineation is done with

⁶³Guiney, Louise Imogen, Letters of, Vol 2, p. 102

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 133-4

more restraint. But the treatment is still sympathetic and there is emotional colouring, therefore we cannot say that she has cut all ties with this school, but she is approaching nearer the modern objective ideal.

In concluding this chapter may be briefly recapitulated as follows. An attempt has been made to show how Miss Guiney portrayed her subjects as living personalities. Her use of heredity, portraits, physical details of appearance, incidents in which words and acts of the subject have been recounted, have been indicated and it has been pointed out that she did not shrink from presenting weaknesses of character, but let the good and the bad be seen.

It has also been observed that her method of freely commenting on the characteristics and actions of her biographee has resulted in a too personal approach and invests the life with an emotional and subjective atmosphere contrary to the requirements of "pure" biography. On the other hand, she is far removed from "earnest lives" and not a full-fledged adherent of the "pedestal school". While Monsieur Henri and Robert Emmet would be classed as lives of that type, the others lean more towards objectivity.

CHAPTER IV

LITERARY EXCELLENCE IN GUINEY

The final analysis of Miss Guiney's work as biographer must deal with her craftsmanship as a writer of prose. This angle has received considerably more attention in the articles, reviews, and theses written concerning her, than the other. Therefore, a few quotations pertinent to the matter in hand, will be sufficient before proceeding with this examination.

Like most writers Miss Guiney had her opponents as well as her admirers. Moreover, her writing did not remain static but showed development over the years. A fairly recent critic says:

The Bostonians resented the Irish, though the case already had its compensations,--the conquerors were bearing gifts for the joy of the conquered. John Boyle O'Reilly was one(...)another, just emerging, was the lovely spirit of Louise Imogen Guiney, the essayist and poet.....

.....
 These poems had a fragile beauty that constantly verged on the false-archaic, and her mannered little essays were very self-conscious(...)But sometimes her poetic note was true, direct, fresh, and the prose of her later essays was precise and distinguished. A Little English Gallery, papers on Farquhar, Henry Vaughan, Hazlitt,(...)and less-known figures, abounded in curious learning.¹

Stephen Parrish mentions her "sparkling portrait sketches at which she excelled"² and refers to Trilby's appreciation of

¹Van Wyck Brooks, op. cit., p. 412; p. 451

²Stephen Parrish, op. cit., p. 256

her Monsieur Henri in which he summarizes her as:

a writer of vivid, energetic, picturesque prose; and acknowledges her the possessor of a style of more grace and vivacity than is the heritage of every poet who chooses to turn historiographer.³

Alexander,⁴ Shuster,⁵ and a large number of clerical and lay writers in America, The Catholic World, The Ave Maria have written of her style, ideals, formative influences, but they need not detain us here. We may merely remark that they too point out these qualities of verve, colour, gaiety, poignancy, dignity and scholarship. Among her most severe critics were Gamaliel Bradford, and Louis Untermeyer. The latter included her in his anthology⁶ but described her work as "poetizing". The most serious charge made against her prose was a certain "obscurity"⁷ due to too much compression.

The purpose of the writer in giving this critical survey is simply to show a rounded picture of how Miss Guiney's work has been appraised. We shall now turn to her works to

³Trilby, in Books, no. 14, issue of April 2, 1892, p. 220, quoted by Stephen Parrish in his thesis, p. 249.

⁴Calvert Alexander, The Catholic Literary Revival, Milwaukee, Bruce, 1935, pp. 205-209.

⁵George N. Shuster, "Inheritors" in Catholic Spirit In Modern English Literature, New York, Macmillan, 1922, pp. 154-157.

⁶Louis Untermeyer, Contemporary American Poetry, New York, Harcourt Brace, 1923, p. 120.

⁷E.M. Tenison, Louise Imogen Guiney, Her Life and Works, 1861-1920, London, Macmillan, 1923, p. 34.

point out those features we feel contribute to its literary excellence. One quality we have mentioned is a flair for the dramatic. This is particularly noticeable in her early work, but she never abandoned it entirely. The following is from Monsieur Henri written in 1892:

Before a crowd of excited farmers a young Frenchman, blond, enthusiastic, delicately-nurtured, made once this singular oration: Friends, if my father were here, you would have confidence. As for me, I am only a boy, but I will prove that I deserve to lead you. When I advance, do you follow me; when I flinch, cut me down; when I fall, avenge me!

Then amid the cheers and tears of peasants, he sat in the great court-yard of his father's abandoned house, and munched with them their coarse brown loaves. (...) There was no retrogression. Henri du Vergier de La Rochejaquelein, twenty years old, a little indolent hitherto, an athlete, a critic of horses and hounds, was suddenly shaken out of his velvet privacy into the rude lap of the Revolution.⁸

The second is taken from "George Farquhar", written two years later:

He had come from the north, under episcopal patronage, to wear a queer dress among his social betters, to sweep and scour and carry tankards of ale to the Fellows in hall; and incidentally, to imbibe, on his own part, the lore of all ages. The major event in his history is that, instead of sitting up nights over Isocrates de Pace, he slipped off to see Robert Wilkes and the stock company, and to decide that acting, or as he afterwards sarcastically defined it, 'tearing his Lungs for a Livelihood,' (sic) was also the thing for him.⁹

There is a certain directness which gives strength and movement to her sentences. Each word is significant, adds

⁸Guiney, Monsieur Henri, pp. 1-2

⁹-----, A Little English Gallery, pp. 122-123

to the picture or the action. The litany of verbs in the last selection, shows precision; each one contributes its specific note and meaning, without sacrificing terseness, and without supplying redundancy. Quality is not the servant of quantity. The ideas follow in quick succession without the accumulation of useless or colourless words.

There is one spot where there could be improvement and that is in the opening sentence of the first extract. Miss Guiney was accused of "bookishness" in her early work. This criticism applies, for the most part, to her first book of essays,¹⁰ but there is a trace of it in the word "oration" and the phraseology, "made once this singular oration." Had she used the same simple and direct style that followed she would have gained in vividness and power.

One last observation can be made concerning the effective use of the word "velvet" qualifying "privacy". It contributes both originality and depth which emphasizes the contrast following. Miss Guiney has a fondness for such contrasts and what, we might call, three dimensional adjectives. In fact, this is what very often leads to her downfall from the heights of "pure" biography because by the

¹⁰Guiney, Goose-Quill Papers, Boston, Roberts, 1885.

employment of such words or expressions she introduces an emotional element. This has already been shown to some extent in chapter two, so it need not be repeated here.

Another feature of Miss Guiney's prose is her frequent use of metaphors and similes. Concerning them, Dobree has some pertinent remarks:

The ability to create metaphor is, as Aristotle remarked the surest sign of originality; but some modern writers seem to confine their originality to that alone. Metaphor can be, and often is, used effectively as decoration, but when used too much it becomes an irritation(...) They (similes and metaphors) fulfill their function in narrative prose.¹¹

The writer does not feel that the stricture applies to Miss Guiney, because she is not guilty of this abuse. She rarely uses them in a purely descriptive way, it is more often to bring out some point more strikingly and clearly. For example, she explains Queen Elizabeth's religious ideas thus:

Elizabeth wanted unity and peace. Her subjects were to be forced by statute to pray less and to pray all alike; (...) English humankind were to forsake their happy wild life, as it were, in the Church Universal, and all become, as if by magic, one large tame pet lying in a ribboned collar on the royal hearth.¹² (Underlining ours).

¹¹Bonamy Dobree, Modern Prose Style, London, Oxford Press, 1934, p. 35.

¹²Guiney, Edmund Campion, p. 10

In another place she describes it in different guise:

The 'received religion,' or, as it was quite as often called, the 'Queen's religion', was simply the new idea of nationalism torn away from relationship to the arch-idea of nations, which is the law of God. It was, in practice, no adoring angel at the Altar, but a capable parish beadle at the door.¹³

In her essay in Hazlitt she rejoices that he cannot be made other than he is:

Time cannot take away his height and his red-gold garments, bestow on him the 'smoother head of hair' which Lamb prayed for, and shrivel him into one of several very wise and weary "precieux". No: he stalks apart in state, the splendid Pasha of English letters.¹⁴

The comparisons are apt and original, with the suggestion of a twinkle in Miss Guiney's eye as she pens them. There is a spontaneity about them which savours of a dash of pepper or a quick flash of light adding pungency and brilliancy to the whole. Frequently Miss Guiney's well-stocked and alert mind dips back into the classics, into history, or reaches out to nature for her comparisons, and this is a double-edged sword, for it demands a like store of knowledge in the reader. To cite one example: "Like Crichton and Falkland and Vergolesi, like Arthur Hallam and Henri Perryve, he is known to history as it were by a smiling semi-private hint,..."¹⁵ Some of these

¹³Guiney, Edmund Campion, p. 12

¹⁴-----, A Little English Gallery, p. 273

¹⁵-----, Hurrell Froude, p. 1

personages are well-known to the student, others pose a problem in research. It must be remembered, however, that the Boston literary circles of the day, cultivated this delving into the personalities of European history and culture, so that many of them were household words. Miss Guiney's ability to see similarities and differences in persons and events led her to round out some thought or grace some expression by referring to some hero of ancient mythology such as a Hector or an Odin, or to some literary light such as Keats or Shelley. This habit gave a bookish and rather mannered air to her early essays, but with time she acquired more grace and freedom, in using them more sparingly and with better effect. They suggest the scholarship of a well-read person. Sometimes her comparisons are built on nature, in fact one of her most striking is of this type and is found in Hurrell Froude:

When the outriders of the whole sea of returning Catholicism charge at first singly and silently, then with uproar, along the levels of the sleeping Protestant kingdom, the Hurrell Froude who loved duty and hard work, and abhorred display and conspicuousness, rises, describe himself, a little dominant, a little spectacular. He is inevitably marked, to ear and eye, as the legendary ninth wave, the foamiest green breaker of the line, ever re-forming and breaking, so long as he is visible, brighter, taller, and farther in-shore than the rest. With the year 1833 he comes into public play, and vanishes as soon.¹⁶

This love of nature was a birthright from her native New England which she never lost, and which sharpened her appreciation

¹⁶Guiney, Hurrell Froude, pp. 116-117

LITERARY EXCELLENCE IN GUINEY

126

of its varying moods and physiognomy thus aiding eye and pen in detailing it. While her biographical studies do not offer many opportunities for pure description, we do find the occasional passage such as the following, which illustrates nicely her power of seizing the salient features:

And Vendee once mentioned means two things: the Marais, or low sea-coast district, a great meadow honey-combed with canals(...) and the inland Bocage, or thicket(...) dull in color, crabbed in outline, niggardly of distance.¹⁷ (underlining ours)

Sometimes a note of poetry creeps into her prose:

Through the charged and purple air strange figures were passing: Mirabeau, borne dead to the Pantheon to be the eldest of its sleepers; Lafayette, with brave step and smile of compromise, riding through the blue national guards; the Queen, appearing in white on balconies, calm before mobs, with her firm, fair arm about her little son; Barbaroux and Roland escorting Madame as she goes reluctantly from her happy dream-times in the garret of the dingy rue Saint-Jacques into place and authority; Camille Desmoulins, ever sauntering loose-haired, with a soiled roll of writing and a sarcasm not unsweet upon his tongue; the Cheniers; (...) and Robespierre, 'the last word of the Revolution which, thus early, no man could read;' regal maskers, flown to the frontiers and snared at Varennes, and marched back to the capital amid the din of sabres; couriers arriving with verifications of the butcheries at Avignon, and Bishops departing, after a rapturous Te Deum in the cathedral, each to his seething diocese; stout foreigners drinking in the Faubourg Saint Honore, and darkly prognosticating ruin for this whole wild smithy where so much old iron was being lighted and beat into new uses(...)such was the pan-amora, such the France, all of which Henri(...)saw and part of which(...)he was not.¹⁸

¹⁷Guiney, Monsieur Henri, p. 15

¹⁸Ibid., p. 63

We see here, too, her tendency to compress a whole background on to a small canvas, or rather, screen, for she never allows it to become static. There is a rhythmic flow to the sentences as they follow in balanced cadences. The skilful blending of action and description, the subdued use of colour, induce a mood and tone that pervades the pageantry. The single strokes of characterization are pregnant with undertones which it is left to the imagination and emotions of the reader to fill in. The contrasts and swift-moving vignettes make us see and feel the pulse of this France on the eve of revolution, but its very mode tends to destroy the detachment of "pure" biography.

An extract from a later work will exemplify how Miss Guiney sobered her prose without sacrificing quality:

In Samuel Johnson's famous circle nearly every man stands for himself, full of definite purpose and power. But two young men are there who did nothing of moment, whose names chime often down the pages of all his biographies, and to whom the world must pay honor, if only for the friendship they took and gave.(...) When the Turk's Head is ajar in Gerrard Street, in shadow-London; when the "unclubable" Hawkins strides over the threshold, and Hogarth goes by the window with his large nod and smile; when Chamier is there reading, Goldsmith posing in purple silk small-clothes, Sir Joshua fingering his trumpet, Burke and little brisk Garrick stirring 'bishop' in their glasses, and the king of the hours, distinguished by his lack of ruffles, is rolling about in his chair of state, saying something prodigiously humorous and wise, it is still Bennet Langton and Topham Beauclerk who most give the scene its human genial lustre, standing with laughter behind him, arm in arm.¹⁹

¹⁹Guiney, *A Little English Gallery*, pp. 173-174

Here we have the same condensation, the same metrical balance, the same intermingling of action and description; in both selections there is cumulative detail leading to a climax; unity and coherence are maintained by the marshalling of single pictures which fit into each other to give a final coordinated whole. However, in the second paragraph, there is less psychological innuendo, less emotional appeal. It could be pointed out, with reason, that the themes themselves are responsible for this, since the violent and hidden passions which eventually flared into the French Revolution can hardly be compared to the mild, friendly, or occasionally stormy, relationships of a literary club. Nevertheless, we can still see a change in Miss Guiney's technique. She limits herself to more objective, concrete particulars that give sufficient personalization to each member of the group, without unduly playing upon the imaginative faculties. Her vocabulary still shows care and variety, but she employs fewer adjectives and adverbs, which immediately results in a reduction of feeling. One critic has said that Miss Guiney is "not satisfied with the precise word-that word must be colorful, it must sing, moan, skip, dance, sigh,"²⁰ While this may be an asset to the essayist, it is not always to the biographer, since it may induce a subjective coloring at odds with objective presentation. It

²⁰Edythe Brown, "Triumfeminate in America", in America Vol 31, issue of May 24, 1924, p. 139

is this tendency which is responsible for the subjective element especially in her earlier work.

Miss Guiney can also write a straight forward prose, and such is most frequently found in her literary criticism:

Though the silurist had in him the possibilities of a great elegiac poet, and his laments for his dead are many and memorable, there is not one sustained masterpiece among them; nothing to equal or approach, for example, Cowley's "Ode on the Death of Mr. Williams Hervey," in the qualities which abide, and are visited with the honors of the class-book and the library shelf. Yet Vaughan's elegies are exquisite and endearing; they haunt one with the conviction that they stop short of immortality, not because their author had too little skill, but because, between his regressed speech and his extreme emotions, no art could make out to live.

There is no doubt as to the evaluation placed on Vaughan's poetry. A similar appraisal of Hazlitt is found:

Living in a level country with no outlook upon eternity and no deep insight into the human past, nor fully understanding those who had wider vision and more instructed utterance than his own, it follows(...) Hazlitt had a crude villageous mien. He had his refined sophistications; chief among them was a surpassing love of natural beauty. But he relished, on the whole, the beef and beer of life. The normal was what he wrote of with 'gusto' (...) While he is an admirable arbiter of what is or is not truly intellectual, he is all at sea when he has to discuss, for instance, emotional poetry(...) ²²

These are not directly biographical passages, yet a writer's work and ideas cannot be entirely ignored by the biographer,

²¹Guiney, A Little English Gallery, pp. 110-111

²²Ibid., pp. 270-271

so they can be considered. We notice that when Miss Guiney turns literary critic her treatment becomes more analytic, more logical and more detached. She does not confuse the issue by allowing personal feelings to intrude themselves. Had she maintained this attitude in her biographical work she would have been nearer the ideal of "pure" biography.

Miss Guiney's sense of humour has been mentioned but an illustration will show it more concretely:

The introduction to his Mount of Olives (whose pages have a soft billowy music like Jeremy Taylor's) is nominally ascribed to 'the peaceful, humble, and pious reader.' That functionary must have found it a trial to preserve his peaceful and pious abstraction, while the peaceful and pious author proceeded to flout the existing government, in a towering rage, and in very elegant caustic English.²³

In Edmund Campion and Hurrell Froude she reproduces letters and anecdotes which have an amusing side, and which are evidence that these thoroughly religious persons were also able to enjoy things in lighter vein. The general effect of this humour is to give a light touch here and there which is both amusing and enlightening for the reader. It prevents the serious matter from bogging down and becoming pedantic.

So far we have been discussing literary excellence in Miss Guiney's work, from the point of view of prose style

²³Guiney, A Little English Gallery, pp. 65-66.

only. When Professor Nicolson laid down his requirements for good biography he demanded good craftsmanship, and by this he meant

that it shall be well constructed (...) there must (...) be a consciousness of creation, a conviction that some creative mind has selected and composed these facts in such a manner as to give them a convincing interpretation; that, in a word, the given biography is a work of intelligence.²⁴

Andre Maurois refers to the same thing, but calls it "art".

It remains for us to consider whether Miss Guiney has or has not succeeded in constructing her biographies in such wise as to give the impression that her work is artistically and intelligently executed. In order to answer this question with more assurance, we shall examine another statement of Professor Nicolson in which he explains how Boswell succeeded in doing this very thing:

He possessed mental vivacity, (...) independent intellect, he was passionately interested in life. His mind was not only inquiring but also open (...) His talent for dramatization is unquestioned; his powers of observation, moreover, are amazing:--It might appear artless but great art was required to fix into some coherent readable whole the disordered mass (...) which (...) had accumulated. (...)

He was able by sheer constructive force to project his detached photographs with such continuity and speed that the effect produced is that of motion and of life.

.....
Equally skilful is his manipulation of the elements of surprise and recognition, of expectation and satisfaction. (...) He records the conversation of other people to the exact degree necessary to explain and illustrate the remarks of Johnson (...) exquisite handling of cumulative detail.²⁵

²⁴Nicolson, op. cit., pp. 12-13

²⁵Ibid., pp. 99-107

We must, at the outset, remark that this comparison does not aim at making out Miss Guiney to be a second Boswell. Its purpose is to see to what extent she has employed the same devices and with what skill. It must be stated further that Miss Guiney did not have the opportunity of observing her subjects in the flesh, a circumstance which will have considerable effect on her method, without invalidating her art. Boswell's art consisted in making good use of the material opportunity afforded him and all biographers must do likewise.

We may begin then by stating that what Boswell obtained by his powers of observation, namely, details, conversation, remarks, incidents, Miss Guiney obtained by research and reading, though quite naturally in smaller quantity. We have already shown that she did employ these things together with letters, which Boswell also used, to give character and life to her subjects. We have also mentioned that she did not allow her story to lag, but carried the narrative forward often telescoping historic events in the process to prevent history from smothering the person. However, the number of "detached pictures" projected by Miss Guiney is considerably smaller than those of Boswell, and they are frequently surrounded by an atmosphere of feeling which emanates from the author, as has likewise been shown. Letters, speeches, conversations have been introduced at strategic points and

incorporated into her work, adding a spark of drama, reality, or an insight into the mind of the person. Such are to be found in Emmet's replies at his inquisition, in his speech at his trial and the last letters he wrote to Sarah and his family, and in Campion's letter to Cheyney and his accounts of the party's experiences. We have mentioned that Miss Guiney was not so successful in weaving her reproduced material in Hurrell Froude as in her other works due to the amount and nature of it. But it does give a full and interesting exposé of the boy and man.

Details have been used by her to round out her portraits or settings thus making them vivid and concrete. She has been less subtle than Boswell in her manipulation of the elements of surprise (...) and satisfaction." To illustrate this point Professor Nicolson refers to the incident concerning the orange peel.²⁶ He remarks that Boswell mentions it without comment and then comes back to it. He thus piques the reader's curiosity and only satisfies it at an unexpected moment later on. Miss Guiney does not employ this artful device which has so much to commend it when properly handled. She does not hesitate to pass her comments, though not in a moralizing and tedious fashion. Moreover, she proceeds in a direct and forthright manner in the telling of her story.

²⁶Nicolson, p. 104

Miss Guiney's selection of what and how much to include shows judgement and a power of discrimination. It is always to the point and enlightening. On the other hand, in dealing with controversial figures such as Henri de La Roche-Jaquelein and Robert Emmet, she could have included more in order to give weight to her assertions and to present a more logical and unbiased view of the case.

Maurois adds when discussing "biography as an art",²⁷ that a chronological order of events is generally recommended as the best method to allow a life to unfold in a natural way. Miss Guiney, has, on the whole followed this method. Another fact he stresses is that human personality is not static, it develops; it is not simple; it is complex. Miss Guiney has given a glimpse of this change and development in her four principal lives, and, where information and knowledge allowed it, in her essays. As we have seen, she did not paint her characters pure black or white; their weaknesses, and this is particularly true of her literary men, are clearly set forth.

We may thus conclude after examining her style and her work as an entity, that Miss Guiney does manifest an intelligent and creative handling of her biographic material. In other words, she does attain a certain standard of excellence in craftsmanship. Her work is not flawless, it could

²⁷Maurois, op. cit., p. 27; p. 36

have gained by a more subtle and detached approach, by more simplicity at the expense of classical or other references; nevertheless it is vibrant, it is interesting, it does present a personality with conviction. It is not merely a document or a "formless mass of undigested material"²⁸ and the reader does not remain merely passive as he reads, but loves and loses with Emmet, or rises to the call of duty and sacrifice with Henri or Edmund Campion, chafes or chuckles at the perversity or folly of men. For these reasons we may say that it attains sufficient literary excellence to possess this third essential of biography.

²⁸Maurois, op. cit., p. 10

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis, as stated at the outset, was to examine the chief biographical works of Louise Imogen Guiney in the light of the requirements of "pure" biography in order to show to what extent they conformed or failed to conform to them; from this the writer hoped to deduce whether her allegiance was to this school or the "pedestal" school of biography, and to point out certain traits that she shares with modern biographers.

To facilitate procedure, chapter one was devoted to the definition of the term biography and a discussion of its three essential elements: history, characterization, and literary excellence.

The examination proper began in chapter two where history as found in Miss Guiney's works was looked into. The norm of accurate and unbiassed historical fact presented in an objective manner, formed the basis of the discussion, and was applied to her works. As a prelude, Miss Guiney's personal aptitudes for research were demonstrated. From these considerations, the following conclusions were deduced. Miss Guiney could and did carry on painstaking research, though her most authentic work relates to seventeenth century figures and recusants. Her earliest biography, Monsieur Henri reflects a too close adherence to her primary source, the

CONCLUSION

138

Memoirs de la Marquise de La Rochejaquelein, which have been criticized for certain assertions made in favour of her kinsmen, though their authenticity and value are still recognized. Miss Guiney's annotated copy of her work containing corrections would indicate, however, that any inaccuracies were due to the difficulties of research, which she mentioned in her preface, rather than to any desire to suppress truth. Robert Emmet requires the reader to take too much for granted since Miss Guiney hints or makes apparently gratuitous statements without giving a logical and reasoned exposé of the political entanglements of the time. Both these works fail as "pure" biographies, however, more from their manner of presentation than from the matter involved. The writer's sympathy and enthusiasm for these subjects, her admiration for the complete devotion to a cause which they manifested, shine on nearly every page, thus impregnating the narrative with her personal feelings and making of it a panegyric rather than a straightforward biography. While this emotionalism is not so obvious in her later works, the subjective and personal attitude of the essayist is always present to some degree, and for this reason it is evident that Miss Guiney's work cannot be classed as "pure" biography.

In chapter three, a study of her portrayal of character was made, where it was tested by comparison with the norms laid down by Professors Nicolson and Maurois, namely,

CONCLUSION

139

that the subject be depicted as he really was, with his qualities, his failings, his complexities, even changes, as he develops with time and experience. Here, the author should remain in the background as much as possible letting the reader judge for himself as the words and actions of the biographee pass before him in review. Because Miss Guiney was not motivated by "moral earnestness", and did not hesitate to show faults as well as good points, the stigma of "earnest" or discreet biography does not apply to her work. On the other hand, because she does not remain in the background, because she passes her judgments and comments on their qualities, because her personal reactions are felt, she cannot qualify as a "pure" biographer.

It has been stated already that her motive in writing Monsieur Henri and Robert Emmet was commemorative and this together with her eulogistic flights of rhetoric injected here and there, place these lives within the pale of "pedestal" lives. Should all her works be so classed? The present writer does not think so. Her later works show an advance towards objectivity; she does not indulge in white-washing; she is not concerned in holding up models for the edification of the reader; she is interested in writing about people who interest her, and giving her appraisal of them. She is, for the most part, sympathetic towards her subjects, Dermody being the great exception, but this does not blind her to their

CONCLUSION

140

shortcomings. These are not the marks of an adherent to the "pedestal" school.

In chapter four an analysis of those qualities of prose style which have a particular bearing upon the literary excellence of a biography, was made. Miss Guiney's sense of drama, her handling of detail, her use of comparison and simile, her scholarship and humour, were illustrated with comment, as was her power of condensation, her lively manner, and careful choice of words. Her sentences, cadenced and rhythmic, sometimes coloured with poetic overtone, or straight-forward and forceful, always well freighted with ideas, warranted the decision that Miss Guiney's craftsmanship did attain that standard of literary excellence demanded by biography as a branch of literature. It was also pointed out, however, that her subjective and personal approach, an attitude at variance with the primary requisites of "pure" biography, does stem largely from her use of adjectives and words suggesting undertones rather than ideas only. In this particular her style is better suited to the essayist, than to the biographer.

In a final summing up it may be said that in all three essentials of biography, history, characterization, and literary excellence, Miss Guiney has exhibited subjectiveness to a degree, but preponderately in her manner of presentation,

CONCLUSION

141

and therefore her work falls short of the demands of "pure" biography, but neither has she succumbed to "earnest" or "discreet" biography. Two of her lives fall into the "pedestal" variety. Of the rest, it may be said that a trace of its influence is seen in her sympathetic and favourable treatment of her subjects, which, nevertheless, stops short of completely idealizing them, and this mingled with a certain frankness and vivacity manifests a certain affinity of her work with modern biography.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alexander, Calvert, The Catholic Literary Revival, Milwaukee, Bruce, 1935, pp. 205-209

An appreciation of Louise Guiney's work and ideals, and her relation to the Catholic group in England and America.

Altick, Richard, The Scholar Adventurer, New York, Macmillan, 1950, 338 p.

The story of research in modern scholarship, hoaxes and discoveries.

Biganne, Cecil, Memoirs of the Marquise de La Rochejaquelein, edited and translated from the original edition published in accordance with her autograph manuscript by her grandson, with an introduction and note by Cecil Biganne, London, George Routledge & Sons, 1933, xxxii-338 p.

This is a translation of the memoirs upon which Miss Guiney based her life of Monsieur Henri. The introductory note discusses the controversial aspects of these memoirs.

Bossard, E., "Autour des sources", Petites variations historiques, in Revue des Facultés Catholiques d'Angers de l'ouest, vol. 10, issues of Feb.--Aug., 1904, pp. 332-362; 522-540; 615-635; 777-791.

The Abbé Bossard is the severest critic of Mme. de La Rochejaquelein. His main contention is that she exalted the merits of her own family to the detriment of the leaders of Angevin. His analysis of her memoirs is found in these articles; they are inclined to be psychological as well as historic, but contain valuable discussions and information.

Boswell, James, Life of Doctor Samuel Johnson, London, Oxford University Press, reprint of third edition 1938, vol. 1, 3-680 p.; vol. 2, 1-704 p.

There are many incidents, comments and letters to and from Langton and Beauclerk in these volumes. Miss Guiney covers the same ground but also adds comments and information from other sources.

Brooks, Van Wyck, New England Indian Summer, 1865-1915, New York, Dutton, 1940, 1-557 p.

Chapters xx and xxi which treat of the trends and personalities of Boston in the nineties were especially valuable, but references to Miss Guiney scattered throughout the book were also useful. Miss Guiney's work and reactions to the spirit of the times are succinctly given.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

143

Browne, Edythe, "Catholic Triumfeminate", in America, Vol. 31, issue of May 24, 1924, pp. 138-139.

A comparison of the prose styles of Alice Meynell, Louise Guiney, Agnes Repplier. Mrs. Meynell's prose is more perfect, but Miss Guiney's is more colourful. It is of homespun, and must sing, dance, mourn, as well as carry her thought.

Daly, J.J., "Louise Imogen Guiney", in America, Vol. 24, issue of Nov. 20, 1920, pp. 112-114.

Father Daly comments on Miss Guiney's work, especially her scholarship and her critical sense.

Gosse, Sir Edmund, "Biography", in Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vo. 3, eleventh edition, 1910, pp. 953-954.

A compact article on the meaning of biography and its modern connotations.

Guiney, Louise, Imogen, Blessed Edmund Campion, New York, Benziger Brothers, 1908, 183 p.

-----, Robert Emmet, A Survey of His Rebellion and of His Romance, London, David Nutt, 1904, viii-103 p.

-----, Hurrell Froude, Memoranda and Comments, London, Methuen, 1904, xxi-439 p.

-----, Monsieur Henri, A Foot-note to French History, New York, Harper, 1892, viii-139 p.

-----, A Little English Gallery, New York, Harper, 1894, 291 p.

-----, Recusant Poets, London, Sheed and Ward, 1938, xv-420 p.

-----, James Clarence Mangan, His Selected Poems, With a Study, Boston, Lamson, Wolfe, 1897, 3-112 p.

-----, "The Mock Chatterton", in The Catholic World Vol. 97, issue of April 1913, pp. 16-44.

-----, Letters of, edited by Grace Guiney, New York, Harper, 1926, Vol. I xxii-259 p., Vol. I⁺, 270 p.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

144

MacDonagh, Michael, The Viceroy's Post Bag, London John Murray, 1904, ix-466 p.

The story of Robert Emmet's arrest, trial, conviction, as found in the suppressed letters between Curran and the Right Honourable William Wickham, known as the Hardwicke Mss. This book was published in the same year as Miss Guiney's and contained the same new material made public for the first time.

Maurois, Andre, Aspects of Biography, translated from the French by Sydney Castle Roberts, New York, Appleton, 1929, vii-209 p.

Biography considered as a science, as an art, and as an expression. Mr. Maurois elaborates the difficulties, the techniques, the aims of biography, and the techniques to be used by the biographer. He refers to Professor Nicolson's comments on "pure" biography and enlarges upon them.

Murphy, Sister Mary Albert, "Louise Imogen Guiney", a dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of English, at Fordham University, New York, 1939, ix-300 p.

A general survey and treatment of the work of Louise Imogen Guiney, in which she does not attempt to place her, but to "arrive at an objective appraisal of L.I.G. in the light of what she produced; a poet with flashes of genius, a familiar essayist of scholarly penetration, and a woman of many-sided culture."

Nicolson, Harold, The Development of English Biography London, Hogarth, 1927, 158 p.

An analysis of the genre of literature known as biography with special emphasis on "pure" and "impure" biography. This work has formed the basis of the criticism used to examine Miss Guiney's work.

Parrish, Stephen Maxfield, "Currents of the Nineties in Boston and London, Fred Holland Day, Louise Imogen Guiney, and Their Circle", a thesis presented to the Department of English, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the subjects of English Language and Literature, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., April 1954.

A study of "the enthusiasms of the nineties", centered especially around the erection of the Keats memorial at Hamstead. & the "aesthetes" of Boston. The part played by Miss Guiney in collaboration with Fred H. Day in many ventures notably the establishment of Copeland-Day Publishing House.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

145

Postgate, R.W., Robert Emmet, London, Secker, 1931, 340 p.

A very full treatment not only of Emmet's rebellion, romance, trial and execution, but also of the whole Irish question. The history of the United Irishmen, and other societies, their uprisings, excesses and bad faith on both sides, the intrigues within Dublin Castle itself, the activities of other members of the Emmet Family, are all recounted with objectivity and buttressed with proofs. An interesting feature of the book is the place given to subsequent discoveries, developments and conjectures.

Shuster, George N., "Inheritors" in Catholic Spirit in Modern Literature, New York, Macmillan, 1922, pp. 154-157.

An appraisal of Miss Guiney's talent and high standards.

Tenison, M.E., Louise Imogen Guiney, Her Life and Works, 1861-1920, London, Macmillan, 1923, pp.v-348.

An appreciation of Miss Guiney's character, aims accomplishments, and a criticism of her work.

Thayer, William Roscoe, The Art of Biography, New York, Scribner's, 1920, x-155 p.

Lectures that were given on Biography in Literature.

Waugh, Evelyn, Edmund Campion, London, Longmans Green, 1935, x-225 p.

The Life and Martyrdom of Blessed Edmund Campion.

Waugh, Evelyn, Edmund Campion, London, Penguin, 1954, #955, p. 7-173.

APPENDIX I

Sources Used by Cecil Biganne

Mémoires de la Marquise de La Rochejaquelein, écrits par elle-même, rédigés par M. le Baron de Barante, 1814.

Mémoires de Mme La Marquise de La Rochejaquelein, Edition Originale, publiés sur son manuscrit autographe par son petit-fils Paris, 1889.

Souvenirs de Baronde Barante publiés par son petit-fils Claude de Barante, Paris, 1892.

Journal d'une femme de cinquante ans, 1778-1815, publiés par son arrière-petit-fils le colonel Comte Aymar de Liedekerke-Beaufort. 1925.

Choses Vendéennes, H. Baguenier Desormeaux, Niort, 1901.

Revue des Facultés Catholiques de l'Ouest, June 1901.

Introduction to the Memoirs of Boutillier de Saint-André.

Souvenirs Vendéens, par A. de Bejarry, Nantes-Paris, 1884.

Mémoires inédits de Bertrand Poirier de Beauvais, Commandant General de l'artillerie des armées de la Vendée, publiés par la Comtesse de la Bouère, Paris, 1893.

Souvenirs de la Comtesse de la Bouère...memoires inédits publiés par Mme la Comtesse de la Bouère, belle-fille de l'auteur, Paris 1890.

Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France sous Napoléon, écrits sous sa dictée à Sainte-Hélène et publiés par Gourgaud et Montholon.

Memoirs of Poirier de Beauvais

Life of Mme de La Rochejaquelein by Maxwell Scott, Longmans Green & Co., 1911.

Mémoires d'un Père à ses Enfants: Une Famille Vendéenne pendant La Grande Guerre, par M. Boutillier de Saint André, Paris 1896.

ABSTRACT

Louise Imogen Guiney, poet and essayist, has written some works that may be classed as biography. The present thesis aims at showing Miss Guiney is not a write of "pure" biography as defined by Professor Nicolson yet does exhibit some characteristics of modern biographers.

An examination into Miss Guiney's aptitudes for research, her primary sources, methods of portraying character, and the literary standard of her work, constitute the bulk of material contained in the thesis.

This examination reveals that while Miss Guiney is a painstaking student of research, and uses proven sources supported or corrected by her own or other reliable person's research, in the case of Monsieur Henri she has followed too closely the Memoirs of la Marquise de La Rochejaquelein, and in Robert Emmet she has not made any attempt to set forth his case in a logical, reasoned, and detached way. Her most authentic research has been done in connection with seventeenth century personages and certain writers.

In character portrayal Miss Guiney delights in tracing hereditary traits, in analyzing portraits, uses physical details, dramatic situations, and character revealing incidents to advantage. She has the ability to give vitality to her subjects, and does not hesitate to expose their weaker side. For this reason she may be exempted

ABSTRACT

148

from the charge of writing "discreet" biography. However, a certain penchant towards being overly enthusiastic and sympathetic, destroys the objective and detached presentation of facts and traits which is the distinctive quality of "pure" biography, and thus excludes her work from being classed as such. Monsieur Henri and Robert Emmet due to her commemorative aim and emotional style, must be placed in the category of "pedestal" lives. Her other works are more restrained and therefore come nearer to the ideal, but none can be termed "pure" biography.

So far as literary excellence is concerned, Miss Guiney's prose, especially in her later works, possesses distinction, scholarship, an ability to handle description, humour, and to weave incidents, dialogue and comments into an artistic whole. Her vocabulary is wide and carefully chosen. Her fondness for qualifying words and phrases adds emotion and depth, but also tends to colour her story. Hurrell Froude, is somewhat chaotic and lacking in that artistic unity demanded of "pure" biography, though the value of the material contained in it is unquestionably high.

The whole study therefore, leads to the conclusion that Miss Guiney is not a writer of "pure" biography, but in an attempt to portray men and events with truth and vitality she shares this characteristic with the modern biographer.