Clarendon's 'History of the Rebellion'

PART II.—THE 'LIFE' OF HIMSELF.

THE composition of the 'History' was suddenly stopped by the outbreak of the second civil war. On 26 June 1648 Hyde left Jersey, at the urgent summons of Lord Jermyn, to join Prince Charles in Holland. He had on 8 March 1648 completed the seventh book of the 'History,' and portions of books viii. and ix. were also written during his residence in Jersey. Twenty years elapsed between the interruption of the 'History' and the commencement of Hyde's account of his own life. On 30 Nov. 1667 he fled a second time from England, and after various wanderings and vicissitudes established himself at Montpellier about the beginning of July 1668. The 'Life' is dated, on the opening page of the first book, '23 July 1668,' and was completed as far as the Restoration on 1 August 1670. Its progress was delayed by other literary labours, of which the most important was a vindication of himself from the charge of high treason drawn up by the house of commons in 1667. It is dated at the commencement 24 July 1668, and is printed in the collection of Clarendon's *Tracts* published in 1727,¹ and in abridged form in sections 1243–1351 of the 'Continuation' of his 'Life.' 'He thought,' he tells us, 'he was indebted for his own reputation, and for the information of his children and other friends, to vindicate himself from those aspersions and reproaches which the malice of his enemies had cast upon him in the parliament.' He styles this vindication 'a plain, particular defence of his innocence upon every one of the reproaches he had been charged with.' When finished it was to be transcribed and sent to his sons in England, not only that they might be convinced of his innocence themselves, but also that they might use it 'to convince other men who were willing to be undeceived.' The manner of doing this, in order not to embarrass the king by the revelation of awkward secrets, was left to their discretion.² Having thus provided for the defence of his memory, Clarendon took up again the narrative of his own life. which was

¹ Pp. 1–88.

² 'Continuation' of 'Life,' section 1243; *A Collection of several Tracts of Edward, Earl of Clarendon*, 1727, p. 876.

written primarily for the information of his children, and not, like the vindication, designed for eventual publicity.³

Clarendon's personal share in public events naturally fills the most prominent place in the narrative of his life, but there are many digressions on the characters of his friends and on the situation of public affairs at particular moments in his career. An analysis of the first part of the 'Life' will show the nature of his scheme. Clarendon begins by an account of his family, of his education at Oxford, and his admission at the Inner Temple. Then he introduces an account of the death of the duke of Buckingham, of the state of public affairs at his death, and of the characters of those ministers who 'had the principal management of public affairs in church and state' after Buckingham's death. Returning after this digression to his personal history he relates his two marriages and the death of his father, describes his own manner of living, and explains what kind of company and conversation he found pleasure in. He then sketches the characters of his friends and winds up by drawing his own. A second digression narrates the king's visit to Scotland in 1633, Laud's appointment as archbishop, the state of the church at the time, and Laud's further appointment as commissioner of the treasury, which brought Hyde into personal contact with him. Accounts of the Scottish rebellion and of the short parliament follow, and Mr. Hyde's part in the parliamentary proceedings is given in great detail. The 'Life' also gives a very complete account of Hyde's activity during the first session of the long parliament, dwelling upon his industrious labours on committees, his energy in reforming legal abuses, and his zeal in the defence of the church. It records conversations with friends and opponents, tells what ominous words Pym, Fiennes, or Marten dropped in familiar talk, why Essex would accept no compromise about Strafford's punishment, why the Scots hated Mr. de and for what reason the northern members loved him. We see Mr. Hyde persuading the city merchants to lend money to pay off the armies, overthrowing the council of the north, obstructing the Root and Branch Bill, and defending the rights of the bishops against his friend Falkland. He relates in detail the different steps which led him to enter the king's service, and how he rose from being a confidential and unofficial adviser to be a privy councillor and chancellor of the exchequer. The meagre and fragmentary narrative actually printed as his 'Life' of himself gives a very imperfect idea of the full and lively autobiography which he originally wrote; for though much of interest remains behind, most

³ 'Life,' ed. 1857, i. 85. Of the 'Continuation' of the 'Life' he says in like manner: 'It cannot be presumed to be intended for a public view, or for more than the information of his children of the true source and grounds from whence their father's misfortunes proceeded' ('Continuation,' section 1; cf. *Essays*, p. 376).

of the best things have been extracted, torn away from the context, and inserted in the *History of the Rebellion*.

As Hyde proceeded in the story of his career his pen ran away with him, and he enlarged more and more upon public affairs. He began to think it a pity that what he had written should never be read beyond the narrow circle of his family and his friends. In apologising for one of his digressions on public affairs he says—

The memorials and extracts are so large and particular of all these proceedings in the notes and papers of the person whose life is the end of this discourse that even unawares many things are inserted not so immediately applicable to his own person, which possibly may hereafter, in some other method, be communicated to the world.⁴

Yet he never contemplated the integral publication of his manuscript, and while the idea that some portions of it might yet be published hereafter encouraged him to be more discursive than if he had been writing solely for his family, the fact that he was primarily writing for them induced him to write with freedom. His children, he was confident, would take care that nothing was published which for reasons of state it would be desirable to keep secret.⁵ In the 'Life,' therefore, he reveals the hidden causes of events with a frankness he had not ventured to exhibit in his earlier work. For instance, speaking of the negotiations between the king and the parliament in the spring of 1648, he says—

All the transactions of that treaty, having been long since published, and being only fit to be digested into the history of that time, are to be omitted here. Only what passed in secret, and was never communicated, nor can otherwise be known, since at this time no other man is living who was privy to that negotiation but the chancellor of the exchequer, will have a proper place in this discourse.⁶

For the same reason 'in this discourse which is never to see the light, and so can reflect upon nobody's character with prejudice,' Clarendon feels at liberty to criticise persons with greater boldness. He does not hesitate now to blame any, even the most sacred persons. In the original 'History' when he felt bound to express his disapproval of some unwise act of the king's he did it timidly and apologetically. 'Here I cannot but let myself loose to say,' and 'here I cannot but again take the liberty to say,' are two of the expressions by which he prefaces his strictures.⁷ 'As if,' comments Warburton, 'he were speaking against his duty when he censured the crown,' or rather because he destined what he was writing for the perusal of the king himself.

⁴ 'Life,' i. 85.

⁵ Clarendon's will runs as follows: 'I give and bequeath to my said sons all my papers and writings of what kind soever, and leave them entirely to their disposal, as they shall be advised either by suppressing or publishing, by the advice of my lord archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of Winchester.'

⁶ 'Life,' iii. 4.

⁷ *Rebellion*, i. 6, 160.

In 1669 the situation had altered. As Clarendon was no longer writing for the king's eye, his former reticence was unnecessary. He could be outspoken without fear of giving offence. Moreover experience and his own treatment had opened his eyes to the faults of the masters he had served. In the character which he gives of Charles I he concludes by saying that 'he was without some parts and qualities which have made some kings great and happy,' and blames him as being 'more irresolute than the conjuncture of his affairs would admit.' The reason was that though he 'had an excellent understanding he was not confident enough of it, which made him oftentimes change his opinion for a worse, and follow the advice of a man that did not judge so well as himself.'⁸ Similarly in the exordium to book ix. of the *History of the Rebellion*, written in 1671, Clarendon, discussing the question how far the king was responsible for his own misfortunes, observes—

The most signal parts of his misfortunes proceeded from the modesty of his own nature, which kept him from trusting himself enough, and made him believe that others discerned better who were much inferior to him in those faculties, and so to depart often from his own reason, to follow the opinions of more unskilful men whose affections he believed to be unquestionable to his service.⁹

One such unskilful counsellor was Lord Digby. In the original 'History' Clarendon had blamed the impeachment of the five members in vague and general terms. Charles, he said,

had very few to give him counsel and none that would avow it. . . . In this restraint the king, considering rather what was just than what was expedient, without communicating it to any of his council, and so not sufficiently weighing the circumstances and way of doing it as well as the matter itself, resolved to impeach the leaders of the opposition.¹⁰

In the 'Life' Clarendon repeatedly blames this design in much stronger terms, paints its fatal effects on the king's position, and complains that he had not only broken his promise to his three advisers in the house of commons, but also had abandoned the policy he had recently promised them to pursue. Clarendon describes himself, Falkland, and Colepepper, as

so much displeased and dejected that they were inclined never more to take upon them the care of anything to be transacted in the house, finding

⁸ *Rebellion*, xi. 241, 243, a passage inserted from the 'Life,' written in 1670.

⁹ *Ibid.* ix. 8. This infirmity, remarks Clarendon in another passage, was not peculiar to Charles I., but was inherited by his children. 'It was the unhappy fate of that family that they trusted naturally to the judgments of those who were as much inferior to them in understanding as they were in quality, before their own, which were very good.' Speaking of his own administration of affairs from 1660 to 1667, he says: 'That which gave him most trouble . . . was that unfixedness and irresolution of judgment which was natural to all his (the king's) family of the male line' ('Continuation,' sections 861, 928; cf. 836).

¹⁰ *Rebellion*, iv. 149, note— a passage from the manuscript of the 'History.'

already that they could not avoid being looked upon as the authors of those counsels to which they were so absolutely strangers and which they so perfectly detested.¹¹

The cause of this, he explains, was 'the unquiet and volatile spirit of the lord Digby' which had 'prevailed with the king, contrary to his resolution,' and after describing Digby's character he adds: 'The king was the unfittest person alive to be served by such a counsellor, being too easily inclined to sudden enterprises, and as easily amazed when they were entered upon.'¹²

In the same way Hyde complains that the king in the spring of 1642 followed the advice of Colepeper and neglected to take counsel with his two friends. In opposition to the policy suggested by them, Charles, after parting from the queen, went to York, intending to get Hull into his hands:

the design upon Hull being the sole advice of Sir John Colepeper, which he owned not to his two companions, well knowing that their opinion being that the queen being gone the king should either return to London or remain at Hampton Court, or at such a distance, and positively refuse to consent to any other unwarrantable demands.¹³

The king's natural irresolution prevented him from consistently adhering to the policy which his regular advisers had engaged him to pursue, and their counsels were always liable to be overruled by the predominating influence of the queen.

The king's affection to the queen was of a very extraordinary alloy; a composition of conscience, and love, and generosity and gratitude, and all those noble affections which raise the passions to the greatest height, insomuch as he saw with her eyes and determined by her judgment; and did not only pay her this adoration, but desired that all men should know he was swayed by her, which was not good for either of them. . . . When she was admitted to the knowledge and participation of the most secret affairs (from which she had been carefully restrained by the duke of Buckingham whilst he lived) she took delight in the examining and discussing them, and from thence in making judgment of them; in which her passions were always strong . . . she took pleasure in nothing but knowing all things and disposing all things. . . . And she so far concurred with the king's inclination that she did not more desire to be possessed of this unlimited power than that all the world should take notice that she was the entire mistress of it; which in truth (with what other unhappy circumstances whatsoever concurred in the mischief) was the foundation upon which the first and utmost prejudices to the king and his government were raised and prosecuted. . . .

¹¹ *Rebellion*, iv. 146, 158, 191.

¹² *Ibid.* iv. 129, 146. Compare Mr. Gardiner's estimate of the influence of Digby on Charles during the later years of the war (*Great Civil War*, ii. 253, 284).

¹³ 'Life,' ii. 17, 30; *Rebellion*, v. 88.

When Henrietta Maria left England in February 1642

his majesty made a solemn promise to her at parting that he would receive no person into any favour and trust, who had disserved him, without her privity and consent, and that as she had undergone so many reproaches and calumnies at the entrance into the war so he would never make any peace but by her interposition and mediation, that the kingdom might receive that blessing only from her.

His majesty, adds Clarendon, 'was too religious an observer of this promise.'¹⁴ The removal of the earls of Essex and Holland from their posts as chamberlain and groom of the stole was effected in pursuance of the king's promise to the queen. That act was most prejudicial in its consequences, for it threw them both into the arms of the popular party, and freed Essex from an obligation which would have prevented him from accepting the command of the parliamentary army. Without Essex it would have been impossible for the parliament to raise an army.¹⁵ To the same promise was due the king's fatal rejection of the secret overtures made to him at the time of the treaty of Oxford, overtures which, according to the view of Clarendon, might, if accepted, have led either to a peace with the parliament or at least to a serious division among its supporters.¹⁶ It was also the queen's opportunity which had prevailed with the king in February 1642 to assent to the bill excluding the bishops from the house of lords.¹⁷

A fault of the same kind in the king was his too great fondness for his nephews. Hyde had not in his earlier narrative hesitated to point out the faults of Rupert and Maurice; he now dwells on their defects in more detail, and censures Charles himself for granting them too much authority. 'The king always loved his family immoderately and with notable partiality, and was willing to believe that their high qualities could not be without all those qualities and qualifications which were equal to it, if they had an opportunity to manifest those endowments.'¹⁸ Hence the appointment of Maurice to be lieutenant-general of the western army under the marquis of Hertford,

which nobody believed would produce any good effect, there being no two men of more contrary natures and dispositions. The prince had never sacrificed to the graces, nor conversed amongst men of quality, but had most used the company of ordinary and inferior men, with whom he loved to be very familiar. He was not qualified with parts of nature, and less with any acquired; and towards men of the best condition, with whom he might very well have justified a familiarity, he maintained at

¹⁴ 'Life,' iii. 14-7.

¹⁵ *Rebellion*, v. 31-5.

¹⁶ 'Life,' iii. 7-13.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* ii. 17-20. For other instances of the influence of the queen and its consequences see *Rebellion*, vii. 182, 242. Hyde finally came to a breach with the queen on the question of Prince Charles going to France (*ibid.* x. 5-49).

¹⁸ *Ibid.* vii. 86, note.

least the full state of his birth and understood very little more of the war than to fight very stoutly when there was occasion.¹⁹

So too when Rupert was made lieutenant-general of the horse a clause was inserted in his commission exempting him from receiving orders from anybody but the king himself, which practically separated the horse from any dependence on the general.

The king was so indulgent to him that he took his advice on all things relating to the army, and so upon consideration of their march and the figure of the battle they resolved to fight in with the enemy, he concurred entirely with Prince Rupert's advice, and rejected the opinion of the general. . . . The uneasiness of the prince's nature, and the little education he had with courts, made him unapt to make acquaintance with any of the lords, who were likewise discouraged from applying themselves to him, whilst some officers of the horse were well pleased to observe that strangeness, and fomented it, believing their credit would be the greater with the prince, and desired that no other person should have any credit with the king. So the war was scarcely begun when there appeared such faction and designs in the army, which wise men looked upon as a very evil presage; and the inconveniences which flowed from thence gave the king great trouble in a short time after.²⁰

It remains now to notice one characteristic of the *History of the Rebellion* in which the information of the future historian is plainly the object of the writer. Nothing delighted Clarendon's first readers more than the personal portraits with which his work is so freely interspersed. 'I cannot but let you know,' writes Evelyn to Pepys, 'the incredible satisfaction I have taken in reading my late Lord Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion* . . . I acknowledge myself transported with all the parts of this excellent history.' He praises the 'masculine style,' the preface, 'so like that of the noble Polybius, leading us by the courts, avenues, and porches into the fabric.' But above all he admires the characters,

so just and tempered without the least ingredient of passion or tincture of revenge, yet with such natural and lively touches as show his lordship well knew not only the persons' outsides but their very interiors, whilst yet he treats the most obnoxious, who deserved the severest rebuke, with a becoming generosity and freedom, even where the ill-conduct of those of that pretended loyal party, as well as of the most flagitious, might have justified the worst that could be said of their miscarriages and demerits.²¹

¹⁹ 'Life.' Compare with this the account of Maurice's appointment in the 'History' (*Rebellion*, vii. 94). See also *ibid.* pp. 144, 155, 156, 192, 290, 296, on the mistake made in appointing Maurice to command the western army, and the errors committed by him. These passages also belong to the earlier narration.

²⁰ *Ibid.* vi. 78; cf. vi. 90, on the relations of Rupert and Lindsey; vi. 126 note, on the origin of the hostility between Rupert and Wilmot; viii. 168, on Rupert's appointment in general. These three passages are from the 'Life.' See also vii. 279 (from the 'History') and ix. 80, 68.

²¹ 20 Jan. 1702-3. Correspondence at the end of Lord Braybrooke's edition of

Hyde himself tells us that one of the motives which induced him to take up his pen was lest 'the memory of those few who, out of duty and conscience, have opposed and resisted the torrent that hath overwhelmed them may lose the recompense due to their virtue, and having undergone the injuries and reproaches of this may not find a vindication in a better age.' ²² 'I take it,' he wrote to Dr. Stewart, when asking for particulars about the life of Laud, 'to be no less the true end of history to derive the eminency and virtue of those persons who lived in those times of which he writes faithfully to posterity than the counsels which were taken and the actions which were done.' ²³

Another reason for the introduction of these personal sketches was afforded by Hyde's conception of the origin of the rebellion. Not observing the share which general causes had in producing it, and declining to look far back for its source, he often overestimated the influence of individuals and the importance of personal causes. May—far inferior in all the qualities of an historian—endeavoured to present the rebellion as a result of the great religious revolution of the preceding century. Hyde announced at the very outset of his work that he sought to make his readers

discern the minds of men prepared, of some to do, and of others to suffer, all that since happened: the pride of this man, and the popularity of that; the levity of one, and the morosity of another . . . the spirit of craft and subtlety in some, and the rude and unpolished integrity of others . . . like so many atoms contributing jointly to this mass of confusion now before us. ²⁴

It is scarcely a paradox to say that his vivid presentment of the actors sprang in part from his imperfect comprehension of the drama itself.

The large experience of public affairs which the next twenty years brought to Hyde made no change in his way of regarding the past. His conception of the historic importance of personal as opposed to general causes remained unaltered. On the other hand his interest in character increased, and time, which blurred and distorted his recollections of events, left his impressions of men as strong and clear as if he had seen them yesterday; for he nurtured his memory of them and exercised it, so as to keep it fresh and strong. He tells us that he never took more pleasure in anything than in frequently mentioning and naming those persons

Pepys. Horace Walpole also compares Clarendon to Polybius, but greatly to his disadvantage (*Letters*, ed. Wright, iii. 184).

²² *Rebellion*, i. 1.

²³ *Clarendon State Papers*, ii. 328. Again in introducing his character of Falkland he observes: 'If the celebrating the memory of eminent and extraordinary persons, and transmitting their great virtues for the imitation of posterity, be one of the principal ends and duties of history . . . ' (*Rebellion*, vii. 217)

²⁴ *Rebellion*, i. 4.

who were then his friends, or of his most familiar conversation, and remembering their particular virtues and faculties.²⁵ When he was rich and powerful he filled Clarendon House with portraits of illustrious Englishmen of every time, but above all those 'of his own time and acquaintance.' Evelyn, who describes the collection, mentions amongst them the great duke of Buckingham, the brave Montrose, the magnificent earl of Carlisle, Lord Treasurer Weston, Hamilton, Digby, Falkland, and many more who played their part in the scenes which live in Clarendon's pages.²⁶ In his solitary and monotonous exile, when Clarendon could no longer see their faces looking down on him from his walls, he recalled their characters to his mind and sketched their portraits with his pen.

The *History of the Rebellion* as published contains a small number of characters derived from the original 'History,' written in 1646-8, and a very large number from the 'Life,' written between 1668 and 1670. It is worth while to compare the two narratives in detail, in order to make this plain. In the earlier narrative there are short sketches of the characters of the king's ministers and servants, as, for instance, of Noy, Finch, Laud, Strafford, Cottington, and Hamilton. There are more elaborate accounts of the leaders of the opposition, of Hampden, Pym, and the earl of Northumberland.²⁷ After every battle there usually occur notices of the chief persons slain on the royalist side. Thus in the sixth book there are characters of the earl of Northampton and Sidney Godolphin, of the earl of Lindsey, Lord Aubigny, and others. After Lansdowne fight come a few sentences on Sir Bevil Greenville and Major Sheldon; after the storming of Bristol Grandison, Slanning, and Trevannion are commemorated; after the first battle of Newbury follow sketches of Sunderland and Carnarvon, and the incomparable portrait of Falkland.²⁸ Falkland is drawn on such a scale that his character seems rather a separate composition inserted in the 'History' than an integral part of the work itself. Of it Hyde himself remarks in a letter to his friend Dr. John Earles—

I told you long since that when I came to speak of the unhappy battle of Newbury I would enlarge upon the memory of our dear friend that perished there, to which I conceive myself obliged not more by the rights of friendship than of history, which ought to transmit the virtues of excellent persons to posterity, and I am therefore careful to do justice to every man who hath fallen in the quarrel, on which side soever, as you will find by what I have said of Mr. Hampden himself. I am now past that point; and being quickened by your most elegant and poetical com-

²⁵ 'Life,' i. 25.

²⁶ *Diary*, iii. 443. See also Ellis, *Historical Inquiries respecting the Character of Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon*, 1827, pp. 28-46.

²⁷ *Rebellion*, i. 157, 158; ii. 100-106, iii. 204, 228; vii. 82, 409.

²⁸ *Ibid.* vi. 90, 251, 283; vii. 109, 132, 215.

memoration of him, and from hints there thinking it necessary to say somewhat for his vindication in such particulars as may possibly have made impression in good men, it may be I have insisted longer upon the argument than may be agreeable to the rules to be observed in such a work, though it be not much longer than Livy is in recollecting the virtues of one of the Scipios after his death. I wish it were with you, that you might read it; for if you thought it disproportionable for the place where it is I could be willingly diverted to make it a piece by itself and enlarge it into the whole size of his 'Life;' and in that way it would be sooner communicated to the world. And you know Tacitus published his *Life of Julius Agricola* before either of his *Annals* or his *History*.²⁹

In Clarendon's second exile, when he set to work to write his autobiography, he developed and amplified the personal element in the story of his times. Many contemporaries whose character he had sketched in a line or two in the original 'History' are drawn at full length in the 'Life.' In the 'History,' for instance, Lenthall, when chosen speaker, had been briefly described as 'a lawyer of good practice and no ill affections, but a very weak man, and unequal to such a task.' In the 'Life' this is represented by fourteen lines, in which Lenthall is much more severely handled, and accused of timorousness and avarice.³⁰ In the 'History' Clarendon had devoted eighteen or twenty lines to a catalogue of the popular leaders in the two houses, saying, 'It will not be amiss to take a view of the persons by whose arts and interests the rest were disposed.' In the 'Life' he inserts the long description of their characters, which now fills eleven sections of the *History of the Rebellion*.³¹ Just in the same way in his account of Edgehill in the 'Life' Clarendon added long characters of the notable persons slain instead of confining himself to commemorating them more briefly.³²

Besides these the 'Life' contains characters of a number of persons who were not even briefly described in the 'History.' 'We will take a survey of that great person the duke of Buckingham,' says Clarendon, just after relating his own recovery from small-pox; and thereupon follows a digression on Buckingham's character, on the Spanish marriage treaty, and on the duke's assassination by Felton.³³ The author tells us that he lamented Buckingham's death at the time, 'and endeavoured to vindicate him from some libels and reproaches which were vented after his death.'³⁴ The death of that omnipotent favourite and the personal changes which

²⁹ 14 Dec. 1647; *Clarendon State Papers*, ii. 386; cf. *ibid.* ii. 350.

³⁰ *Rebellion*, iii. 2, and Dr. Macray's note to iii. 1.

³¹ *Ibid.* iii. 24-85, and Dr. Macray's note to iii. 55.

³² *Ibid.* vi. 89-98, and notes to 88 and 93.

³³ *Ibid.* i. 13-98.

³⁴ *Ibid.* i. 94. Clarendon refers to the account of Buckingham printed in *Reliquiae Wottonianae* (ed. 1685, p. 85), entitled *The Difference and Disparity between the Estate and Condition of George, Duke of Buckingham, and Robert, Earl of Essex*.

resulted afford opportunity for another digression. We are given, therefore, 'a prospect of the constitution of the court after that bright star was shot out of the horizon, who were the chief ministers that had the principal management of affairs in church and state; and how equal their faculties and qualifications were for those high transactions.' Then follow characters of Coventry, Portland, and others, and in the same way the mention of the king's journey to Scotland gives occasion for another digression on the characters of the two archbishops, Abbott and Laud.³⁵ To conclude, throughout the first book of the published *History of the Rebellion* the portraits of persons are taken from the 'Life,' just as the dissertations on politics are from the 'History.'

At several other points in his autobiography Clarendon halts to insert digressions upon the characters of his friends or acquaintances. The men he knew during his early life in London, whether men of letters, such as Ben Jonson, Selden, Cotton, Carew, and May, or divines, such as Chillingworth, Hales, and Sheldon, are one after another depicted, and there is an account of the early life of Falkland, which supplements that which had been already written on the occasion of his death.³⁶ When Hyde has occasion to mention his own appointment as chancellor of the exchequer he makes it an excuse for another series of experiments in character-painting.

We shall set down the state of the court and the state of the kingdom at this time, the names of those privy councillors who attended the king or were in his service, and the names of those who were likewise of the council, but stayed and acted with the parliament against the king.

Portraits of twelve royalists and nine parliamentarians follow.³⁷

It is evident that the taste for analysing and depicting character had grown upon Clarendon since the days when he wrote the original 'History.' He now inserted characters not merely when the incidents of the narration demanded but whenever he could find a pretext for indulging his predilection for that particular kind of composition. Comparing the characters in the 'Life' with those in the 'History,' those written later are more elaborate and more epigrammatic than the earlier ones; there is more striving after literary effect visible. They are ornaments introduced to diversify and decorate the plain, straightforward story of events. One curious proof of the attraction which character-drawing possessed for Clarendon is afforded by the fact that he wrote several independent pieces of the kind, which are not included in either the 'History' or the 'Life.' At Montpellier in April 1669, just after he had completed the first part of his own autobiography, he suspended the progress of that work in order to put together three biographical sketches of the

³⁵ *Rebellion*, i. 95-146, 185-215.

³⁶ 'Life,' i. 26-60.

³⁷ *Rebellion*, vi. 382-411.

earl of Bristol, Lord Berkeley, and Lord Arlington. All three were his enemies. Bristol had impeached him in 1663, though without success, and Arlington had been the chief agent in his overthrow in 1667. Berkeley had once been his friend, but had become an enemy when his demand for the mastership of the court of wards was opposed by Hyde. Clarendon sat down to dissect the characters of his enemies as an agreeable literary exercise, and apparently without any other object than the gratification of his feelings and the trial of his skill. Apparently he had no idea of publishing any of these productions, for although a small part of one of them was inserted in the *History of the Rebellion*,²⁸ and a few phrases from another in the 'Continuation' of the 'Life,' the bitterest epigrams they contained were left to slumber amongst his manuscripts.²⁹

Having completed our examination of the chief characteristics of the 'Life' as compared with the 'History,' it is necessary to consider the relative trustworthiness of the two narratives from which the *History of the Rebellion* is derived. In order to determine the trustworthiness of the 'Life' we must inquire first what the conditions were under which it was written. Clarendon was born on 18 Feb. 1608-9, and the first page of his autobiography is dated 23 July 1668. He was, therefore, nearly sixty years of age when he began to write it, and his memory of past events was impaired not merely by the lapse of time but by the failing health of which he often complains. In Jersey when he was writing his 'History' he had around him some of the men whose acts he set out to relate, and he was in constant correspondence with others. And, quite apart from what he might learn in familiar intercourse with his friends, he had a certain amount of documentary evidence to help his memory, though much less than he desired or needed. In his second exile at Montpellier and Moulins he had none of these aids. Clarendon had accumulated a great collection of papers which are of permanent value to the historian of the age in which he lived, but he had brought none of them with him to France. His flight had been unpremeditated and unprepared. Confident in his own integrity he had no thought of refusing to face the accusations brought against him in parliament, and disregarded many hints that it would be best for him to leave England of his own accord. On 29 Nov. 1667 Charles II, who had already through different emissaries suggested that the accused minister should withdraw himself beyond the seas, paid a visit to the duke of York, and told him bluntly to 'advise the chancellor to be gone.' Upon this the duke

²⁸ *Rebellion*, x. 13-20.

²⁹ *Clarendon State Papers*, p. 111; 'Supplement,' pp. li-lxxxi. The account of Digby fills 23 pages folio, that of Berkeley 7, that of Bennett 8½. The original is the Clarendon MS. 112. Digby's character is dated at the end April 1669; the others are undated.

sent the bishop of Winchester to Clarendon with the message 'that it was absolutely necessary for him speedily to be gone.' Clarendon embarked for Calais the same night, and, in the hurry of the sudden departure, neither thought of encumbering himself with his papers, nor had time to select from the mass he left behind.

During the first few months of his exile Clarendon did not feel the loss of his papers. He was too ill to write anything, and he was driven from place to place, uncertain whether he would be allowed to remain in France, or in what part of the country he would be permitted to pass his banishment. As soon as his health grew better he betook himself again to the literary occupations which had been the solace of his earlier exile. He wrote home for papers, but those which were sent him were, as he tells us, not the papers he wanted.

When . . . I began to discern some hope of health and repose I thought of preparing some diet for my mind that might recover it to the sobriety and method of thinking which, after any notable distraction, is a preparative not easily made. And in order thereunto I writ to one of you to transmit me a case of papers, in which there was some rough drafts and imperfect conceptions upon several arguments, which I had a purpose to polish when I should find myself in such a place as I might confidently reside in ; and I was in no such place till I came hither to Montpellier. . . . Now I begun to find myself vacant for my own recollections, God having restored me to a good degree of health, and thought to examine those papers which I had sent to you for, and which you had sent to me in a trunk, that till then I had not looked into ; but I found that I had either mistaken my directions, or you in the execution of them, for the case you sent me was not that which I desired, but another which contained many loose papers, which I wondered how they were got together, nor can to this day ever call to mind that I did ever put them there ; but do conclude that they might by chance be all before me, and that being suddenly called away, or some persons coming suddenly in upon me, I might put them all together into that *porte-feuille* in which they were sent to me.⁴⁰

Among these papers were a series of meditations on the Psalms, begun at Jersey, 26 Dec. 1647, taken up again at Madrid, 18 Feb. 1650, and at Antwerp, 16 July 1651. These he now resumed and continued, setting aside a certain portion of each day for this pious duty.

In sending for papers, however, Clarendon had in his mind a definite practical purpose, which he now had to carry out deprived of their assistance. His immediate aim was to vindicate himself from the charges upon which the house of commons had based their impeachment of high treason against him, and this answer was intended to be published to the world at a convenient season. He undertook this task, as he complains, under the gravest disadvantages.

⁴⁰ Clarendon's *Tracts*, p. 378, Preface to *Meditations on the Psalms*.

In order to this so necessary vindication of my integrity and honour I can only take notice of the printed paper of my charge, all other correspondence and communication being so strictly inhibited to all kinds of men to hold any commerce with me, except my children and menial servants, who have only liberty to write to me of my own domestic affairs, and the letters they write being to be first communicated to one of the secretaries of state.⁴¹

Under precisely the same difficulties Clarendon began to write the account of his own life, which, as we have seen, was meant to be a private vindication for the benefit of his own children. He commenced the 'Life' on 23 July 1668 and the 'Vindication' on 24 July. He concluded the latter with the words: 'I have now, according as my memory hath been able to supply (for I have not any paper or note by me for assistance), answered every particular charge against me.' The 'Life' took a much longer time to complete, but, like the 'Vindication,' it was written entirely from memory, and in more than one passage in the work he complains of the absence of his papers.

By November 1669 Clarendon had completed the third part of the 'Life,' which closed with his parting from the king in March 1645.⁴² He had now to relate what occurred during his attendance on Prince Charles in the west as one of the council entrusted with the direction of the prince. Part iv. of the 'Life' was designed to contain an account of affairs in the west during the rest of 1645, and of the reasons which led the prince to take refuge in Scilly, to remove from Scilly to Jersey, and finally to embark for France. But Clarendon felt at once the want of the detailed narrative which he had drawn up in Jersey in June 1646 for the purpose of vindicating the prince's councillors. Till he should succeed in obtaining that narrative he was obliged to content himself with setting down the heads of his intended story, and sketching an outline which he hoped one day to be able to fill in. 'A very particular memorial of all material affairs in the west,' he tells us, 'is contained in papers orderly and methodically set down, which papers and relations are not now at hand, but are safe and will easily be found.' He concludes his summary by saying: 'All these particulars are so exactly remembered in those papers, remaining in a cabinet easy to be found, that they will quickly be put into a method, and contain enough to be inserted in the fourth part of this relation.'⁴³ So again, a few months later, when Clarendon

⁴¹ Clarendon's *Tracts*, p. 2; cf. 'Continuation' of the 'Life,' section 1209.

⁴² Part i. was written between 23 July 1668 and 27 March 1669; part ii. was finished 24 July 1669, part iii. 6 Nov. 1669. The fourth part, which mainly consists of heads, is dated at the end 9 Nov. 1669, and closes with the prince's embarkation for France. The whole 'Life' down to the Restoration was completed on 1 Aug. 1670. The 'Continuation,' dealing with the reign of Charles II, was not begun till 8 June 1672.

⁴³ 'Life,' ed. 1857, i. 200-1, 204.

undertook to describe his share in events during the year 1649, he mentioned once more the documents left behind in England.

All that passed at the Hague, both with the states and the Scots, is more particularly contained in papers and memorials which will be found in the hair cabinet,⁴⁴ out of which anything that is material may be added or altered; as also the names of all the ministers at that time in Madrid are in a paper book that stands in the shop.⁴⁵

Even without these statements it would be easy to prove from internal evidence that Clarendon wrote the 'Life' without the assistance of his papers.⁴⁶ He had not, we at once perceive, Sir Edward Walker's narrative of the campaign of 1644. In that narrative there are long, detailed, and accurate accounts of the battle of Cropredy Bridge and of Colonel Gage's relief of Basing. In the 'Life' Clarendon inserted accounts of both these events, which are not only inaccurate but differ in many details from Walker's version. It is clear that he was not then in possession of the narrative in question.⁴⁷ A comparison of the 'History' and the 'Life' proves in the same way that Clarendon had not the earlier work before his eyes when he wrote the later; for the original 'History' is throughout much more accurate than the 'Life,' because it was written when the events related were much fresher in the author's memory, and because in the one case he had some documentary assistance and in the other none. Facts which are wrongly stated in the 'Life' had been in very many cases correctly stated in the original 'History.' For instance, in the 'Life' Clarendon says that Charles I set up his standard at Nottingham on 25 August 1642, whereas in the 'History' he had said 22 August, which was the correct date. There is the same discrepancy in Clarendon's two versions of several important episodes. In the original 'History' Clarendon gives a comparatively brief account of the short parliament of 1640; in the 'Life' there is a very much longer one, which in the text of the *History of the Rebellion* was finally substituted

⁴⁴ Note to manuscript of 'Life,' p. 401; quoted by Dr. Macray, *Rebellion*, xii. 99, note. A list of manuscripts and papers belonging to Lord Hyde, which had been at Cornbury House and were removed thence to Cassiobury, begins with 'a brown hair trunk containing the manuscript Life of Edward, Earl of Clarendon, in his own handwriting.' Perhaps this was Clarendon's 'hair cabinet' (Lewis, *Portraits from the Clarendon Gallery*, Introd. p. 76, note).

⁴⁵ The paper book referred to is no doubt the *Journal of the Embassy to Spain*, by William Edgeman, Clarendon's secretary there, which is now Clarendon MS. 187.

⁴⁶ As soon as the *Clarendon State Papers* were published careful readers were struck by the discrepancies between the facts they contained and the facts stated in the *History of the Rebellion*. 'Pray,' wrote Walpole to Gray, 'turn to the new *State Papers*, from which, it is said, he composed his *History*. You will find they are the papers from which he did not compose his *History*' (*Letters*, ed. Wright, v. 88).

⁴⁷ The passages of the 'Life' referred to were for the first time printed by Dr. Macray as notes to sections 73 and 123 of book viii. of the *History of the Rebellion*. The accounts of those events given in sections 63-70 and 123-30 of the text of the same book were written after consulting Walker.

for the earlier version. This second narrative is full of errors. Mr. Gardiner criticises it as follows:—

Clarendon's account of this session is really worthless. . . . His account of the parliament is so inaccurate that I dare not trust his narrative of the debate. His memory only served to show the figure of Vane as frustrating an agreement which but for Vane's delinquencies would have been brought about by himself. . . . By entirely omitting the question of the military charges Clarendon reduces the whole affair to a personal question.⁴⁸

Now, as Ranke has pointed out, the original narrative was much more accurate than the later one. It blamed Vane more than was fair for the dissolution, but made his share in the result less important. It stated the point at issue in the debate on the king's message more clearly, and gave the date of the debate more accurately. Ranke rightly concludes that the later narrative was composed without the earlier one being consulted, and probably composed merely from memory without any external assistance.⁴⁹

To take another instance, in the 'Life' Clarendon describes Strafford as present in the house of lords when Pym brought up the impeachment, and says that Strafford obtained leave to make a speech in his defence, giving the substance of the speech. Now we know from the contemporary evidence of Baillie and D'Ewes that the earl was not in the house, but had to be sent for, and that he tried to speak, but was not allowed to do so. In the original 'History' the facts are correctly stated: we are told that the earl came into the house just after the messenger of the commons retired, was commanded to withdraw, brought to the bar, and committed.⁵⁰

In the same way the two narratives of the 'Grand Remonstrance' disagree. That printed in the text of the *History of the Rebellion* is taken from the 'Life.' It is full of errors and misstatements, which Mr. Forster in his monograph on the 'Grand Remonstrance' points out at great length and with great acrimony. The narrative of the original 'History' was briefer, less detailed, and more accurate. For instance, in the later version it is said that the 'Remonstrance' was carried by only nine votes, while in the earlier version it is correctly stated that the number was eleven.⁵¹ In the later version Clarendon says that it was Hampden who moved that the 'Remonstrance' should be printed; in the earlier he mentions the motion, but not the mover; in reality it was moved by an obscure member named Peard.⁵² One more instance will suffice. In the account of 'The Incident' standing in the published *History of the Rebellion* Clarendon describes Montrose as 'frankly undertaking' to assassi-

⁴⁸ *History of England*, ix. 118.

⁴⁹ Ranke, *History of England* (Engl. transl.), vi. 11.

⁵⁰ *Rebellion*, iii. 11, and Dr. Macray's note to iii. 1.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* iv. 52, and Dr. Macray's note to iv. 74.

⁵² *Ibid.* iv. 52.

nate Hamilton and Argyle. This charge has caused some searchings of heart amongst the biographers of Montrose. But the passage in which the charge is made comes from the 'Life,' and in the account of the same episode given in the original 'History' no charge was made.⁵³ There can be no doubt that the charge is absolutely groundless. Mr. Gardiner comments upon the matter as follows:—

The story as told by Clarendon originally is a plain, straightforward narrative, fitting in very well with what we know of the matter from other sources. Twenty years later Clarendon substituted another story, and told how Montrose offered to commit murder. Such a change would be of value if he had access to fresh evidence. But, as all that he knew must have been derived either from Charles or Montrose, there can have been no fresh evidence. My explanation would be that he had a vague recollection of hearing that Crawford had offered to kill Hamilton and Argyle, and that, with his usual habit of blundering, he substituted Montrose for Crawford.⁵⁴

All these examples, which might be multiplied if it were necessary, prove conclusively that the 'Life' is much less trustworthy than the original 'History.'⁵⁵ In estimating, therefore, the credibility of any statement made in the *History of the Rebellion*, the first thing needed is to inquire whether the passage in question is derived from the 'Life' or the 'History.' Whenever there are two accounts of the same event they should be carefully compared, and the presumption is always in favour of the earlier version. There are, however, many cases in which such a comparison is not possible; incidents are related in the 'Life' which are omitted in the 'History,' and the earlier narrative ends in March 1644, while the later one is continued down to 1660. In dealing with those parts of the 'Life' for which no parallel version exists it is always necessary to bear in mind the inexactness of Clarendon's memory, and the fact that he wrote the 'Life' without the aid of documents. This consideration vindicates his honesty. Had he written the 'Life' with the original 'History' before him, it would not have been possible to explain the discrepancies except by supposing that he wished to misrepresent what really happened, or sought to exaggerate his share in events by consciously writing what he knew to be untrue. As it is, the misstatements and errors which an examination of the 'Life' reveals are plainly due to a failing memory, a memory that was confused, inexact, and imaginative.

C. H. FIRTH.

⁵³ *Rebellion*, iv. 20, and Dr. Macray's note to iv. 15.

⁵⁴ Gardiner, *History of England*, x. 28.

⁵⁵ 'Have you read my lord Clarendon's "Life"?' writes Horace Walpole to George Montagu in July 1769, when it first appeared. 'I am enchanted with it; 'tis very incorrect, but I think more entertaining than his "History." It makes me quite out of humour with other memoirs.' In another letter Walpole criticises it more in detail (*Letters of Horace Walpole*, ed. Wright, iii. 238, 273).