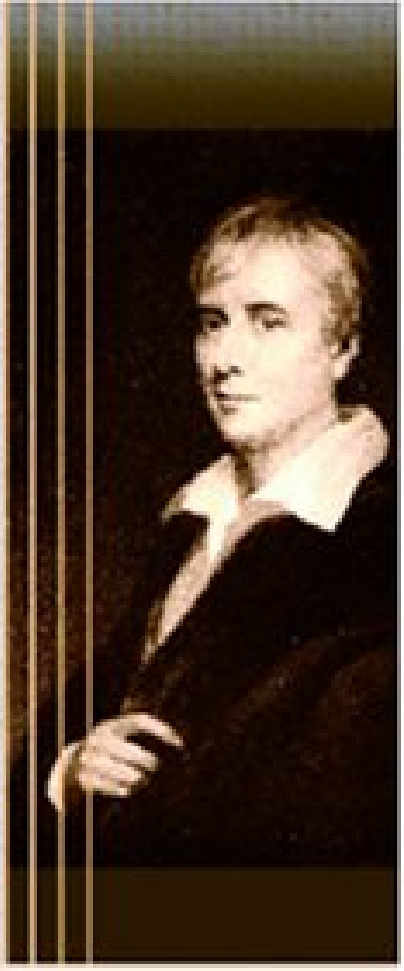
Herbert G. JENKINS



THE LIFE OF GEORGE BORROW

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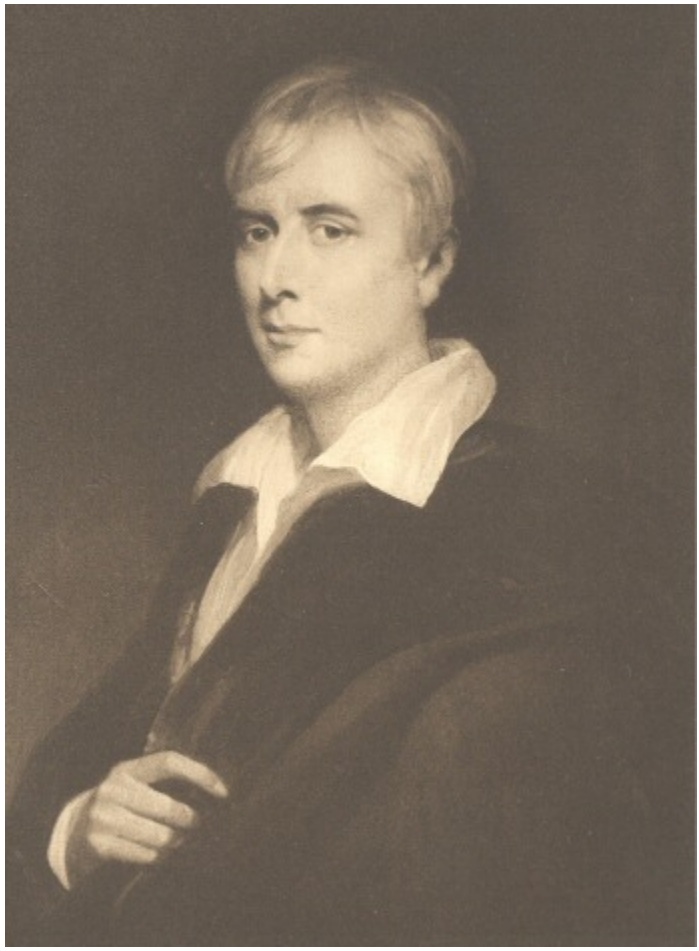
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THE LIFE OF
GEORGE BORROW

COMPILED FROM UNPUBLISHED
OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS, HIS
WORKS, CORRESPONDENCE, ETC.

BY HERBERT JENKINS

WITH A FRONTISPIECE IN PHOTOGRAVURE, AND
TWELVE OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.
1912

TO
JOHN MURRARY THE FOURTH

IN GRATEFUL RECOLLECTION OF THE KEEN INTEREST
HE HAS SHOWN IN THE WRITING OF THE LIFE OF
A MAN WHOM HE WELL REMEMBERS AND MUCH ADMIRES
THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR

PREFACE

DURING the whole of Borrow's manhood there was probably only one period when he was unquestionably happy in his work and content with his surroundings. He may almost be said to have concentrated into the seven years (1833–1840) that he was employed by the British and Foreign Bible Society in Russia, Portugal and Spain, a lifetime's energy and resource. From an unknown hack-writer, who hawked about unsaleable translations of Welsh and Danish bards, a travelling tinker and a vagabond Ulysses, he became a person of considerable importance. His name was acclaimed with praise and enthusiasm at Bible meetings from one end of the country to the other. He developed an astonishing aptitude for affairs, a tireless energy, and a diplomatic resourcefulness that aroused silent wonder in those who had hitherto regarded him as a failure. His illegal imprisonment in Madrid nearly brought about a diplomatic rupture between Great Britain and Spain, and later his missionary work in the Peninsula was referred to by Sir Robert Peel in the House of Commons as an instance of what could be achieved by courage and determination in the face of great difficulties.

Those seven rich and productive years realised to the full the strange talents and unsuspected abilities of George Borrow's unique character. He himself referred to the period spent in Spain as the "five happiest years" of his life. When, however, his life came to be written by Dr Knapp, than whom no biographer has approved himself more loyal or enthusiastic, it was found that the records of that period were not accessible. The letters that he had addressed to the Bible Society had been mislaid. These came to light shortly after the publication of Dr Knapp's work, and type-written copies were

placed at my disposal by the General Committee long before they were given to the public in volume form.

A systematic search at the Public Record Office has revealed a wealth of unpublished documents, including a lengthy letter from Borrow relating to his imprisonment at Seville in 1839. From other sources much valuable information and many interesting anecdotes have been obtained, and through the courtesy of their possessor a number of unpublished Borrow letters are either printed in their entirety or are quoted from in this volume.

My thanks are due in particular to the Committee of British and Foreign Bible Society for placing at my disposal the copies of the Borrow Letters, and also for permission to reproduce the interesting silhouette of the Rev. Andrew Brandram, and to the Rev. T. H. Darlow, M.A. (Literary Superintendent), whose uniform kindness and desire to assist me I find it impossible adequately to acknowledge. My thanks are also due to the Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Grey, M.P., for permission to examine the despatches from the British Embassy at Madrid at the Record Office, and the Registers of Passports at the Foreign Office, and to Mr F. H. Bowring (son of Sir John Bowring), Mr Wilfrid J. Bowring (who has placed at my disposal a number of letters from Borrow to his grandfather), Mr R. W. Brant, Mr Ernest H. Caddie, Mr William Canton, Mr S. D. Charles, an ardent Borrovian from whom I have received much kindness and many valuable suggestions, Mr A. I. Dasent, the editors of *The Athenæum* and *The Bookman*, Mr Thomas Hake, Mr D. B. Hill of Mattishall, Norfolk, Mr James Hooper, Mr W. F. T. Jarrold (for permission to reproduce the hitherto unpublished portrait of Borrow painted by his brother), Dr F. G. Kenyon,

C.B., Mr F. A. Mumby, Mr George Porter of Denbigh (for interesting particulars about Borrow's first visit to Wales), Mr Theodore Rossi, Mr Theodore Watts-Dunton, Mr Thomas Vade-Walpole, who have all responded to my appeal for help with great willingness.

To one friend, who elects to be nameless, I am deeply grateful for many valuable suggestions and much help; but above all for the keen interest he has taken in a work which he first encouraged me to write. To her who gave so plentifully of her leisure in transcribing documents at the Record Office and in research work at the British Museum and elsewhere, I am indebted beyond all possibility of acknowledgment. To no one more than to Mr John Murray are my acknowledgments due for his unfailing kindness, patience and assistance. It is no exaggeration to state that but for his aid and encouragement this book could not have been written.

HERBERT JENKINS.

January, 1912.

CHAPTER I:
1678–MAY 1816

ON 28th July 1783 was held the annual fair at Menheniot, and for miles round the country folk flocked into the little Cornish village to join in the

festivities. Among the throng was a strong contingent of young men from Liskeard, a town three miles distant, between whom and the youth of Menheniot an ancient feud existed. In days when the bruisers of England were national heroes, and a fight was a fitting incident of a day's revelry, the very presence of their rivals was a sufficient challenge to the chivalry of Menheniot, and a contest became inevitable. Some unrecorded incident was accepted by both parties as a sufficient cause for battle, and the two factions were soon fighting furiously midst collapsing stalls and tumbled merchandise. Women shrieked and fainted, men shouted and struck out grimly, whilst the stall-holders, in a frenzy of grief and despair, wrung their hands helplessly as they saw their goods being trampled to ruin beneath the feet of the contestants.

Slowly the men of Liskeard were borne back by their more numerous opponents. They wavered, and just as defeat seemed inevitable, there arrived upon the scene a young man who, on seeing his townsmen in danger of being beaten, placed himself at their head and charged down upon the enemy, forcing them back by the impetuosity of his attack.

The new arrival was a man of fine physique, above the medium height and a magnificent fighter, who, later in life, was to achieve something of which a Mendoza or a Belcher might have been proud. He fought strongly and silently, inspiring his fellow townsmen by his example. The new leader had entirely turned the tide of battle, but just as the defeat of the men of Menheniot seemed certain, a diversion was created by the arrival of the local constables. Now that their own villagers were on the verge of disaster, there was no longer any reason

why they should remain in the background. They made a determined effort to arrest the leader of the Liskeard contingent, and were promptly knocked down by him.

At that moment Mr Edmund Hambley, a much-respected maltster and the headborough of Liskeard, was attracted to the spot. Seeing in the person of the outrageous leader of the battle one of his own apprentices, he stepped forward and threatened him with arrest. Goaded to desperation by the scornful attitude of the young man, the master-maltster laid hands upon him, and instantly shared the fate of the constables. With great courage and determination the headborough rose to his feet and again attempted to enforce his authority, but with no better result. When he picked himself up for a second time, it was to pass from the scene of his humiliation and, incidentally, out of the life of the young man who had defied his authority.

The young apprentice was Thomas Borrow (born December 1758), eighth and posthumous child of John Borrow and of Mary his wife, of Trethinnick (the House on the Hill), in the neighbouring parish of St Cleer, two and a half miles north of Liskeard. At the age of fifteen, Thomas had begun to work upon his father's farm. At nineteen he was apprenticed to Edmund Hambley, maltster, of Liskeard, who five years later, in his official capacity as Constable of the Hundred of Liskeard, was to be publicly defied and twice knocked down by his insubordinate apprentice.

A trifling affair in itself, this village fracas was to have a lasting effect upon the career of Thomas Borrow. He was given to understand by his kinsmen that he need not look to them for sympathy or

assistance in his wrongdoing. The Borrows of Trethinnick could trace back further than the parish registers record (1678). They were godly and law-abiding people, who had stood for the king and lost blood and harvests in his cause. If a son of the house disgrace himself, the responsibility must be his, not theirs. In the opinion of his family, Thomas Borrow had, by his vigorous conduct towards the headborough, who was also his master, placed himself outside the radius of their sympathy. At this period Trethinnick, a farm of some fifty acres in extent, was in the hands of Henry, Thomas' eldest brother, who since his mother's death, ten years before, had assumed the responsibility of launching his youngest brother upon the world.

Fearful of the result of his assault on the headborough, Thomas Borrow left St Cleer with great suddenness, and for five months disappeared entirely. On 29th December he presented himself as a recruit before Captain Morshead, [3] in command of a detachment of the Coldstream Guards, at that time stationed in the duchy.

Thomas Borrow was no stranger to military training. For five years he had been in the Yeomanry Militia, which involved a short annual training. In the regimental records he is credited with five years "former service." He remained for eight years with the Coldstream Guards, most of the time being passed in London barracks. He had no money with which to purchase a commission, and his rise was slow and deliberate. At the end of nine months he was promoted to the rank of corporal, and five years later he became a sergeant. In 1792 he was transferred as Sergeant-Major to the First, or West Norfolk Regiment of Militia, whose headquarters

were at East Dereham in Norfolk.

It was just previous to this transfer that Sergeant Borrow had his famous encounter in Hyde Park with Big Ben Bryan, the champion of England; he “whose skin was brown and dusky as that of a toad.” It was a combat in which “even Wellington or Napoleon would have been heartily glad to cry for quarter ere the lapse of five minutes, and even the Blacksmith Tartar would, perhaps, have shrunk from the opponent with whom, after having had a dispute with him,” Sergeant Borrow “engaged in single combat for one hour, at the end of which time the champions shook hands and retired, each having experienced quite enough of the other’s prowess.” [4a]

At East Dereham Thomas Borrow met Ann [4b] Perfrement, [4c] a strikingly handsome girl of twenty, whose dark eyes first flashed upon him from over the footlights. It was, and still is, the custom for small touring companies to engage their supernumeraries in the towns in which they were playing. The pretty daughter of Farmer Perfrement, whose farm lay about one and a half miles out of East Dereham, was one of those who took occasion to earn a few shillings for pin-money. The Perfrements were of Huguenot stock. On the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, their ancestors had fled from their native town of Caen and taken refuge in East Anglia, there to enjoy the liberty of conscience denied them in their beloved Normandy. Thomas Borrow made the acquaintance of the young probationer, and promptly settled any aspirations that she may have had towards the stage by marrying her. The wedding took place on 11th February 1793 at East Dereham church, best known as the resting-place of

the poet Cowper, Ann being twenty-one and Thomas thirty-four years of age.

For the next seven years Thomas and Ann Borrow moved about with the West Norfolk Militia, which now marched off into Essex, a few months later doubling back again into Norfolk. Then it dived into Kent and for a time hovered about the Cinque Ports, Thomas Borrow in the meantime being promoted to the rank of quarter-master (27th May 1795). It was not until he had completed fourteen years of service that he received a commission. On 27th February 1798 he became Adjutant in the same regiment, a promotion that carried with it a captain's rank.

Whilst at Sandgate Mrs Borrow became acquainted with John Murray, the son of the founder of the publishing house from which, forty-four years later, were to be published the books of her second son, then unborn. The widow of John Murray the First had married in 1795 Lieutenant Henry Paget of the West Norfolk Militia. Years later (27th March 1843) George Borrow wrote to John Murray, Junr., third of the line:

> "I am at present in Norwich with my mother, who has been ill, but is now, thank God, recovering fast. She begs leave to send her kind remembrances to Mr Murray. She knew him at Sandgate in Kent *forty-six* years ago, when he came to see his mother, Mrs P[aget]. She was also acquainted with his sister, Miss Jane Murray, [5] who used to ride on horseback with her on the Downs. She says Captain [*sic*] Paget once

> cooked a dinner for Mrs P. and herself; and sat down to table with his cook's apron on. Is not this funny? Does it not 'beat the Union,' as the Yankees say?"

The first child of the marriage was born in 1800, it is not known exactly when or where. This was John, "the brother some three years older than myself," whose beauty in infancy was so great "that people, especially those of the poorer classes, would follow the nurse who carried him about in order to look at and bless his lovely face," [6a] with its rosy cheeks and smiling, blue-eyed innocence. On one occasion even, an attempt was made to snatch him from the arms of his nurse as she was about to enter a coach. The parents became a prey to anxiety; for the child seems to have possessed many endearing qualities as well as good looks. He was quick and clever, and when the time came for instruction, "he mastered his letters in a few hours, and in a day or two could decipher the names of people on the doors of houses and over the shop windows." [6b] His cleverness increased as he grew up, and later he seems to have become, in the mind of Captain Borrow at least, a standard by which to measure the shortcomings of his younger son George, whom he never was able to understand.

For the next three years, 1800–3, the regiment continued to hover about the home counties. The Peace of Amiens released many of the untried warriors, who had enlisted "until the peace," their adjutant having to find new recruits to fill up the gaps. War broke out again the following year (18th May 1803), and the Great Terror assumed a phase so critical as to subdue almost entirely all thought of

party strife. On 5th July Ann Borrow gave birth to a second son, in the house of her father. At the time Captain Borrow was hunting for recruits in other parts of Norfolk, in order to send them to Colchester, where the regiment was stationed. In due course the child was christened George Henry [7a] at the church of East Dereham, and, within a few weeks of his birth, he received his first experience of the vicissitudes of a soldier's life, by accompanying his father, mother, and brother to Colchester to rejoin the regiment. The whole infancy of George Borrow was spent in the same trailing restlessness. Napoleon was alive and at large, and the West Norfolks seemed doomed eternally to march and countermarch in the threatened area, Sussex, Kent, Essex.

No efforts appear to have been made to steal the younger brother, although "people were in the habit of standing still to look at me, ay, more than at my brother." [7b] Unlike John in about everything that one child could be unlike another, George was a gloomy, introspective creature who considerably puzzled his parents. He compares himself to "a deep, dark lagoon, shaded by black pines, cypresses and yews," [7c] beside which he once paused to contemplate "a beautiful stream . . . sparkling in the sunshine, and . . . tumbling merrily into cascades," [7d] which he likened to his brother.

Slow of comprehension, almost dull-witted, shy of society, sometimes bursting into tears when spoken to, George became "a lover of nooks and retired corners," [7e] where he would sit for hours at a time a prey to "a peculiar heaviness . . . and at times . . . a strange sensation of fear, which occasionally amounted to horror," [7f] for which there was no apparent cause. In time he grew to be as much

disliked as his brother was admired. On one occasion an old Jew pedlar, attracted by the latent intelligence in the smouldering eyes of the silent child, who ignored his questions and continued tracing in the dust with his fingers curious lines, pronounced him “a prophet’s child.” This carried to the mother’s heart a quiet comfort; and reawakened in her hope for the future of her second son.



The early childhood of George Borrow was spent in stirring times. Without, there was the menace of Napoleon’s invasion; within, every effort was being made to meet and repel it. Dumouriez was preparing his great scheme of defence; Captain Thomas Borrow was doing his utmost to collect and drill men to help in carrying it into effect. Sometimes the family were in lodgings; but more frequently in barracks, for reasons of economy. Once, at least, they lived under canvas.

The strange and puzzling child continued to impress

his parents in a manner well-calculated to alarm them. One day, with a cry of delight, he seized a viper that, "like a line of golden light," was moving across the lane in which he was playing. Whilst making no effort to harm the child, who held and regarded it with awe and admiration, the reptile showed its displeasure towards John, his brother, by hissing and raising its head as if to strike. This happened when George was between two and three years of age. At about the same period he ate largely of some poisonous berries, which resulted in "strong convulsions," lasting for several hours. He seems to have been a source of constant anxiety to his parents, who were utterly unable to understand the strange and gloomy child who had been vouchsafed to them by the inscrutable decree of providence.

In the middle of the year 1809 the regiment returned from Essex to Norfolk, marching first to Norwich and thence to other towns in the county. Captain Borrow and his family took up their quarters once more at Dereham. George was now six years old, acutely observant of the things that interested him, but reluctant to proceed with studies which, in his eyes, seemed to have nothing to recommend them. Books possessed no attraction for him, although he knew his alphabet and could even read imperfectly. The acquirement of book-learning he found a dull and dolorous business, to which he was driven only by the threats or entreaties of his parents, who showed some concern lest he should become an "arrant dunce."

The intelligence that the old Jew pedlar had discovered still lay dormant, as if unwilling to manifest itself. The boy loved best "to look upon the heavens, and to bask in the rays of the sun, or to sit

beneath hedgerows and listen to the chirping of the birds, indulging the while in musing and meditation." [9a] Meanwhile John was earning golden opinions for the astonishing progress he continued to make at school, unconsciously throwing into bolder relief the apparent dullness of his younger brother. George, however, was as active mentally as the elder. The one was studying men, the other books. George was absorbing impressions of the things around him: of the quaint old Norfolk town, its "clean but narrow streets branching out from thy modest market-place, with thine old-fashioned houses, with here and there a roof of venerable thatch"; of that exquisite old gentlewoman Lady Fenn, [9b] as she passed to and from her mansion upon some errand of bounty or of mercy, "leaning on her gold-headed cane, whilst the sleek old footman walked at a respectful distance behind." [9c] On Sundays, from the black leather-covered seat in the church-pew, he would contemplate with large-eyed wonder the rector and James Philo his clerk, "as they read their respective portions of the venerable liturgy," sometimes being lulled to sleep by the monotonous drone of their voices.

On fine Sundays there was the evening walk "with my mother and brother—a quiet, sober walk, during which I would not break into a run, even to chase a butterfly, or yet more a honey-bee, being fully convinced of the dread importance of the day which God had hallowed. And how glad I was when I had got over the Sabbath day without having done anything to profane it. And how soundly I slept on the Sabbath night after the toil of being very good throughout the day." [10a]

During these early years there was being

photographed upon the brain of George Borrow a series of impressions which, to the end of his life, remained as vivid as at the moment they were absorbed. What appeared to those around him as dull-witted stupidity was, in reality, mental surfeit. His mind was occupied with other things than books, things that it eagerly took cognisance of, strove to understand and was never to forget. [10b] Hitherto he had taken "no pleasure in books . . . and bade fair to be as arrant a dunce as ever brought the blush of shame into the cheeks of anxious and affectionate parents." [10c] His mind was not ready for them. When the time came there was no question of dullness: he proved an eager and earnest student.

One day an intimate friend of Mrs Borrow's, who was also godmother to John, brought with her a present of a book for each of the two boys, a history of England for the elder and for the younger *Robinson Crusoe*. Instantly George became absorbed.

"The true chord had now been touched . . . Weeks succeeded weeks, months followed months, and the wondrous volume was my only study and principal source of amusement. For hours together I would sit poring over a page till I had become acquainted with the import of every line. My progress, slow enough at first, became by degrees more rapid, till at last, under a 'shoulder of mutton sail,' I found myself cantering before a steady breeze over an ocean of enchantment, so well pleased with my voyage that I cared not how long it might be ere it reached its termination. And it was in this manner that I first took to the paths of knowledge." [11a]

In the spring of 1810 the regiment was ordered to Norman Cross, in Huntingdonshire, situated at the

junction of the Peterborough and Great North Roads. At this spot the Government had caused to be erected in 1796 an extensive prison, covering forty acres of ground, in which to confine some of the prisoners made during the Napoleonic wars. There were sixteen large buildings roofed with red tiles. Each group of four was surrounded by a palisade, whilst another palisade "lofty and of prodigious strength" surrounded the whole. At the time when the West Norfolk Militia arrived there were some six thousand prisoners, who, with their guards, constituted a considerable-sized township. From time to time fresh batches of captives arrived amid a storm of cheers and cries of "Vive L'Empereur!" These were the only incidents in the day's monotony, save when some prisoner strove to evade the hospitality of King George, and was shot for his ingratitude.

Captain Borrow rejoined his regiment at Norman Cross, leaving his family to follow a few days later. At the time the country round Peterborough was under water owing to the recent heavy rains, and at one portion of the journey the whole party had to embark in a species of punt, which was towed by horses "up to the knees in water, and, on coming to blind pools and 'greedy depths,' were not unfrequently swimming." [11b] But they were all old campaigners and accepted such adventures as incidents of a soldier's life.

At Norman Cross George made the acquaintance of an old snake-catcher and herbalist, a circumstance which, insignificant in itself, was to exercise a considerable influence over his whole life. Frequently this curious pair were to be seen tramping the countryside together; a tall, quaint

figure with fur cap and gaiters carrying a leathern bag of wriggling venom, and an eager child with eyes that now burned with interest and intelligence —and the talk of the two was the lore of the viper. When the snake-catcher passed out of the life of his young disciple, he left behind him as a present a tame and fangless viper, which George often carried with him on his walks. It was this well-meaning and inoffensive viper that turned aside the wrath of Gypsy Smith, [12a] and awakened in his heart a superstitious awe and veneration for the child, the *Sap-engro*, who might be a goblin, but who certainly would make a most admirable "clergyman and God Almighty," who read from a book that contained the kind of prayers particularly to his taste—perhaps the greatest encomium ever bestowed upon the immortal *Robinson Crusoe*. Thus it came about that George Borrow was proclaimed brother to the gypsy's son Ambrose, [12b] who as Jasper Petulengro figures so largely in *Lavengro* and *The Romany Rye*, and is credited with that exquisitely phrased pagan glorification of mere existence:

> "Life is sweet, brother . . . There's night and day, brother, both sweet things; sun, moon and stars, brother, all sweet things; there's likewise the wind on the heath. Life is very sweet, brother; who would wish to die?" [13a]

The Borrows were nomads, permitted by God and the king to tarry not over long in any one place. In the following July (1811) the West Norfolks proceeded to Colchester *via* Norfolk, after fifteen months of prison duty and straw-plait destroying. [13b] Captain Borrow betook himself to East

Dereham again to seek for likely recruits. In the meantime George made his first acquaintance with that universal specific for success in life, for correctness of conduct, for soundness of principles—Lilly's Latin Grammar, which to learn by heart was to acquire a virtue that defied evil. The good old pedagogue who advocated Lilly's Latin Grammar as a remedy for all ills, would have traced George Borrow's eventual success in life entirely to the fact that within three years of the date that the solemn exhortation was pronounced the boy had learned Lilly by heart, although without in the least degree comprehending him.

Early in 1812 the regiment turned its head north, and by slow degrees, with occasional counter marchings, continued to progress towards Edinburgh, which was reached thirteen months later (6th April 1813). "With drums beating, colours flying, and a long train of baggage-waggons behind," [13c] the West Norfolk Militia wound its way up the hill to the Castle, the adjutant's family in a chaise forming part of the procession. There in barracks the regiment might rest itself after long and weary marches, and the two young sons of the adjutant be permitted to continue their studies at the High School, without the probability that the morrow would see them on the road to somewhere else.

Whilst at Edinburgh George met with his first experience of racial feeling, which, under uncongenial conditions, develops into race-hatred. He discovered that one English boy, when faced by a throng of young Scots patriots, had best be silent as to the virtues of his own race. He joined in and enjoyed the fights between the "Auld and the New Toon," and incidentally acquired a Scots accent that

somewhat alarmed his loyal father, who had named him after the Hanoverian Georges. Proving himself a good fighter, he earned the praise of his Scots acquaintances, and a general invitation to assist them in their "bickers" with "thae New Toon blackguards."

He loved to climb and clamber over the rocks, peeping into "all manner of strange crypts, crannies, and recesses, where owls nestled and the weasel brought forth her young." He would go out on all-day excursions, enjoying the thrills of clambering up to what appeared to be inaccessible ledges, until eventually he became an expert cragsman. One day he came upon David Haggart [14] sitting on the extreme verge of a precipice, "thinking of Willie Wallace."

For fifteen months the regiment remained at Edinburgh. In the spring of 1814 the waning star of Napoleon had, to all appearances, set, and he was on his way to his miniature kingdom, the Isle of Elba (28th April). Europe commenced to disband its huge armies, Great Britain among the rest. On 21st June the West Norfolks received orders to proceed to Norwich by ship *via* Leith and Great Yarmouth. The Government, relieved of all apprehension of an invasion, had time to think of the personal comfort of the country's defenders. With marked consideration, the orders provided that those who wished might march instead of embarking on the sea. Accordingly Captain Borrow and his family chose the land route. Arrived at Norwich, the regiment was formally disbanded amid great festivity. The officers, at the Maid's Head, the queen of East Anglian inns, and the men in the spacious market-place, drank to the king's health and peace. The regiment was formally mustered out on 19th

July.

The Borrows took up their quarters at the Crown and Angel in St Stephen's Street, a thoroughfare that connects the main roads from Ipswich and Newmarket with the city. George, now eleven years old, had an opportunity of continuing his education at the Norwich Grammar School, whilst his brother proceeded to study drawing and painting with a "little dark man with brown coat . . . and top-boots, whose name will one day be considered the chief ornament of the old town," [15a] and whose works are to "rank among the proudest pictures of England,"—the Norwich painter, "Old Crome." [15b]

Whilst the two boys were thus occupied, Louis XVIII. was endeavouring to reorder his kingdom, and on a little island in the Mediterranean, Napoleon was preparing a bombshell that was to shatter the peace of Europe and send Captain Borrow hurrying hither and thither in search of the men who, a few months before, had left the colours, convinced that a generation of peace was before them.

On 1st March Napoleon was at Cannes; eighteen days later Louis XVIII. fled from Paris. Everywhere there were feverish preparations for war. John Borrow threw aside pencil and brush and was gazetted ensign in his father's regiment (29th May). Europe united against the unexpected and astonishing danger. By the time Captain Borrow had finished his task, however, the crisis was past, Waterloo had been won and Napoleon was on his way to St Helena.

By a happy inspiration it was decided to send the West Norfolks to Ireland, where "disturbances were apprehended" and private stills flourished. On 31st August the regiment, some eight hundred strong,

sailed in two vessels from Harwich for Cork, the passage occupying eight days. The ship that carried the Borrows was old and crazy, constantly missing stays and shipping seas, until it seemed that only by a miracle she escaped "from being dashed upon the foreland."

After a few days' rest at Cork, the "city of contradictions," where wealth and filth jostled one another in the public highways and "boisterous shouts of laughter were heard on every side," the regiment marched off in two divisions for Clonmel in Tipperary. Walking beside his father, who was in command of the second division, and holding on to his stirrup-leather, George found a new country opening out before him. On one occasion, as they were passing through a village of low huts, "that seemed to be inhabited solely by women and children," he went up to an old beldam who sat spinning at the door of one of the hovels and asked for some water. She "appeared to consider for a moment, then tottering into her hut, presently reappeared with a small pipkin of milk, which she offered . . . with a trembling hand." When the lad tendered payment she declined the money, and patted his face, murmuring some unintelligible words. Obviously there was nothing in the boy's nature now that appeared strange to simple-minded folk. Probably the intercourse with other boys at Edinburgh and Norwich had been beneficial in its effect. Keenly interested in everything around him, George fell to speculating as to whether he could learn Irish and speak to the people in their own tongue.

At Clonmel the Borrows lodged with an Orangeman, who had run out of his house as the Adjutant rode by

at the head of his men, and proceeded to welcome him with flowery volubility. On the advice of his host Captain Borrow sent George to a Protestant school, where he met the Irish boy Murtagh, who figures so largely in *Lavengro* and *The Romany Rye*. Murtagh settled any doubts that Borrow may have had as to his ability to acquire Erse, by teaching it to him in exchange for a pack of cards.

On 23rd December 1815 Ensign John Thomas Borrow was promoted to the rank of lieutenant, he being then in his sixteenth year. In the following January, after only a few months' stay, the West Norfolks were moved on to Templemore. It was here that George learned to ride, and that without a saddle, and had awakened in him that "passion for the equine race" that never left him. [17]

The nine months spent in Ireland left an indelible mark upon Borrow's imagination. In later life he repeatedly referred to his knowledge of the country, its people, and their language. In overcoming the difficulties of Erse, he had opened up for himself a larger prospect than was to be enjoyed by a traveller whose first word of greeting or enquiry is uttered in a hated tongue.

On 11th May 1816 the West Norfolk Militia was back again at Norwich. Peace was now finally restored to Europe, and every nation was far too impoverished, both as regards men and money, to nourish any schemes of aggression. Napoleon was safe at St Helena, under the eye of that instinctive gaoler, Sir Hudson Lowe. The army had completed its work and was being disbanded with all possible speed. The turn of the West Norfolk Militia came on 17th June, when they were formally mustered out for the

second time within two years. Three years later their Adjutant was retired upon full-pay—eight shillings a day.

CHAPTER II:
MAY 1816–MARCH 1824

FOR the first time since his marriage, Captain Borrow found himself at liberty to settle down and educate his sons. He had spent much of his life in Norfolk, and he decided to remain there and make Norwich his home. It was a quiet and beautiful old-world city: healthy, picturesque, ancient, and, above all, possessed of a Grammar School, where George could try and gather together the stray threads of education that he had acquired at various times and in various dialects. It was an ideal city for a warrior to take his rest in; but probably what counted most with Captain Borrow was the Grammar School—more than the Norman Cathedral, the grim old Castle that stands guardian-like upon its mound, the fact of its being a garrison town, or even the traditions that surrounded the place. He had two sons who must be appropriately sent out into the world, and Norwich offered facilities for educating both. He accordingly took a small house in Willow Lane, to which access was obtained by a covered passage then called King's, but now Borrow's Court.

During the most nomadic portion of his life, when, with discouraging rapidity, he was moving from

place to place, Captain Borrow never for one moment seems to have forgotten his obligations as a father. Whenever he had been quartered in a town for a few months, he had sought out a school to which to send John and George, notably at Huddersfield and Sheffield. Had he known it, these precautions were unnecessary; for he had two sons who were of what may be called the self-educating type: John, by virtue of the quickness of his parts; George, on account of the strangeness of his interests and his thirst for a knowledge of men and the tongues in which they communicate to each other their ideas. It would be impossible for an unconventional linguist, such as George Borrow was by instinct, to remain uneducated, and it was equally impossible to educate him.

Quite unaware of the trend of his younger son's genius, Captain Borrow obtained for him a free-scholarship at the Grammar School, then under the headmastership of the Rev. Edward Valpy, B.D., whose principal claims to fame are his severity, his having flogged the conqueror of the "Flaming Tinman," and his destruction of the School Records of Admission, which dated back to the Sixteenth Century. Among Borrow's contemporaries at the Grammar School were "Rajah" Brooke of Sarawak (for whose achievements he in after life expressed a profound admiration), Sir Archdale Wilson of Delhi, Colonel Charles Stoddart, Dr James Martineau, and Thomas Borrow Burcham, the London Magistrate.

Borrow was now thirteen, and, it would appear, as determined as ever to evade as much as possible academic learning. He was "far from an industrious boy, fond of idling, and discovered no symptoms by his progress either in Latin or Greek of that

philology, so prominent a feature of his last work (*Lavengro*)." [20] Borrow was an idler merely because his work was uncongenial to him. "Mere idleness is the most disagreeable state of existence, and both mind and body are continually making efforts to escape from it," he wrote in later years concerning this period. He wanted an object in life, an occupation that would prove not wholly uncongenial. That he should dislike the routine of school life was not unnatural; for he had lived quite free from those conventional restraints to which other boys of his age had always been accustomed. Occupation of some sort he must have, if only to keep at a distance that insistent melancholy that seems to have been for ever hovering about him, and the tempter whispered "Languages." [21a] One day chance led him to a bookstall whereon lay a polyglot dictionary, "which pretended to be an easy guide to the acquirement of French, Italian, Low Dutch, and English." He took the two first, and when he had gleaned from the old volume all it had to teach him, he longed for a master. Him he found in the person of an old French *émigré* priest, [21b] a study in snuff-colour and drab with a frill of dubious whiteness, who attended to the accents of a number of boarding-school young ladies. The progress of his pupil so much pleased the old priest that "after six months' tuition, the master would sometimes, on his occasional absences to teach in the country, request his so forward pupil to attend for him his home scholars." [21c] It was M. D'Eterville who uttered the second recorded prophecy concerning George Borrow: "Vous serez un jour un grand philologue, mon cher," he remarked, and heard that his pupil nourished aspirations towards other things than mere philology.

In the study of French, Spanish, and Italian, Borrow spent many hours that other boys would have devoted to pleasure; yet he was by no means a student only. He found time to fish and to shoot, using a condemned, honey-combed musket that bore the date of 1746. His fishing was done in the river Yare, which flowed through the estate of John Joseph Gurney, the Quaker-banker of Earlham Hall, two miles out of Norwich. It was here that he was reproached by the voice, "clear and sonorous as a bell," of the banker himself; not for trespassing, but "for pulling all those fish out of the water, and leaving them to gasp in the sun."

At Harford Bridge, some two miles along the Ipswich Road, lived "the terrible Thurtell," a patron and companion of "the bruisers of England," who taught Borrow to box, and who ultimately ended his own inglorious career by being hanged (9th January 1824) for the murder of Mr Weare, and incidentally figuring in De Quincey's "On Murder Considered As One of the Fine Arts." It was through "the king of flash-men" that Borrow saw his first prize-fight at Eaton, near Norwich.

The passion for horses that came suddenly to Borrow with his first ride upon the cob in Ireland had continued to grow. He had an opportunity of gratifying it at the Norwich Horse Fair, held each Easter under the shadow of the Castle, and famous throughout the country. [22] It was here, in 1818, that Borrow encountered again Ambrose Petulengro, an event that was to exercise a considerable influence upon his life. Mr Petulengro had become the head of his tribe, his father and mother having been transported for passing bad money. He was now a man, with a wife, a child, and also a mother-

in-law, who took a violent dislike to the tall, fair-haired *gorgio*. Borrow's life was much broadened by his intercourse with Mr Petulengro. He was often at the gypsy encampment on Mousehold, a heath just outside Norwich, where, under the tuition of his host, he learned the Romany tongue with such rapidity as to astonish his instructor and earn for him among the gypsies the name of "Lav-engro," word-fellow or word-master. He also boxed with the godlike Tawno Chikno, who in turn pronounced him worthy to bear the name "Cooro-mengro," fist-fellow or fist-master. He frequently accompanied Mr Petulengro to neighbouring fairs and markets, riding one of the gypsy's horses. At other times the two would roam over the gorse-covered Mousehold, discoursing largely about things Romany.

The departure of Mr Petulengro and his retinue from Norwich threw Borrow back once more upon his linguistic studies, his fishing, his shooting, and his smouldering discontent at the constraints of school life. It was probably an endeavour on Borrow's part to make himself more like his gypsy friends that prompted him to stain his face with walnut juice, drawing from the Rev. Edward Valpy the question: "Borrow, are you suffering from jaundice, or is it only dirt?" The gypsies were not the only vagabonds of Borrow's acquaintance at this period. There were the Italian peripatetic vendors of weather-glasses, who had their headquarters at Norwich. In after years he met again more than one of these merchants. They were always glad to see him and revive old memories of the Norwich days.

About this time he saved a boy from drowning in the Yare. [23] It may be this act with which he generously credits his brother John when he says—

> "I have known him dash from a steep bank into a stream in his full dress, and pull out a man who was drowning; yet there were twenty others bathing in the water, who might have saved him by putting out a hand, without inconvenience to themselves, which, however, they did not do, but stared with stupid surprise at the drowning one's struggles." [24]

From the first Borrow had shown a strong distaste for the humdrum routine of school life. In a thousand ways he was different from his fellows. He had been accustomed to meet strange and, to him, deeply interesting people. Now he was bidden adopt a course of life against which his whole nature rebelled. It was impossible. He missed the atmosphere of vagabondage that had inspired and stimulated his early boyhood.

The crisis came at last. There was only one way to avoid the awkward and distasteful destiny that was being forced upon him. He entered into a conspiracy with three school-fellows, all younger than himself, to make a dash for a life that should offer wider opportunities to their adventurous natures. The plan was to tramp to Great Yarmouth and there excavate on the seashore caves for their habitation. From these headquarters they would make foraging expeditions, and live on what they could extract from the surrounding country, either by force or by the terror that they inspired. One morning the four started on their twenty-mile trudge to the sea; but, when only a few miles out, one of their number became fearful and turned back.

Encouraged by their leader, the others continued on their way. The father of the other two boys appears to have got wind of the project and posted after them in a chaise. He came up with them at Acle, about eleven miles from Norwich. When they were first seen, Borrow was striving to hearten his fellow buccaneers, who were tired and dispirited after their long walk. The three were unceremoniously bundled into the chaise and returned to their homes and, subsequently, to the wrath of the Rev. Edward Valpy. [25a]

The names of the three confederates were John Dalrymple (whose heart failed him) and Theodosius and Francis Purland, sons of a Norwich chemist. The Purlands are credited with robbing "the paternal till," while Dalrymple confined himself to the less compromising duty of "gathering horse-pistols and potatoes." If the boys robbed their father's till, why did they beg? In the ballad entitled *The Wandering Children and the Benevolent Gentleman*, Borrow depicts the "eldest child" as begging for charity for these hungry children, who have had "no breakfast, save the haws." This does not seem to suggest that the boys were in the possession of money. Again, it was the father of one of their schoolfellows who was responsible for their capture, according to Dr Knapp, by asking them to dinner whilst he despatched a messenger to the Rev. Edward Valpy. The story of Borrow's being "horsed" on Dr Martineau's back is apocryphal. Martineau himself denied it. [25b]

There is no record of how Captain Borrow received the news of his younger son's breach of discipline. It probably reminded him that the boy was now fifteen and it was time to think about his future. The old soldier was puzzled. Not only had his second son

shown a great partiality for acquiring Continental tongues, but he had learned Irish, and Captain Borrow seemed to think that by learning the language of Papists and rebels, his son had sullied the family honour. To his father's way of thinking, this accomplishment seemed to bar him from most things that were at one and the same time honourable and desirable.

The boy's own inclinations pointed to the army; but Captain Borrow had apparently seen too much of the army in war time, and the slowness of promotion, to think of it as offering a career suitable to his son, now that there was every prospect of a prolonged peace. He thought of the church as an alternative; but here again that fatal facility the boy had shown in learning Erse seemed to stand out as a barrier. "I have observed the poor lad attentively and really I do not see what to make of him," Captain Borrow is said to have remarked. What could be expected of a lad who would forsake Greek for Irish, or Latin for the barbarous tongue of homeless vagabonds? Certainly not a good churchman. At length it became obvious to the distressed parents that there was only one choice left them—the law.

About this period Borrow fell ill of some nameless and unclassified disease, which defied the wisdom of physicians, who shook their heads gravely by his bedside. An old woman, however, cured him by a decoction prepared from a bitter root. The convalescence was slow and laborious; for the boy's nerves were shattered, and that deep, haunting melancholy, which he first called the "Fear" and afterwards the "Horrors," descended upon him.

On the 30th of March 1819 Borrow was articled for

five years to Simpson & Rackham, solicitors, of Tuck's Court, St Giles, Norwich. [26] He consequently left home to take up his abode at the house of the senior partner in the Upper Close. [27a] Mr William Simpson was a man of considerable importance in the city; for besides being Treasurer of the County, he was Chamberlain and Town Clerk, whilst his wife was famed for her hospitality, in particular her expensive dinners.

With that unerring instinct of contrariety that never seemed to forsake him, Borrow proceeded to learn, not law but Welsh. When the eyes of authority were on him he transcribed Blackstone, but when they were turned away he read and translated the poems of Ab Gwilym. He performed his tasks "as well as could be expected in one who was occupied by so many and busy thoughts of his own."

At the end of Tuck's Court was a house at which was employed a Welsh groom, a queer fellow who soon attracted the notice of Simpson & Rackham's clerks, young gentlemen who were bent on "mis-spending the time which was not legally their own." [27b] They would make audible remarks about the unfortunate and inoffensive Welsh groom, calling out after him "Taffy"—in short, rendering the poor fellow's life a misery with their jibes, until at last, almost distracted, he had come to the determination either to give his master notice or to hang himself, that he might get away from that "nest of parcupines." Borrow saw in the predicament of the Welsh groom the hand of providence. He made a compact with him, that in exchange for lessons in Welsh, he, Borrow, should persuade his fellow clerks to cease their annoyance.

From that time, each Sunday afternoon, the Welsh groom would go to Captain Borrow's house to instruct his son in Welsh pronunciation; for in book Welsh Borrow was stronger than his preceptor. Borrow had learned the language of the bards "chiefly by going through Owen Pugh's version of 'Paradise Lost' twice" with the original by his side. After which "there was very little in Welsh poetry that I could not make out with a little pondering." [28a] This had occupied some three years. The studies with the groom lasted for about twelve months, until he left Norwich with his family. [28b]

Captain Borrow's thoughts were frequently occupied with the future of his younger son, a problem that had by no means been determined by signing the articles that bound him to Simpson & Rackham. The boy was frank and honest and did not scruple to give expression to ideas of his own, and it was these ideas that alarmed his father. Once at the house of Mr Simpson, and before the assembled guests, he told an archdeacon, worth £7000 a year, that the classics were much overvalued, and compared Ab Gwilym with Ovid, to the detriment of the Roman. To Captain Borrow the possession of ideas upon any subject by one so young was in itself a thing to be deplored; but to venture an opinion contrary to that commonly held by men of weight and substance was an unforgivable act of insubordination.

The boy had been sent to Tuck's Court to learn law, and instead he persisted in acquiring languages, and such languages! Welsh, Danish, Arabic, Armenian, Saxon; for these were the tongues with which he occupied himself. None but a perfect mother such as Mrs Borrow could have found excuses for a son who pursued such studies, and her husband pointed out to

her, it is “in the nature of women invariably to take the part of the second born.”

In one of those curiously self-revelatory passages with which his writings abound, Borrow tells how he continued to act as door-keeper long after it had ceased to be part of his duty. As a student of men and a collector of strange characters, it was in keeping with his genius to do so, although he himself was unable to explain why he took pleasure in the task. No one was admitted to the presence of the senior partner who did not first pass the searching scrutiny of his articled clerk. Those who pleased him were admitted to Mr Simpson’s private room; to those who did not he proved himself an almost insuperable obstacle. Unfortunately Borrow’s standards were those of the physiognomist rather than the lawyer; he inverted the whole fabric of professional desirability by admitting the goats and refusing the sheep. He turned away a knight, or a baronet, and admitted a poet, until at last the distressed old gentleman in black, with the philanthropical head, his master, was forced to expostulate and adjure his clerk to judge, not by faces but by clothes, which in reality make the man. Borrow bowed to the ruling of “the prince of English solicitors,” revised his standards and continued to act as keeper of the door.

Mr Simpson seems to have earned Borrow’s thorough regard, no small achievement considering in how much he differed from his illustrious articled-clerk in everything, not excepting humour, of which the delightful, old-world gentleman seems to have had a generous share. He was doubtless puzzled to classify the strange being by whose instrumentality a stream of undesirable people was admitted to his presence,

whilst distinguished clients were sternly and rigorously turned away. He probably smiled at the story of the old yeoman and his wife who, in return for some civility shown to them by Borrow, presented him with an old volume of Danish ballads, which inspired him to learn the language, aided by a Danish Bible. [30a] He was not only "the first solicitor in East Anglia," but "the prince of all English solicitors—for he was a gentleman!" [30b] In another place Borrow refers to him as "my old master . . . who would have died sooner than broken his word. God bless him!" [30c] And yet again as "my ancient master, the gentleman solicitor of East Anglia." [30d]

Borrow was always handsome in everything he did. If he hated a man he hated him, his kith and kin and all who bore his name. His friendship was similarly sweeping, and his regard for William Simpson prompted him to write subsequently of the law as "a profession which abounds with honourable men, and in which I believe there are fewer scamps than in any other. The most honourable men I have ever known have been lawyers; they were men whose word was their bond, and who would have preferred ruin to breaking it." [31a]

Fortunately for Borrow there was at the Norwich Guildhall a valuable library consisting of a large number of ancient folios written in many languages. "Amidst the dust and cobwebs of the Corporation Library" he studied earnestly and, with a fine disregard for a librarian's feelings, annotated some of the volumes, his marginalia existing to this day. One of his favourite works was the *Danica Literatura Antiquissima* of Olaus Wormius, 1636, which inspired him with the idea of adopting the name Olaus, his

subsequent contributions to *The New Magazine* being signed George Olaus Borrow.

Whilst Borrow was striving to learn languages and avoid the law, [31b] the question of his brother's career was seriously occupying the mind of their father. Borrow loved and admired his brother. There is sincerity in all he writes concerning John, and there is something of nobility about the way in which he tells of his father's preference for him. "Who," he asks, "cannot excuse the honest pride of the old man—the stout old man?" [31c]

The Peace had closed to John Borrow the army as a profession, and he had devoted himself assiduously to his art. Under Crome the elder he had made considerable progress, and had exhibited a number of pictures at the yearly exhibitions of the Norwich Society of Artists. He continued to study with Crome until the artist's death (22nd April 1821), when a new master had to be sought. With his father's blessing and £150 he proceeded to London, where he remained for more than a year studying with B. R. Haydon. [32a] Later he went to Paris to copy Old Masters.

About this time Borrow had an opportunity of seeing many of "the bruisers of England." In his veins flowed the blood of the man who had met Big Ben Bryan and survived the encounter undefeated. "Let no one sneer at the bruisers of England," Borrow wrote—"What were the gladiators of Rome, or the bull-fighters of Spain, in its palmiest days, compared to England's bruisers?" [32b] he asks. On 17th July 1820 Edward Painter of Norwich was to meet Thomas Oliver of London for a purse of a hundred guineas. On the Saturday previous (the 15th) the

Norwich hotels began to fill with bruisers and their patrons, and men went their ways anxiously polite to the stranger, lest he turn out to be some champion whom it were dangerous to affront. Thomas Cribb, the champion of England, had come to see the fight, "Teucer Belcher, savage Shelton, . . . the terrible Randall, . . . Bulldog Hudson, . . . fearless Scroggins, . . . Black Richmond, . . . Tom of Bedford," and a host of lesser lights of the "Fancy."

On the Monday, upwards of 20,000 men swept out of the old city towards North Walsham, less than twenty miles distant, among them George Borrow, striding along among the varied stream of men and vehicles (some 2000 in number) to see the great fight, which was to end in the victory of the local man and a terrible storm, as if heaven were thundering its anger against a brutal spectacle. The sportsmen were left to find their way to shelter, Borrow and Mr Petulengro, whom he had encountered just after the fight, with them, talking of dukkeripens (fortunes).

Some time during the year 1820, a Jew named Levy (the Mousha of *Lavengro*), Borrow's instructor in Hebrew, introduced him to William Taylor, [33a] one of the most extraordinary men that Norwich ever produced. In the long-limbed young lawyer's clerk, whose hair was rapidly becoming grey, Taylor showed great interest, and, as an act of friendship, undertook to teach him German. He was gratified by the young man's astonishing progress, and much interested in his remarkable personality. As a result Borrow became a frequent visitor at 21 King Street, Norwich, where Taylor lived and many strange men assembled.

It is doubtful if William Taylor ever found another pupil so apt, or a disciple so enthusiastic among all the "harum-scarum young men" [33b] that he was so fond of taking up and introducing "into the best society the place afforded." [33c] He was much impressed by Borrow's extraordinary memory and power of concentration. Speaking one day of the different degrees of intelligence in men he said:—"I cannot give you a better example to explain my meaning than my two pupils (there was another named Cooke, who was said to be 'a genius in his way'); what I tell Borrow once he ever remembers; whilst to the fellow Cooke I have to repeat the same thing twenty times, often without effect; and it is not from want of memory either, but he will never be a linguist." [33d]

To a correspondent Taylor wrote:—

> "A Norwich young man is construing with me Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*, with the view of translating it for the press. His name is George Henry Borrow, and he has learnt German with extraordinary rapidity; indeed, he has the gift of tongues, and, though not yet eighteen, understands twelve languages—English, Welsh, Erse, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, German, Danish, French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese; he would like to get into the Office for Foreign Affairs, but does not know how." [34a]

This was in 1821; two years later Borrow is said to have "translated with fidelity and elegance from

twenty different languages." [34b] In spite of his later achievements in learning languages, it seems scarcely credible that he acquired eight separate languages in two years, although it must be remembered that with him the learning of a language was to be able to read it after a rather laborious fashion. Taylor, however, uses the words "facility and elegance."



In the autobiographical notes that Borrow supplied to Mr John Longe in 1862 there appears the following passage:—

> "At the expiration of his clerkship he knew little of the law, but he was well versed in languages, being not only a good Greek and Latin scholar, but acquainted with French, Italian, Spanish, all the Celtic and Gothic dialects, and likewise with the peculiar language of the English Romany Chals or gypsies."

At William Taylor's table Borrow met "the most intellectual and talented men of Norwich, as also those of note who visited the city." [34c] Taylor was much interested in young men, into whose minds he did not hesitate to instil his own ideas, ideas that not only earned for him the name of "Godless Billy," but outraged his respectable fellow-citizens as much as did his intemperate habits. "His face was terribly bloated from drink, and he had a look as if his intellect was almost as much decayed as his body," wrote a contemporary. [35a] "Matters grew worse in his old age," says Harriet Martineau, "when his habits of intemperance kept him out of the sight of ladies, and he got round him a set of ignorant and conceited young men, who thought they could set the whole world right by their destructive propensities. One of his chief favourites was George Borrow." [35b] Borrow has given the following convincing picture of Taylor:

> "Methought I was in a small, comfortable room wainscotted with oak; I was seated on one side of a fireplace, close by a table on which were wine and fruit; on the other side of the fire sat a man in a plain suit of brown, with the hair combed

> back from the somewhat high forehead; he had a pipe in his mouth, which for some time he smoked gravely and placidly, without saying a word; at length, after drawing at the pipe for some time rather vigorously, he removed it from his mouth, and emitting an accumulated cloud of smoke, he exclaimed in a slow and measured tone: 'As I was telling you just now, my good chap, I have always been an enemy of humbug.'" [35c]

William Taylor appears to have flattered "the harum-scarum young men" with whom he surrounded himself by talking to them as if they were his intellectual equals. He encouraged them to form their own opinions, in itself a thing scarcely likely to make him popular with either parents or guardians, least of all with discipline-loving Captain Borrow, who declined even to return the salute of his son's friend on the public highway.

Borrow now began to look to the future and speculate as to what his present life would lead to. His cogitations seem to have ended, almost invariably, in a gloomy mist of pessimism and despair—in other words, an attack of the "Horrors." If Mr Petulengro were encamped upon Mousehold, the antidote lay near to hand in his friend's pagan optimism; if, on the other hand, the tents of Egypt were pitched on other soil, there was no remedy, unless perhaps a prize-fight supplied the necessary stimulus to divert his thoughts from their melancholy trend.



Borrow met at the house of his tutor and friend, in July 1821, Dr Bowring [36a] (afterwards Sir John) at a dinner given in his honour. Bowring had recently published *Specimen of Russian Poets*, in recognition of which the Czar (Alexander I.) had presented him with a diamond ring. He had a considerable reputation as a linguist, which naturally attracted Borrow to him. Dr Bowring was told of Borrow's accomplishments, and during the evening took a seat

beside him. Borrow confessed to being “a little frightened at first” of the distinguished man, whom he described as having “a thin weaselly figure, a sallow complexion, a certain obliquity of vision, and a large pair of spectacles.” It would be dangerous to accept entirely the account that Borrow gives of the meeting, [36b] because when that was written he had come to hate and despise the man whom he had begun by regarding with such awe. Bowring appears to have ventilated his views with some freedom, and to have had a rather serious passage of arms with another guest whom he had rudely contradicted. It is very probable that Borrow’s dislike of Bowring prompted him to exaggerate his account of what happened at Taylor’s house that evening.

Whilst Borrow was industriously occupied in collecting vagabonds and imbibing the dangerous beliefs of William Taylor, there sat in an easy-chair in the small front-parlour of the little house in Willow Lane, in a faded regimental coat, a prematurely old man, whose frame still showed signs of the magnificent physique of his vigorous manhood. “Sometimes in prayer, sometimes in meditation, and sometimes in reading the Scriptures,” with his dog beside him, Captain Thomas Borrow, now sixty-five, was preparing for the end that he felt to be approaching. He frequently meditated upon what was to become of his younger son George, who held his father in such awe as to feel ill at ease when alone with him.

One day the inevitable interrogation took place. “What do you propose to do?” and the equally inevitable reply followed, “I really do not know what I shall do.” In the course of a somewhat lengthy cross-examination, Captain Borrow discovered that

his son knew the Armenian tongue, for which he very cunningly strove to enlist his father's interest by telling him that in Armenia was Mount Ararat, whereon the ark rested. Captain Borrow also discovered that his son could not only shoe a horse, but also make the shoes; but, what was most important, he found that George had learned "very little" law. When asked if he thought he could support himself by Armenian or his "other acquirements," the younger man was not very hopeful, and horrified the old soldier by suggesting that if all else failed there was always suicide.

The dying man was thus left to yearn for the return of his elder son, in whom all his hopes lay centred. John appears to have been by no means dutiful to his parents in the matter of letters. For six months he left them unacquainted even with his address in Paris, where he was still copying Old Masters in the Louvre.

After their talk the father and younger son seem to have come to a better understanding. George would frequently read aloud from the Bible, whilst Captain Borrow would tell about his early life. His son "had no idea that he knew and had seen so much; my respect for him increased, and I looked upon him almost with admiration. His anecdotes were in general highly curious; some of them related to people in the highest stations, and to men whose names are closely connected with some of the brightest glories of our native land." [38]

At last John arrived, apparently a little disillusioned with the world; but the coming of his favourite son produced no change for the better in Captain Borrow's health. He was content and happy that God

had granted his wish. There remained nothing now to do but "to bless my little family and go." George learned "that it is possible to feel deeply and yet make no outward sign."

The end came on the morning of 28th February 1824. It was by a strange chance that the old man should die in the arms of his younger son, who had run down on hearing his mother's anguished screams. Borrow has given a dramatic account of his father's last moments:—

> "At the dead hour of night, it might be about two, I was awakened from sleep by a cry which sounded from the room immediately below that in which I slept. I knew the cry, it was the cry of my mother, and I also knew its import; yet I made no effort to rise, for I was for the moment paralysed. Again the cry sounded, yet still I lay motionless—the stupidity of horror was upon me. A third time, and it was then that, by a violent effort bursting the spell which appeared to bind me, I sprang from the bed and rushed downstairs. My mother was running wildly about the room; she had awoke and found my father senseless in the bed by her side. I essayed to raise him, and after a few efforts supported him in the bed in a sitting posture. My brother now rushed in, and snatching a light that was burning, he held it to my father's face. 'The surgeon, the surgeon!' he

cried; then dropping the light, he ran out of the room followed by my mother; I remained alone, supporting the senseless form of my father; the light had been extinguished by the fall, and an almost total darkness reigned in the room. The form pressed heavily against my bosom—at last methought it moved. Yes, I was right, there was a heaving of the breast, and then a gasping. Were those words which I heard? Yes, they were words, low and indistinct at first, and then audible. The mind of the dying man was reverting to former scenes. I heard him mention names which I had often heard him mention before. It was an awful moment; I felt stupified, but I still contrived to support my dying father. There was a pause, again my father spoke: I heard him speak of Minden, and of Meredith, the old Minden sergeant, and then he uttered another name, which at one period of his life was much on his lips, the name of—but this is a solemn moment! There was a deep gasp: I shook, and thought all was over; but I was mistaken—my father moved and revived for a moment; he supported himself in bed without my assistance. I make no doubt that for a moment he was perfectly sensible, and it was then that, clasping his

hands, he uttered another name clearly, distinctly—it was the name of Christ. With that name upon his lips, the brave old soldier sank back upon my bosom, and, with his hands still clasped, yielded up his soul." [39]

CHAPTER III
APRIL 1824–MAY 1825

On 2nd April 1824, George Borrow was cast upon the world of London by the death of his father, "with an exterior shy and cold, under which lurk much curiosity, especially with regard to what is wild and extraordinary, a considerable quantity of energy and industry, and an unconquerable love of independence." [40a]

It had become necessary for him to earn his own livelihood. Captain Borrow's pension had ceased with his death, and the old soldier's savings of a lifetime were barely sufficient to produce an income of a hundred pounds a year for his widow. The provision made in the will for his younger son during his minority would operate only for about four months, as he would be of age in the following July. [40b] The clerkship with Simpson & Rackham would expire at the end of March. Borrow had outlined his ambitions in a letter written on 20th January 1824, when he was ill and wretched, to Roger Kerrison, then in London: "If ever my health mends [this has

reference to a very unpleasant complaint he had contracted], and possibly it may by the time my clerkship is expired, I intend to live in London, write plays, poetry, etc., abuse religion and get myself prosecuted," for he was tired of the "dull and gloomy town." It was therefore with a feeling of relief that, on the evening of 1st April, he took his seat on the top of the London coach, his hopes centred in a small green box that he carried with him. It contained his stock-in-trade as an author: his beloved manuscripts, "closely written over in a singular hand."

Among the bundles of papers were:

> (i.) The Ancient Songs of Denmark, heroic and romantic, translated by himself, with notes philological, critical and historical.
>
> (ii.) The Songs of Ab Gwilym, the Welsh Bard, also translated by himself, with notes critical, philological and historical. [41]
>
> (iii.) A romance in the German style.

In addition to his manuscripts, Borrow had some twenty or thirty pounds, his testimonials, and a letter from William Taylor to Sir Richard Phillips, the publisher, to whose *New Magazine* he had already contributed a number of translations of poems. He had also printed in *The Monthly Magazine* and *The New Monthly Magazine* translations of verse from the German, Swedish, Dutch, Danish and Spanish, and an essay on Danish ballad writing.

On the morning of 2nd April there arrived at 16 Milman Street, Bedford Row, London, W.C.,

> "A lad who twenty tongues can talk,
> And sixty miles a day can walk;

Drink at a draught a pint of rum,
And then be neither sick nor dumb;
Can tune a song and make a verse,
And deeds of Northern kings rehearse;
Who never will forsake his friend
While he his bony fist can bend;
And, though averse to broil and strife,
Will fight a Dutchman with a knife;
O that is just the lad for me,
And such is honest six-foot-three." [42a]

It was through the Kerrisons that Borrow went to 16 Milman Street, where Roger was lodging. His apartments seem to have been dismal enough, consisting of "a small room, up two pair of stairs, in which I was to sit, and another, still smaller, above it, in which I was to sleep." After the first feeling of loneliness had passed, dispelled largely by a bright fire and breakfast, he sallied forth, the contents of the green box under his arm, to present his letter of introduction to Sir Richard Phillips, [42b] in whom centred his hopes of employment.



On arriving at the publisher's house in Tavistock Square, he was immediately shown into Sir Richard's study, where he found "a tall, stout man, about sixty, dressed in a loose morning gown," and with him his confidential clerk Bartlett (the Taggart of *Lavengro*). Sir Richard was at first enthusiastic and cordial, but when he learned from William Taylor's letter that Borrow had come up to earn his livelihood by authorship, his manner underwent a marked change. The bluff, hearty expression gave place to "a sinister glance," and Borrow found that within that loose morning gown there was a second Sir Richard.

He learned two things—first, that Sir Richard Phillips had retired from publishing and had reserved only *The Monthly Magazine*; [43] secondly, that literature was a drug upon the market. With airy self-assertiveness, the ex-publisher dismissed the contents of the green box that Borrow had brought with him, which had already aroused considerable suspicion in the mind of the maid who had admitted him to the publisher's presence.

When he had thoroughly dashed the young author's hopes of employment, Sir Richard informed him of a new publication he had in preparation, *The Universal Review* [*The Oxford Review* of *Lavengro*], which was to support the son of the house and the wife he had married. With a promise that he should become a contributor to the new review, an earnest exhortation to write a story in the style of *The Dairyman's Daughter*, and an invitation to dinner for the following Sunday, the first interview between George Borrow and Sir Richard Phillips ended, and Borrow left the great man's presence to begin his exploration of London, first leaving his manuscripts at Milman Street. During the rest of the day he walked "scarcely less than thirty miles about the big city." It was late when he returned to his lodgings, thoroughly tired, but with a copy of *The Dairyman's Daughter*, for "a well-written tale in the style" of which Sir Richard Phillips "could afford as much as ten pounds." The day had been one of the most eventful in Borrow's life.

On the following Sunday Borrow dined at Tavistock Square, and met Lady Phillips, young Phillips and his bride. He learned that Sir Richard was a vegetarian of twenty years' standing and a total abstainer, although meat and wine were not banished from his

table. When publisher and potential author were left alone, the son having soon followed the ladies into the drawing-room, Borrow heard of Sir Richard's amiable intentions towards him. He was to compile six volumes of the lives and trials of criminals [the *Newgate Lives and Trials* of *Lavengro*], each to contain not less than a thousand pages. [44a] For this work he was to receive the munificent sum of fifty pounds, which was to cover all expenses incurred in the purchase of books, papers and manuscripts necessary to the compilation of the work. This was only one of the employments that the fertile brain of the publisher had schemed for him. He was also to make himself useful in connection with the forthcoming *Universal Review*. "Generally useful, sir—doing whatever is required of you"; for it was not Sir Richard's custom to allow young writers to select their own subjects.

With impressive manner and ponderous diction, Sir Richard Phillips unfolded his philanthropic designs regarding the young writer to whom his words meant a career. He did not end with the appointment of Borrow as general utility writer upon *The Universal Review*; but proceeded to astonish him with the announcement that to him, George Borrow, understanding German in a manner that aroused the "strong admiration" of William Taylor, was to be entrusted the translating into that tongue of Sir Richard Phillips' book of Philosophy. [44b] If translations of Goethe into English were a drug, Sir Richard Phillips' *Proximate Causes* was to prove that neither he nor his book would be a drug in Germany. For this work the remuneration was to be determined by the success of the translation, an arrangement sufficiently vague to ensure eventual disagreement.

When Sir Richard had finished his account of what were his intentions towards his guest, he gave him to understand that the interview was at an end, at the same time intimating how seldom it was that he dealt so generously with a young writer. Borrow then rose from the table and passed out of the house, leaving his host to muse, as was his custom on Sunday afternoons, "on the magnificence of nature and the moral dignity of man."

For the next few weeks Borrow was occupied in searching in out-of-the-way corners for criminal biography. If he flagged, a visit from his philosopher-publisher spurred him on to fresh effort. He received a copy of *Proximate Causes*, with an injunction that he should review it in *The Universal Review*, as well as translate it into German. He was taken to and introduced to the working editor [45a] of the new publication, which was only ostensibly under the control of young Phillips.

In the provision that he should purchase at his own expense all the necessary materials for *Celebrated Trials*, Borrow found a serious tax upon his resources; but a harder thing to bear with patience and good-humour were the frequent visits he received from Sir Richard himself, who showed the keenest possible interest in the progress of the compilation. He had already caused a preliminary announcement to be made [45b] to the effect that:

> "A Selection of the most remarkable Trials and Criminal Causes is printing, in five volumes. [46a] It will include all famous cases, from that of Lord Cobham, in the reign of Henry the Fifth, to that of John

> Thurtell: and those connected with foreign as well as English jurisprudence. Mr Borrow, the editor, has availed himself of all the resources of the English, German, French, and Italian languages; and his work, including from 150 to 200 [46b] of the most interesting cases on record, will appear in October next." [46c]

Sir Richard's visits to Milman Street were always accompanied by numerous suggestions as to criminals whose claims to be included in this literary chamber of horrors were in his, Sir Richard's, opinion unquestionable. The English character of the compilation was soon sacrificed in order to admit notable malefactors of other nationalities, and the drain upon the editor's small capital became greater than ever.

The leisure that he allowed himself, Borrow spent in exploring the city, or in the company of Francis Arden (Ardrey in *Lavengro*), whom he had met by chance in the coffee-room of a hotel. The two appear to have been excellent friends, perhaps because of the dissimilarity of their natures. "He was an Irishman," Borrow explains, "I an Englishman; he fiery, enthusiastic and opened-hearted; I neither fiery, enthusiastic, nor open-hearted; he fond of pleasure and dissipation, I of study and reflection." [46d]

They went to the play together, to dog-fights, gaming-houses, in short saw the sights of London. The arrival of Francis Arden at 16 Milman Street was a signal for books and manuscripts to be thrown aside in favour either of some expedition or an hour

or two's conversation. Borrow, however, soon tired of the pleasures of London, and devoted himself almost entirely to work. Although he saw less of Francis Arden in consequence, they continued to be excellent friends.

After being some four weeks in London, Borrow received a surprise visit (29th April) from his brother, whom he found waiting for him one morning when he came down to breakfast. John told him of his mother's anxiety at receiving only one letter from him since his departure, of her fits of crying, of the grief of Captain Borrow's dog at the loss of his master. He also explained the reason for his being in London. He had been invited to paint the portrait of Robert Hawkes, an ex-mayor of Norwich, for a fee of a hundred guineas. Lacking confidence in his own ability, he had declined the honour and suggested that Benjamin Haydon should be approached. At the request of a deputation of his fellow citizens, which had waited upon him, he had undertaken to enter into negotiations with Haydon. He even undertook to come up to London at his own expense, that he might see his old master and complete the bargain. Borrow subsequently accompanied his brother when calling upon Haydon, and was enabled to give a thumbnail-sketch of the painter of the Heroic at work that has been pronounced to be photographic in its faithfulness.

John returned to Norwich about a fortnight later accompanied by Haydon, who was to become the guest of his sitter, [47] and George was left to the compilation of *Celebrated Trials*. Sir Richard Phillips appears to have been a man as prolific of suggestion as he was destitute of tact. He regarded his authors as the instruments of his own genius. Their business

it was to carry out his ideas in a manner entirely congenial to his colossal conceit. His latest author he exposed "to incredible mortification and ceaseless trouble from this same rage for interference."

The result of all this was an attack of the "Horrors." Towards the end of May, Roger Kerrison received from Borrow a note saying that he believed himself to be dying, and imploring him to "come to me immediately." The direct outcome of this note was, not the death of Borrow, but the departure from Milman Street of Roger Kerrison, lest he should become involved in a tragedy connected with Borrow's oft-repeated threat of suicide. Kerrison became "very uneasy and uncomfortable on his account, so that I have found it utterly impossible to live any longer in the same lodgings with him." [48a] Looked at dispassionately it seems nothing short of an act of cowardice on Kerrison's part to leave alone a man such as Borrow, who might at any moment be assailed by one of those periods of gloom from which suicide seemed the only outlet. On the other hand, from an anecdote told by C. G. Leland ("Hans Breitmann"), there seems to be some excuse for Kerrison's wish to live alone. "I knew at that time [about 1870]," he writes, [48b] "a Mr Kerrison, who had been as a young man, probably in the Twenties, on intimate terms with Borrow. He told me that one night Borrow acted very wildly, whooping and vociferating so as to cause the police to follow him, and after a long run led them to the edge of the Thames, 'and there they thought they had him.' But he plunged boldly into the water and swam in his clothes to the opposite shore, and so escaped."

A serious misfortune now befell Borrow in the premature death of *The Universal Review*, which

expired with the sixth number (March 1824—January 1825). It is not known what was the rate of pay to young and impecunious reviewers [49a] certainly not large, if it may be judged by the amount agreed upon for *Celebrated Trials*. Still, its end meant that Borrow was now dependent upon what he received for his compilation, and what he merited by his translation into German of *Proximate Causes*.

There appears to have been some difficulty about payment for Borrow's contributions to the now defunct review, which considerably widened the breach that the *Trials* had created. Sir Richard became more exacting and more than ever critical. [49b] The end could not be far off. Borrow had come to London determined to be an author, and by no juggling with facts could his present drudgery be considered as authorship. Occasionally his mind reverted to the manuscripts in the green box, his faith in which continued undiminished. He made further efforts to get his translations published, but everywhere the answer was the same, in effect, "A drug, sir, a drug!"

At last he determined to approach John Murray (the Second), "Glorious John, who lived at the western end of the town"; but he called many times without being successful in seeing him. Another seventeen years were to elapse before he was to meet and be published by John Murray.

Yet another dispute arose between Borrow and Sir Richard Phillips. Neither appeared to have realised the supreme folly of entrusting to a young Englishman the translation into German of an English work. A novel would have presented almost

insurmountable difficulties; but a work of philosophy! The whole project was absurd. The diction of philosophy in all languages is individual, just as it is in other branches of science, and a very thorough knowledge of, and deep reading in both languages are necessary to qualify a man to translate from a foreign tongue into his own. To expect an inexperienced youth to reverse the order seems to suggest that Sir Richard Phillips must have been a publisher whose enthusiasm was greater than his judgment.

One day when calling at Tavistock Square, Borrow found Sir Richard in a fury of rage. He had submitted the first chapter of the translation of *Proximate Causes* to some Germans, who found it utterly unintelligible. This was only to be expected, as Borrow confesses that, when he found himself unable to comprehend what was the meaning of the English text, he had translated it *literally into German*!

The result of the interview was that Borrow, after what appears to be a tactless, not to say impertinent, rejoinder, [50a] relapsed into silence and finally left the house, ordered back to his compilation by Sir Richard, as soon as he became sufficiently calm to appear coherent, and Borrow walked away musing on the "difference in clever men."

The discovery of the inadequacy of the German translation apparently urged Borrow to hasten on with *Celebrated Trials*. *The Universal Review* was dead, the German version of *Proximate Causes* [50b] had passed out of his hands. It was desirable, therefore, that the remaining undertaking should be completed as soon as possible, that the two might part. The last of the manuscript was delivered, the

proofs passed for press, and on 19th March the work appeared, the six volumes, running to between three and four thousand pages, containing accounts of some four hundred trials, including that of Borrow's old friend Thurtell for the murder of Mr Weare.

Borrow's name did not appear. He was "the editor," and as such was referred to in the preface contributed by Sir Richard himself. Among other things he tells of how, in some cases, "the Editor has compressed into a score of pages the substance of an entire volume." Sir Richard was a philosopher as well as a preface-writing publisher, and it was only natural that he should speculate as to the effect upon his editor's mind of months spent in reading and editing such records of vice. "It may be expected," he writes, "that the Editor should convey to his readers the intellectual impressions which the execution of his task has produced on his mind. He confesses that they are mournful." Sir Richard was either a master of irony, or a man of singular obtuseness.

One effect of this delving into criminal records had been to raise in Borrow's mind strange doubts about virtue and crime. When a boy, he had written an essay in which he strove to prove that crime and virtue were mere terms, and that we were the creatures of necessity or circumstance. These broodings in turn reawakened the theory that everything is a lie, and that nothing really exists except in our imaginations. The world was "a maze of doubt." These indications of an overtaxed brain increased, and eventually forced Borrow to leave London. His work was thoroughly uncongenial. He disliked reviewing; he had failed in his endeavours to render *Proximate Causes* into intelligible German; and

it had taken him some time to overcome his dislike of the sordid stories of crime and criminals that he had to read and edit. He became gloomy and depressed, and prone to compare the real conditions of authorship with those that his imagination had conjured up.

The most important result of his labours in connection with *Celebrated Trials* was that upon his literary style. There is a tremendous significance in the following passage. It tells of the transition of the actual vagabond into the literary vagabond, with power to express in words what proved so congenial to Borrow's vagabond temperament:

> "Of all my occupations at this period I am free to confess I liked that of compiling the Newgate Lives and Trials [Celebrated Trials] the best; that is, after I had surmounted a kind of prejudice which I originally entertained. The trials were entertaining enough; but the lives—how full were they of wild and racy adventures, and in what racy, genuine language were they told. What struck me most with respect to these lives was the art which the writers, whoever they were, possessed of telling a plain story. It is no easy thing to tell a story plainly and distinctly by mouth; but to tell one on paper is difficult indeed, so many snares lie in the way. People are afraid to put down what is common on paper, they seek to embellish their narratives, as they

> think, by philosophic speculations and reflections; they are anxious to shine, and people who are anxious to shine can never tell a plain story. 'So I went with them to a music booth, where they made me almost drunk with gin, and began to talk their flash language, which I did not understand,' [52a] says, or is made to say, Henry Simms, executed at Tyburn some seventy years before the time of which I am speaking. I have always looked upon this sentence as a masterpiece of the narrative style, it is so concise and yet so clear." [52b]

By the time the work was published and Borrow had been paid his fee, all relations between editor and publisher had ceased, and there was "a poor author, or rather philologist, upon the streets of London, possessed of many tongues," which he found "of no use in the world." [52c] A month after the appearance of *Celebrated Trials* (18th April), and a little more than a year after his arrival in London, Borrow published a translation of Klinger's *Faustus*. [53a] He himself gives no particulars as to whether it was commissioned or no. It may even have been "the Romance in the German style" from the Green Box. It is known that he received payment for it by a bill at five or six months, [53b] but there is no mention of the amount. It would appear that the translation had long been projected, for in *The Monthly Magazine*, July 1824, there appeared, in conjunction with the announcement of *Celebrated Trials*, the following paragraph: "The editor of the

preceding has ready for the press, a Life of Faustus, his Death and Descent into Hell, which will also appear the next winter."

Faustus did not meet with a very cordial reception. *The Literary Gazette* (16th July 1825) characterised it as "another work to which no respectable publisher ought to have allowed his name to be put. The political allusion and metaphysics, which may have made it popular among a low class in Germany, do not sufficiently season its lewd scenes and coarse descriptions for British palates. We have occasionally publications for the fireside,—these are only fit for the fire."

Borrow had apparently been in some doubt about certain passages, for in a note headed "The Translator to the Public," he defends the work as moral in its general teaching:

> "The publication of the present volume may at first sight appear to require some brief explanation from the Translator, inasmuch as the character of the incidents may justify such an expectation on the part of the reader. It is, therefore, necessary to state that, although scenes of vice and crime are here exhibited, it is merely in the hope that they may serve as beacons, to guide the ignorant and unwary from the shoals on which they might otherwise be wrecked. The work, when considered as a whole, is strictly moral."

It must be confessed that Faustus does not err on the side of restraint. Many of its scenes might appear "lewd . . . and coarse" to anyone who for a moment allowed his mind to wander from the morality of "its general teaching." The attacks upon the lax morals of the priesthood must have proved particularly congenial to the translator.

The more Borrow read his translations of Ab Gwilym, the more convinced he became of their merit and the profit they would bring to him who published them. The booksellers, however, with singular unanimity, declined the risk of introducing to the English public either Welsh or Danish ballads; and their translator became so shabby in consequence, that he refrained from calling upon his friend Arden, for whom he had always cherished a very real friendship. He began to lose heart. His energy left him and with it went hope. He was forced to review his situation. Authorship had obviously failed, and he found himself with no reasonable prospect of employment.

There is no episode in Borrow's life that has so exercised the minds of commentators and critics as his account of the book he terms in *Lavengro*, *The Life and Adventures of Joseph Sell, the Great Traveller*. Some dismiss the whole story as apocryphal; others see in it a grain of truth distorted into something of vital importance; whilst there are a number of earnest Borrovians that accept the whole story as it is written. Dr Knapp has said that Joseph Sell "was not a book at all, and the author of it never said that it was." This was obviously an error, for the bookseller is credited with saying, "I think I shall venture on sending your book to the press," [55a] referring to it as a "book" four times in nine lines. Again, in another place, Borrow describes how he rescued

himself “from peculiarly miserable circumstances by writing a book, an original book, within a week, even as Johnson is said to have written his *Rasselas* and Beckford his *Vathek*.” [55b] This removes all question of the *Life and Adventures of Joseph Sell* being included in a collection of short stories. The title would not be the same, the date is most probably wrongly given, as in the case of Marshland Shales; but the general accuracy of the account as written seems to be highly probable. Many efforts have been made to trace the story; but so far unsuccessfully. It must be remembered that Borrow loved to stretch the long arm of coincidence; but he loved more than anything else a dramatic situation. He was always on the look out for effective “curtains.”

In favour of the story having been actually written, is the knowledge that Borrow invented little or nothing. Collateral evidence has shown how little he deviated from actual happenings, although he did not hesitate to revise dates or colour events. The strongest evidence, however, lies in the atmosphere of truth that pervades Chapters LV.–LVII. of *Lavengro*. They are convincing. At one time or another during his career, it would appear that Borrow wrote against time from grim necessity; otherwise he must have been a master of invention, which everything that is known about him clearly shows that he was not.

Joseph Sell has disappeared, a most careful search of the Registers at Stationers’ Hall can show no trace of that work, or any book that seems to suggest it, and the contemporary literary papers render no assistance.

According to Borrow's own account, one morning on getting up he found that he had only half a crown in the world. It was this circumstance, coupled with the timely notice that he saw affixed to a bookseller's window to the effect that "A Novel or Tale is much wanted," that determined him to endeavour to emulate Dr Johnson and William Beckford. He had tired of "the Great City," and his thoughts turned instinctively to the woods and the fields, where he could be free to meditate and muse in solitude.

When he returned to Milman Street after seeing the bookseller's advertisement, he found that his resources had been still further reduced to eighteen-pence. He was too proud to write home for assistance, he had broken with Sir Richard Phillips, and he had no reasonable expectation of obtaining employment of any description; for his accomplishments found no place in the catalogue of everyday wants. He was a proper man with his hands, and knew some score or more languages. No matter how he regarded the situation, the facts were obvious. Between him and actual starvation there was the inconsiderable sum of eighteen-pence and the bookseller's advertisement. The gravity of the situation banished the cloud of despondency that threatened to settle upon him, and also the doubts that presented themselves as to whether he possessed the requisite ability to produce what the bookseller required. The all-important question was, could he exist sufficiently long on eighteen-pence to complete a story? Sir Richard Phillips had told him to live on bread and water. He now did so.

For a week he wrote ceaselessly at the *Life and Adventures of Joseph Sell, the Great Traveller*. He wrote with the feverish energy of a man who sees the

shadow of actual starvation cast across his manuscript. When the tale was finished there remained the work of revision, and after that, worst of all, fears lest the bookseller were already suited.

Fortune, however, was kind to him, and he was successful in extracting for his story the sum of twenty pounds. Borrow had not mixed among gypsies for nothing. He, a starving and unknown author, succeeded in extracting from a bookseller twenty pounds for a story, twice the amount offered by Sir Richard Phillips for a novel on the lines of *The Dairyman's Daughter*. It was an achievement.

The first argument against the story, as related by Borrow, is that he was not without resources at the time. Why should he be so impoverished a few weeks after receiving payment for *Celebrated Trials*? [57] Above all, why did he not realise upon Simpkin & Marshall's bill for *Faustus*? He would have experienced no difficulty in discounting a bill accepted by such a firm. It seems hardly conceivable that he should preserve this piece of paper when he had only eighteen-pence in the world. Everything seems to point to the fact that in May 1825 Borrow was not in want of money, and if he were not, why did he almost kill himself by writing the *Life and Adventures of Joseph Sell*? Again, at that period he had met with no adventures such as might be included in the life of a "Great Traveller," and Borrow was not an inventive writer. Later he possessed plenty of material; for there can be no question that he roamed about the world for a considerable portion of those seven mysterious years of his life that came to be known as the "Veiled Period." His accuracy as to actual occurrences has been so emphasised that this particular argument

holds considerable significance.

The strongest evidence against *Joseph Sell* having been written in 1825, however, lies in the fact that Greenwich Fair was held on 23rd May, and not 12th May, as given by Dr Knapp. By his error Dr Knapp makes Borrow leave London a day before the Fair took place that he describes. Borrow must have left London on the day following Greenwich Fair (24th May). If he left later, then those things which tend to confirm his story of the life in the Dingle do not fit in, as will be seen. He certainly could not have left before Greenwich Fair was held.

In one of his brother John's letters, written at the end of 1829, there is a significant passage, "Let me know how you sold your manuscript." [58] What manuscript is it that is referred to? There is no record of George having sold a manuscript in the autumn of 1829. The passage can scarcely have reference to some article or translation; it seems to suggest something of importance, an event in George's life that his brother is anxious to know more about. If this be *Joseph Sell*, then it explains where Borrow got the money from to go up to London at the end of 1829, when he entered into relations with Dr Bowring. It is merely a theory, it must be confessed; but there is certain evidence that seems to support it. In the first place, Borrow was a chronicler before all else. He possessed an amazing memory and a great gift for turning his experiences into literary material. If he coloured facts, he appears to have done so unconsciously, to judge from those portions of *The Bible in Spain* that were covered by letters to the Bible Society. Not only are the facts the same, but, with very slight changes, the words in which he relates them. He never hesitated

to change a date if it served his purpose, much as an artist will change the position of a tree in a landscape to suit the exigencies of composition. His five volumes of autobiography bristle with coincidences so amazing that, if they were actually true, he must have been the most remarkable genius on record for attracting to himself strange adventures. He met the sailor son of the old Apple-Woman returning from his enforced exile; Murtagh tells him of how the postilion frightened the Pope at Rome by his denunciation, a story Borrow had already heard from the postilion himself; the Hungarian at Horncastle narrates how an Armenian once silenced a Moldavian, the same Moldavian whom Borrow had encountered in London; the postilion meets the man in black again. There are scores of such coincidences, which must be accepted as dramatic embellishments.

CHAPTER IV
MAY–SEPTEMBER 1825

FOURTEEN months in London had shown Borrow how hard was the road of authorship. He confessed that he was not "formed by nature to be a pallid indoor student." "The peculiar atmosphere of the big city" did not agree with him, and this fact, together with the anxiety and hard work of the past twelve months, caused him to flag, and his first thought was how to recover his health. He was disillusioned as to the busy world, and the opportunities it offered to a

young man fired with ambition to make a stir in it. He determined to leave London, which he did towards the end of May, [60] first despatching his trunk "containing a few clothes and books to the old town [Norwich]." He struck out in a south-westerly direction, musing on his achievements as an author, and finding that in having preserved his independence and health, he had "abundant cause to be grateful."

Throughout his life Borrow was hypnotised by independence. Like many other proud natures, he carried his theory of independence to such an extreme as to become a slave to it and render himself unsociable, sometimes churlish. It was this virtue carried to excess that drove Borrow from London. He must tell men what was in his mind, and his one patron, Sir Richard Phillips, he had mortally offended in this manner.

Finding that he was unequal to much fatigue, after a few hours' walking he hailed a passing coach, which took him as far as Amesbury in Wiltshire. From here he walked to Stonehenge and on to Salisbury, "inspecting the curiosities of the place," and endeavouring by sleep and good food to make up the wastage of the last few months. The weather was fine and his health and spirits rapidly improved as he tramped on, his "daily journeys varying from twenty to twenty-five miles." He encountered the mysterious stranger who "touched" against the evil eye. F. H. Groome asserts, on the authority of W. B. Donne, that this was in reality William Beckford. Borrow must have met him at some other time and place, as he had already left Fonthill in 1825. It is, however, interesting to recall that Borrow himself "touched" against the evil eye. Mr Watts-Dunton has

said:

> "There was nothing that Borrow strove against with more energy than the curious impulse, which he seems to have shared with Dr Johnson, to touch the objects along his path in order to save himself from the evil chance. He never conquered the superstition. In walking through Richmond Park he would step out of his way constantly to touch a tree, and he was offended if the friend he was with seemed to observe it." [61a]

The chance meeting with Jack Slingsby (in fear of his life from the Flaming Tinman, and bound by oath not to continue on the same beat) gave Borrow the idea of buying out Slingsby, beat, plant, pony and all. "A tinker is his own master, a scholar is not," [61b] he remarks, and then proceeds to draw tears and moans from the dispirited Slingsby and his family by a description of the joys of tinkering, "the happiest life under heaven . . . pitching your tent under the pleasant hedge-row, listening to the song of the feathered tribes, collecting all the leaky kettles in the neighbourhood, soldering and joining, earning your honest bread by the wholesome sweat of your brow." [62a]

By the expenditure of five pounds ten shillings, plus the cost of a smock-frock and some provisions, George Borrow, linguist, editor and translator, became a travelling tinker. With his dauntless little pony, Ambrol, he set out, a tinkering Ulysses, indifferent to what direction he took, allowing the

pony to go whither he felt inclined. At first he experienced some apprehension at passing the night with only a tent or the stars as a roof. Rain fell to mar the opening day of the adventure, but the pony, with unerring instinct, led his new master to one of Slingsby's usual camping grounds.

In the morning Borrow fell to examining what it was beyond the pony and cart that his five pounds ten shillings had purchased. He found a tent, a straw mattress and a blanket, "quite clean and nearly new." There were also a frying-pan, a kettle, a teapot (broken in three pieces) and some cups and saucers. The stock-in-trade "consisted of various tools, an iron ladle, a chafing-pan, and small bellows, sundry pans and kettles, the latter being of tin, with the exception of one which was of copper, all in a state of considerable dilapidation." The pans and kettles were to be sold after being mended, for which purpose there was "a block of tin, sheet-tin, and solder." But most precious of all his possessions was "a small anvil and bellows of the kind which are used in forges, and two hammers such as smiths use, one great, and the other small." [62b] Borrow had learned the blacksmith's art when in Ireland, and the anvil, bellows and smith's hammers were to prove extremely useful.

A few days after pitching his tent, Borrow received from his old enemy Mrs Herne, Mr Petulengro's mother-in-law, a poisoned cake, which came very near to ending his career. He then encountered the Welsh preacher ("the worthiest creature I ever knew") and his wife, who were largely instrumental in saving him from Mrs Herne's poison. Having remained with his new friends for nine days, he accompanied them as far as the Welsh border, where

he confessed himself the translator of Ab Gwilym, giving as an excuse for not accompanying them further that it was “neither fit nor proper that I cross into Wales at this time, and in this manner. When I go into Wales, I should wish to go in a new suit of superfine black, with hat and beaver, mounted on a powerful steed, black and glossy, like that which bore Greduv to the fight of Catraeth. I should wish, moreover,” he continued, “to see the Welshmen assembled on the border ready to welcome me with pipe and fiddle, and much whooping and shouting, and to attend me to Wrexham, or even as far as Machynllaith, where I should wish to be invited to a dinner at which all the bards should be present, and to be seated at the right hand of the president, who, when the cloth was removed, should arise, and amidst cries of silence, exclaim—‘Brethren and Welshmen, allow me to propose the health of my most respectable friend the translator of the odes of the great Ab Gwilym, the pride and glory of Wales.’” [63a]

He returned with Mr Petulengro, who directed him to Mumber Lane (Mumper’s Dingle), near Willenhall, in Staffordshire, “the little dingle by the side of the great north road.” Here Borrow encamped and shod little Ambrol, who kicked him over as a reminder of his clumsiness.

He had refused an invitation from Mr Petulengro to become a Romany *chal* and take a Romany bride, the granddaughter of his would-be murderess, who “occasionally talked of” him. He yearned for solitude and the country’s quiet. He told Mr Petulengro that he desired only some peaceful spot where he might hold uninterrupted communion with his own thoughts, and practise, if so inclined, either

tinkering or the blacksmith's art, and he had been directed to Mumper's Dingle, which was to become the setting of the most romantic episode in his life.

In the dingle Borrow experienced one of his worst attacks of the "Horrors"—the "Screaming Horrors." He raged like a madman, a prey to some indefinable, intangible fear; clinging to his "little horse as if for safety and protection." [64a] He had not recovered from the prostrating effects of that night of tragedy when he was called upon to fight Anselo Herne, "the Flaming Tinman," who somehow or other seemed to be part of the bargain he had made with Jack Slingsby, and encounter the queen of road-girls, Isopel Berners. The description of the fight has been proclaimed the finest in our language, and by some the finest in the world's literature.

Isopel Berners is one of the great heroines of English Literature. As drawn by Borrow, with her strong arm, lion-like courage and tender tearfulness, she is unique. However true or false the account of her relations with Borrow may be, she is drawn by him as a living woman. He was incapable of conceiving her from his imagination. It may go unquestioned that he actually met an Isopel Berners, [64b] but whether or no his parting from her was as heart-rendingly tragic as he has depicted it, is open to very grave question.



With this queen of the roads he seems to have been less reticent and more himself than with any other of his vagabond acquaintance, not excepting even Mr Petulengro. To the handsome, tall girl with "the flaxen hair, which hung down over her shoulders unconfined," and the "determined but open expression," he showed a more amiable side of his character; yet he seems to have treated her with no little cruelty. He told her about himself, how he "had tamed savage mares, wrestled with Satan, and had dealings with ferocious publishers," bringing tears to her eyes, and when she grew too curious, he administered an antidote in the form of a few Armenian numerals. If his *Autobiography* is to be credited, Isopel loved him, and he was aware of it; but the knowledge did not hinder him from torturing the poor girl by insisting that she should decline the verb "to love" in Armenian.

Borrow's attitude towards Isopel was curiously complex; he seemed to find pleasure in playing upon her emotions. At times he appeared as deliberately brutal to her, as to the gypsy girl Ursula when he

talked with her beneath the hedge. He forced from Isopel a passionate rebuke that he sought only to vex and irritate "a poor ignorant girl . . . who can scarcely read or write." He asked her to marry him, but not until he had convinced her that he was mad. How much she had become part of his life in the dingle he did not seem to realise until after she had left him. Isopel Berners was a woman whose character was almost masculine in its strength; but she was prepared to subdue her spirit to his, wished to do so even. With her strength, however, there was wisdom, and she left Borrow and the dingle, sending him a letter of farewell that was certainly not the composition of "a poor girl" who could "scarcely read or write." The story itself is in all probability true; but the letter rings false. Isopel may have sent Borrow a letter of farewell, but not the one that appears in *The Romany Rye*.

Among Borrow's papers Dr Knapp discovered a fragment of manuscript in which Mr Petulengro is shown deliberating upon the expediency of emulating King Pharaoh in the number of his wives. Mrs Petulengro desires "a little pleasant company," and urges her husband to take a second spouse. He proceeds:—

> "Now I am thinking that this here Bess of yours would be just the kind of person both for my wife and myself. My wife wants something *gorgiko*, something genteel. Now Bess is of blood gorgious; if you doubt it, look at her face, all full of *pawno ratter*, white blood, brother; and as for gentility, nobody can make exceptions to Bess's gentility,

seeing she was born in the
workhouse of Melford the Short."

Mr Petulengro sees in Bess another advantage. If "the Flaming Tinman" [66a] were to descend upon them, as he once did, with the offer to fight the best of them for nothing, and Tawno Chikno were absent, who was to fight him? Mr Petulengro could not do so for less than five pounds; but with Bess as a second wife the problem would be solved. She would fight "the Flaming Tinman."

This proves nothing, one way or the other, and can scarcely be said to "dispel any allusions," as Dr Knapp suggests, or confirm the story of Isopel. Why did Borrow omit it from Lavengro? Not from caprice surely. It has been stated that those who know the gypsies can vouch for the fact that no such suggestion could have been made by a gypsy woman.

It would appear that Isopel Berners existed, but the account of her given by Borrow in Lavengro and The Romany Rye is in all probability coloured, just as her stature was heightened by him. If she were taller than he, she must have appeared a giantess. Borrow was an impressionist, and he has probably succeeded far better in giving a faithful picture of Isopel Berners than if he had been photographically accurate in his measurements.

According to Borrow's own account, he left Willenhall mounted upon a fine horse, purchased with money lent to him by Mr Petulengro, a small valise strapped to the saddle, and "some desire to meet with one of those adventures which upon the roads of England are generally as plentiful as blackberries." From this point, however, *The Romany Rye* becomes dangerous as autobiography.

[66b]

For one thing, it was unlike Borrow to remain in debt, and it is incredible that he should have ridden away upon a horse purchased with another man's money, without any set purpose in his mind. Therefore the story of his employment at the Swan Inn, Stafford, where he found his postilion friend, and the subsequent adventures must be reluctantly sacrificed. They do not ring true, nor do they fit in with the rest of the story. That he experienced such adventures is highly probable; but it is equally probable that he took some liberty with the dates.

Up to the point where he purchases the horse, Borrow's story is convincing; but from there onwards it seems to go to pieces, that is as autobiography. The arrival of Ardry (Arden) at the inn, [67a] *passing through Stafford on his way to Warwick* to be present at a dog and lion fight that had already taken place (26th July), is in itself enough to shake our confidence in the whole episode of the inn. In *The Gypsies of Spain* Mr Petulengro is made to say:

> "I suppose you have not forgot how, fifteen years ago, when you made horseshoes in the little dingle by the side of the great north road, I lent you fifty cottors [guineas] to purchase the wonderful trotting cob of the innkeeper with the green Newmarket coat, which three days after you sold for two hundred. Well, brother, if you had wanted the two hundred instead of the fifty, I could have lent them to you, and would have done so, for I knew you

would not be long pazorrhus
[indebted] to me." [67b]

It seems more in accordance with Borrow's character to repay the loan within three days than to continue in Mr Petulengro's debt for weeks, at one time making no actual effort to realise upon the horse. The question as to whether Borrow received a hundred and fifty (as he himself states) or two hundred pounds is immaterial. It is quite likely that he sold the horse before he left the dingle, and that the adventures he narrates may be true in all else save the continued possession of his steed, that is, with the exception of the Francis Ardry episode, the encounter with the man in black, and the arrival at Horncastle during the fair. If Borrow left London on 24th May, and he could not have left earlier, as has been shown, he must have visited the Fair (Tamworth) with Mr Petulengro on 26th July, and set out from Willenhall about 2nd August.

It has been pointed out by that distinguished scholar and gentleman-gypsy, Mr John Sampson, [68] that as the Horse Fair at Horncastle was held 12th–21st August, if Borrow took the horse there it could not have been in the manner described in *The Romany Rye*, where he is shown as spending some considerable time at the inn, if we may judge by the handsome cheque (£10) offered to him by the landlord as a bonus on account of his services. Then there was the accident and the consequent lying-up at the house of the man who knew Chinese, but could not tell what o'clock it was. To confirm Borrow's itinerary all this must have been crowded into less than three weeks, fully a third of which Borrow spent in recovering from his fall. This would mean that for less than a fortnight's work, the

innkeeper offered him ten pounds as a gratuity, in addition to the bargain he had made, which included the horse's keep.

Mr Sampson has supported his itinerary with several very important pieces of evidence. Borrow states in *Lavengro* that "a young moon gave a feeble light" as he mounted the coach that was to take him to Amesbury. The moon was in its first quarter on 24th May. There actually was a great thunderstorm in the Willenhall district about the time that Borrow describes (18th July). It is Mr Sampson also who has identified the fair to which Borrow went with the gypsies as that held at Tamworth on 26th July.

Whatever else Borrow may have been doing immediately after leaving the dingle, he appears to have been much occupied in speculating as to the future. Was he not "sadly misspending his time?" He was forced to the conclusion that he had done nothing else throughout his life but misspend his time. He was ambitious. He chafed at his narrow life. "Oh! what a vast deal may be done with intellect, courage, riches, accompanied by the desire of doing something great and good!" [69a] he exclaims, and his thoughts turned instinctively to the career of his old school-fellow, Rajah Brooke of Sarawak. [69b] He was now, by his own confession, "a moody man, bearing on my face, as I well knew, the marks of my strivings and my strugglings, of what I had learnt and unlearnt." [69c] He recognised the possibilities that lay in every man, only awaiting the hour when they should be called forth. He believed implicitly in the power of the will. [69d] He possessed ambition and a fine workable theory of how success was to be obtained; but he lacked initiative. He expected fortune to wait for him on

the high-road, just as he knew adventures awaited him. He would not go "across the country," to use a phrase of the time common to postilions. He was too independent, perhaps too sensitive of being patronised, to seek employment. That he cared "for nothing in this world but old words and strange stories," was an error into which his friend Mr Petulengro might well fall. The mightiness of the man's pride could be covered only by a cloak of assumed indifference. He must be independent of the world, not only in material things, but in those intangible qualities of the spirit. It was this that lost him Isopel Berners, whose love he awakened by a strong right arm and quenched with an Armenian noun. Again, his independence stood in the way of his happiness. A man is a king, he seemed to think, and the attribute of kings is their splendid isolation, their godlike solitude. If his Ego were lonely and crying out for sympathy, Borrow thought it a moment for solitude, in which to discipline his insurgent spirit. The "Horrors" were the result of this self-repression. When they became unbearable, his spirit broke down, the yearning for sympathy and affection overmastered him, and he stumbled to his little horse in the desolate dingle, and found comfort in the faithful creature's whinny of sympathy and its affectionate licking of his hand. The strong man clung to his dumb brute friend as a protection against the unknown horror—the screaming horror that had gripped him.

One quality Borrow possessed in common with many other men of strange and taciturn personality. He could always make friends when he chose. Ostlers, scholars, farmers, gypsies; it mattered not one jot to him what, or who they were. He could earn their respect and obtain their good-will, if he wished to do

so. He demanded of men that they should have done things, or be capable of doing things. They must know everything there was to be known about some one thing; and the ostler, than whom none could groom a horse better, was worthy of being ranked with the best man in the land. He demanded of every man that he should justify his existence, and was logical in his attitude, save in the insignificant particular that he applied the same rule to himself only in theory.

He was shrewd and a good judge of character, provided it were Protestant character, and could hold his own with a Jew or a Gypsy. He was fully justified in his boast of being able to take "precious good care of" himself, and "drive a precious hard bargain"; yet these qualities were not to find a market until he was thirty years of age.

Sometime during the autumn (1825) Borrow returned to Norwich, where he busied himself with literary affairs, among other things writing to the publishers of *Faustus* about the bill that was shortly to fall due. The fact of the book having been destroyed at both the Norwich libraries, gave him the idea that he might make some profit by selling copies of the suppressed volume. Hence his offer to Simpkin & Marshall to take copies in lieu of money.

CHAPTER V
SEPTEMBER 1825–DECEMBER 1832

FROM the autumn of 1825 until the winter of 1832, when he obtained an introduction to the British & Foreign Bible Society, only fragmentary details of Borrow's life exist. He decided to keep sacred to himself the "Veiled Period," as it came to be called. In all probability it was a time of great hardship and mortification, and he wished it to be thought that the whole period was devoted to "a grand philological expedition," or expeditions. There is no doubt that some portion of the mysterious epoch was so spent, but not all. Many of the adventures ascribed to characters in *Lavengro* and *The Romany Rye* were, most probably, Borrow's own experiences during that period of mystery and misfortune. Time after time he was implored to "lift up a corner of the curtain"; but he remained obdurate, and the seven years are in his life what the New Orleans days were in that of Walt Whitman.

Soon after his return to Norwich, Borrow seems to have turned his attention to the manuscripts in the green box. In the days of happy augury, before he had quarrelled with Sir Richard Phillips, there had appeared in *The Monthly Magazine* the two following paragraphs:—

> "We have heard and seen much of the legends and popular superstitions of the North, but, in truth, all the exhibitions of these subjects which have hitherto appeared in England have been translations from the German. Mr Olaus Borrow, who is familiar with the Northern Languages, proposes, however, to present these curious reliques of romantic antiquity

> directly from the Danish and Swedish, and two elegant volumes of them now printing will appear in September. They are highly interesting in themselves, but more so as the basis of most of the popular superstitions of England, when they were introduced during the incursions and dominion of the Danes and Norwegians." (1st September 1824.)
>
> "We have to acknowledge the favour of a beautiful collection of Danish songs and ballads, of which a specimen will be seen among the poetical articles of the present month. One, or more, of these very interesting translations will appear in each succeeding number." (1st December 1824.)

It seems to have been Borrow's plan to run his ballads serially through *The Monthly Magazine* and then to publish them in book-form. His initial contribution to *The Monthly Magazine* had appeared in October 1823. The first of the articles, entitled "Danish Traditions and Superstitions," appeared August 1824, and continued, with the omission of one or two months, until December 1825, there being in all nine articles; but there was only one instalment of "Danish Songs and Ballads." [73]

Borrow was determined that these ballads, at least, should be published, and he set to work to prepare them for the press. Allan Cunningham, with whom Borrow was acquainted, contributed, at his request, a

metrical dedication. The volume appeared on 10th May, in an edition of five hundred copies at ten shillings and sixpence each. It appears that some two hundred copies were subscribed for, thus ensuring the cost of production. The balance, or a large proportion of it, was consigned to John Taylor, the London publisher, who printed a new title-page and sold them at seven shillings each, probably the trade price for a half-guinea book.

Cunningham wrote to Borrow advising him to send out freely copies for review, and with each a note saying that it was the translator's ultimate intention to publish an English version of the whole *Kiæmpe Viser* with notes; also to "scatter a few judiciously among literary men." It is doubtful if this sage counsel were acted upon; for there is no record of any review or announcement of the work. This in itself was not altogether a misfortune; for Borrow did not prove himself an inspired translator of verse. Apart from the two hundred copies sold to subscribers, the book was still-born.

After the publication of *Romantic Ballads*, Borrow appears to have returned to London, not to his old lodging at Milman Street, possibly on account of the associations, but to 26 Bryanston Street, Portman Square, from which address he wrote to Benjamin Haydon the following note:—[74]

> DEAR SIR,—
>
> I should feel extremely obliged if you would allow me to sit to you as soon as possible. I am going to the South of France in little better than a fortnight, and I would sooner lose a thousand pounds than not have the

honour of appearing in the picture.

Yours sincerely,

GEORGE BORROW.

In his account of how he first became acquainted with Haydon, Borrow shows himself as anything but desirous of appearing in a picture. When John tells of the artist's wish to include him as one of the characters in a painting upon which he is engaged, Borrow replies: "I have no wish to appear on canvas." It is probable that in some way or other Haydon offended his sitter, who, regretting his acquiescence, antedated the episode and depicted himself as refusing the invitation. Such a liberty with fact and date would be quite in accordance with Borrow's autobiographical methods.

Borrow wrote in *Lavengro*, "I have been a wanderer the greater part of my life; indeed I remember only two periods, and these by no means lengthy, when I was, strictly speaking, stationary." [75a] One of the "two periods" was obviously the eight years spent at Norwich, 1816–24, the other is probably the years spent at Oulton. Thus the "Veiled Period" may be assumed to have been one of wandering. The seven years are gloomy and mysterious, but not utterly dark. There is a hint here, a suggestion there—a letter or a paragraph, that gives in a vague way some idea of what Borrow was doing, and where. It seems comparatively safe to assume that after the publication of *Romantic Ballads* he plunged into a life of roving and vagabondage, which, in all probability, was brought to an abrupt termination by either the loss or the exhaustion of his money. Anything beyond this is pure conjecture. [75b]

After he became associated with the British & Foreign Bible Society, his movements are easily accounted for; but all we have to guide us as to what countries he had seen before 1833 is an occasional hint. He casually admits having been in Italy, [75c] at Bayonne, [75d] Paris, [75e] Madrid, [75f] the south of France. [75g] "I have visited most of the principal capitals of the world," he writes in 1843; and again in the same year, "I have heard the ballad of Alonzo Guzman chanted in Danish, by a hind in the wilds of Jutland." [76a] "I have lived in different parts of the world, much amongst the Hebrew race, and I am well acquainted with their words and phraseology," [76b] he writes; and on another occasion: "I have seen gypsies of various lands, Russian, Hungarian, and Turkish; and I have also seen the legitimate children of most countries of the world." [76c] An even more significant admission is that made when Colonel Elers Napier, whom Borrow met in Seville in 1839, enquired where he had obtained his knowledge of Moultanee. "Some years ago, in Moultan," was the reply; then, as if regretting that he had confessed so much, showed by his manner that he intended to divulge nothing more. [76d]

"Once, during my own wanderings in Italy," Borrow writes, "I rested at nightfall by the side of a kiln, the air being piercingly cold; it was about four leagues from Genoa." [76e] Again, "Once in the south of France, when I was weary, hungry, and penniless, I observed one of these last patterans [76f] [a cross marked in the dust], and following the direction pointed out, arrived at the resting-place of 'certain Bohemians,' by whom I was received with kindness and hospitality, on the faith of no other word of recommendation than patteran." [76g] In a letter of introduction to the Rev. E. Whitely, of Oporto, the

Rev. Andrew Brandram, of the Bible Society, wrote in 1835: “With Portugal he [Borrow] is already acquainted, and speaks the language.” This statement is significant, for only during the “Veiled Period” could Borrow have visited Portugal.

It may be argued that Borrow was merely posing as a great traveller, but the foregoing remarks are too casual, too much in the nature of asides, to be the utterances of a poseur. A man seeking to impress himself upon the world as a great traveller would probably have been a little more definite.

The only really reliable information as to Borrow’s movements after his arrival in London is contained in the note to Haydon. In all probability he went to Paris, where possibly he met Vidocq, the master-rogue turned detective. [77a] It has been suggested by Dr Knapp that he went to Paris, and thence on foot to Bayonne and Madrid, after which he tramped to Pamplona, where he gets into trouble, is imprisoned, and is released on condition that he leave the country; he proceeds towards Marseilles and Genoa, where he takes ship and is landed safely in London. The data, however, upon which this itinerary is constructed are too frail to be convincing. There is every probability that he roamed about the Continent and met with adventures—he was a man to whom adventures gravitated quite naturally—but the fact of his saying that he had been imprisoned on three occasions, and there being only two instances on record at the time, cannot in itself be considered as conclusive evidence of his having been arrested at Pamplona. [77b]

In the spring of 1827 Borrow was unquestionably at Norwich, for he saw the famous trotting stallion

Marshland Shales on the Castle Hill (12th April), and did for that grand horse "what I would neither do for earl or baron, doffed my hat." [78] Borrow apparently remained with his mother for some months, to judge from certain entries (29th September to 19th November) in his hand that appear in her account books.

In December 1829 he was back again in London at 77 Great Russell Street, W.C. He was as usual eager to obtain some sort of work. He wrote to "the Committee of the Honourable and Praiseworthy Association, known by the name of the Highland Society . . . a body animate with patriotism, which, guided by philosophy, produces the noblest results, and many of whose members stand amongst the very eminent in the various departments of knowledge."

The project itself was that of translating into English "the best and most approved poetry of the Ancient and Modern Scoto-Gaelic Bards, with such notes on the usages and superstitions therein alluded to, as will enable the English reader to form a clear and correct idea of the originals." In the course of a rather ornate letter, Borrow offers himself as the translator and compiler of such a work as he suggests, avowing his willingness to accept whatsoever remuneration might be thought adequate compensation for his expenditure of time. Furthermore, he undertakes to complete the work within a period of two years.

On 7th December he wrote to Dr Bowring, recently returned from Denmark:—

> "Lest I should intrude upon you when you are busy, I write to enquire when you will be

> unoccupied. I wish to show you my translation of The Death of Balder, Ewald's most celebrated production, which, if you approve of, you will perhaps render me some assistance in bringing forth, for I don't know many publishers. I think this will be a proper time to introduce it to the British public, as your account of Danish literature will doubtless cause a sensation." [79]

On 29th December he wrote again:—

> "When I had last the pleasure of being at yours, you mentioned that we might at some future period unite our strength in composing a kind of Danish Anthology. Suppose we bring forward at once the first volume of the Danish Anthology, which should contain the heroic supernatural songs of the *K*[*iæmpe*] *V*[*iser*]."

It was suggested that there should be four volumes in all, and the first, with an introduction that Borrow expressed himself as not ashamed of, was ready and "might appear instanter, with no further trouble to yourself than writing, if you should think fit, a page or two of introductory matter." Dr Bowring replied by return of post that he thought that no more than two volumes could be ventured on, and Borrow acquiesced, writing: "The sooner the work is advertised the better, *for I am terribly afraid of being forestalled in the Kiæmpe Viser by some of those Scotch blackguards*, who affect to translate from all

languages, of which they are fully as ignorant as Lockhart is of Spanish."

Borrow was full of enthusiasm for the project, and repeated that the first volume was ready, adding: "If we unite our strength in the second, I think we can produce something worthy of fame, for we shall have plenty of matter to employ talent upon." A later letter, which was written from 7 Museum Street (8th January), told how he had "been obliged to decamp from Russell St. for the cogent reason of an execution having been sent into the house, and I thought myself happy in escaping with my things."

He drew up a prospectus, endeavouring "to assume a Danish style," which he submitted to his collaborator, begging him to "alter . . . whatever false logic has crept into it, find a remedy for its incoherencies, and render it fit for its intended purpose. I have had for the two last days a rising headache which has almost prevented me doing anything."

It would appear that Dr Bowring did not altogether approve of the "Danish style," for on 14th January Borrow wrote, "I approve of the prospectus in every respect; it is business-like, and there is nothing flashy in it. I do not wish to suggest one alteration . . . When you see the foreign Editor," he continues, "I should feel much obliged if you would speak to him about my reviewing Tegner, and enquire whether a *good* article on Welsh poetry would be received. I have the advantage of not being a Welshman. I would speak the truth, and would give translations of some of the best Welsh poetry; and I really believe that my translations would not be the worst that have been made from the Welsh tongue."

The prospectus, which appeared in several publications ran as follows:—

> "Dr Bowring and Mr George Borrow are about to publish, dedicated to the King of Denmark, by His Majesy's permission, THE SONGS OF SCANDINAVIA, in 2 vols. 8vo, containing a Selection of the most interesting of the Historical and Romantic Ballads of North-Western Europe, with Specimens of the Danish and Norwegian Poets down to the present day.
>
> Price to Subscribers, £1, 1s.—to Non-Subscribers £1, 5s.
>
> The First Volume will be devoted to Ancient Popular Poetry; the Second will give the choicest productions of the Modern School, beginning with Tullin." [81]

The Songs of Scandinavia now became to Borrow what the *Celebrated Trials* had been four years previously, a source of constant toil. On one occasion he writes to Dr Bowring telling him that he has just translated an ode "as I breakfasted." What Borrow lived on at this period it is impossible to say. It may be assumed that Mrs Borrow did not keep him, for, apart from the slender proportions of the income of the mother, the unconquerable independence of the son must be considered; and Borrow loved his mother too tenderly to allow her to deprive herself of luxuries even to keep him. He borrowed money from her at various times; but he

subsequently faithfully repaid her. Even John was puzzled. "You never tell me what you are doing," he writes to his brother at the end of 1832; "you can't be living on nothing."

Borrow appears to have kept Dr Bowring well occupied with suggestions as to how that good-natured man might assist him. Although he is to see him on the morrow, he writes on the evening of 21st May regarding another idea that has just struck him:

> "As at present no doubt seems to be entertained of Prince Leopold's accepting the sovereignty of Greece, would you have any objection to write to him concerning me? I should be very happy to go to Greece in his service. I do not wish to go in a civil or domestic capacity, and I have, moreover, no doubt that all such situations have been long since filled up; I wish to go in a military one, for which I am qualified by birth and early habits. You might inform the Prince that I have been for years on the Commander-in-Chiefs list for a commission, but that I have not had sufficient interest to procure an appointment. One of my reasons for wishing to reside in Greece is, that the mines of Eastern literature would be accessible to me. I should soon become an adept in Turkish, and would weave and transmit to you such an anthology as would gladden your very heart. As for the *Songs of*

> *Scandinavia*, all the ballads would be ready before departure, and as I should have books, I would in a few months send you translations of the modern Lyric Poetry. I hope this letter will not displease you. I do not write it from *flightiness*, but from thoughtfulness. I am uneasy to find myself at four and twenty drifting on the sea of the world, and likely to continue so."

On 22nd May Dr Bowring introduced Borrow to Dr Grundtvig, the Danish poet, who required some transcriptions done. On 7th June, Borrow wrote to Dr Bowring:

> "I have looked over Mr Gruntvig's (*sic*) manuscript. It is a very long affair, and the language is Norman Saxon. £40 would not be an extravagant price for a transcript, and so they told him at the Museum. However, as I am doing nothing particular at present, and as I might learn something from transcribing it, I would do it for £20. He will call on you to-morrow morning, and then, if you please, you may recommend me. The character closely resembles the ancient Irish, so I think you can answer for my competency."

At this time there were a hundred schemes seething through Borrow's eager brain. Hearing that "an order has been issued for the making a transcript of

the celebrated Anglo-Saxon Codex of Exeter, for the use of the British Museum," he applied to some unknown correspondent for his interest and help to obtain the appointment as transcriber. The work, however, was carried out by a Museum official.

Another project appears to have been to obtain a post at the British Museum. On 9th March 1830 he had written to Dr Bowring:

> "I have thought over the Museum matter, which we were talking about last night, and it appears to me that it would be the very thing for me, provided that it could be accomplished. I should feel obliged if you would deliberate upon the best mode of proceeding, so that when I see you again I may have the benefit of your advice."

In reply Dr Bowring commended the scheme, and promised to assist "by every sort of counsel and exertion. But it would injure you," he proceeds, "if I were to take the initiative. [The Gibraltar house of Bowring & Murdock had recently failed.] Quietly make yourself master of that department of the Museum. We must then think of how best to get at the Council. If by any management they can be induced to ask my opinion, I will give you a character which shall take you to the top of Hecla itself. You have claims, strong ones, and I should rejoice to see you *niched* in the British Museum."

Again failure! Disappointment seemed to be dogging Borrow's footsteps at this period. For years past he had been seeking some sort of occupation, into

which he could throw all that energy and determination of character that he possessed. He was earnest and able, and he knew that he only required an opportunity of showing to the world what manner of man he was. He seemed doomed to meet everywhere with discouragement; for no one wanted him, just as no one wanted his translations of the glorious Ab Gwilym. He appeared before the world as a failure, which probably troubled him very little; but there was another aspect of the case that was in his eyes, "the most heartbreaking of everything, the strange, the disadvantageous light in which I am aware that I must frequently have appeared to those whom I most love and honour." [83]

On 14th September he wrote to Dr Bowring:

> "I am going to Norwich for some short time, as I am very unwell and hope that cold bathing in October and November may prove of service to me. My complaints are, I believe, the offspring of ennui and unsettled prospects. I have thoughts of attempting to get into the French service, as I should like prodigiously to serve under Clausel in the next Bedouin campaign. I shall leave London next Sunday and will call some evening to take my leave; I cannot come in the morning, as early rising kills me."

A year later he writes again to Dr Bowring, who once more has been exerting himself on his friend's behalf:

"Willow Lane, Norwich,
11*th September* 1831.

My dear Sir,—

I return you my most sincere thanks for your kind letter of the 2nd inst., and though you have not been successful in your application to the Belgian authorities in my behalf, I know full well that you did your utmost, and am only sorry that at my instigation you attempted an impossibility.

The Belgians seem either not to know or not to care for the opinion of the great Cyrus who gives this advice to his captains. 'Take no heed from what countries ye fill up your ranks, but seek recruits as ye do horses, not those particularly who are of your own country, but those of merit.' The Belgians will only have such recruits as are born in Belgium, and when we consider the heroic manner in which the native Belgian army defended the person of their new sovereign in the last conflict with the Dutch, can we blame them for their determination? It is rather singular, however, that resolved as they are to be served only by themselves they should have sent for 5000 Frenchmen to clear their country of a handful of Hollanders, who have

generally been considered the most unwarlike people in Europe, but who, if they had fair play given them, would long ere this time have replanted the Orange flag on the towers of Brussels, and made the Belgians what they deserve to be, hewers of wood and drawers of water.

And now, my dear Sir, allow me to reply to a very important part of your letter; you ask me whether I wish to purchase a commission in the British service, because in that case you would speak to the Secretary at War about me. I must inform you therefore that my name has been for several years upon the list for the purchase of a commission, and I have never yet had sufficient interest to procure an appointment. If I can do nothing better I shall be very glad to purchase; but I will pause two or three months before I call upon you to fulfil your kind promise. It is believed that the Militia will be embodied in order to be sent to that unhappy country Ireland, and provided I can obtain a commission in one of them, and they are kept in service, it would be better than spending £500 about one in the line. I am acquainted with the Colonels of the two Norfolk regiments, and I daresay that neither

of them would have any objection to receive me. If they are not embodied I will most certainly apply to you, and you may say when you recommend me that being well grounded in Arabic, and having some talent for languages, I might be an acquisition to a corps in one of our Eastern Colonies. I flatter myself that I could do a great deal in the East provided I could once get there, either in a civil or military capacity; there is much talk at present about translating European books into the two great languages, the Arabic and Persian; now I believe that with my enthusiasm for these tongues I could, if resident in the East, become in a year or two better acquainted with them than any European has been yet, and more capable of executing such a task. Bear this in mind, and if before you hear from me again you should have any opportunity to recommend me as a proper person to fill any civil situation in those countries or to attend any expedition thither, I pray you to lay hold of it, and no conduct of mine shall ever give you reason to repent it.

I remain,

My Dear Sir,
Your most obliged and obedient
Servant,

GEORGE BORROW.

P.S.—Present my best remembrances to Mrs B. and to Edgar, and tell them that they will both be starved. There is now a report in the street that twelve corn-stacks are blazing within twenty miles of this place. I have lately been wandering about Norfolk, and I am sorry to say that the minds of the peasantry are in a horrible state of excitement; I have repeatedly heard men and women in the harvest-field swear that not a grain of the corn they were cutting should be eaten, and that they would as lieve be hanged as live. I am afraid all this will end in a famine and a rustic war."

It was pride that prompted Borrow to ask Dr Bowring to stay his hand for the moment about a commission. There was no reasonable possibility of his being able to raise £500. Even if his mother had possessed it, which she did not, he would not have drained her resources of so large an amount. His subsequent attitude towards the Belgians was characteristic of him. To his acutely sensitive perceptions, failure to obtain an appointment he sought was a rebuff, and his whole nature rose up against what, at the moment, appeared to be an intolerable slight.

Nothing came of the project of collaboration between Bowring and Borrow beyond an article on Danish and Norwegian literature that appeared in *The Foreign Quarterly Review* (June 1830), in which

Borrow supplied translations of the sixteen poems illustrating Bowring's text. In all probability the response to the prospectus was deemed inadequate, and Bowring did not wish to face a certain financial loss.

From Borrow's own letters there is no question that Dr Bowring was acting towards him in a most friendly manner, and really endeavouring to assist him to obtain some sort of employment. It may be, as has been said, and as seems extremely probable, that Bowring used his "facility in acquiring and translating tongues deliberately as a ladder to an administrative post abroad," [86a] but if Borrow "put a wrong construction upon his sympathy" and was led into "a veritable *cul-de-sac* of literature," [86b] it was no fault of Bowring's.

Borrow's relations with Dr Bowring continued to be most cordial for many years, as his letters show. "Pray excuse me for troubling you with these lines," he writes years later; "I write to you, as usual, for assistance in my projects, convinced that you will withhold none which it may be in your power to afford, more especially when by so doing you will perhaps be promoting the happiness of our fellow-creatures." This is very significant as indicating the nature of the relations between the two men.

Borrow was to experience yet another disappointment. A Welsh bookseller, living in the neighbourhood of Smithfield, commissioned him to translate into English Elis Wyn's *The Sleeping Bard*, a book printed originally in 1703. The bookseller foresaw for the volume a large sale, not only in England but in Wales; but "on the eve of committing it to the press, however, the Cambrian-Briton felt his

small heart give way within him. 'Were I to print it,' said he, 'I should be ruined; the terrible descriptions of vice and torment would frighten the genteel part of the English public out of its wits, and I should to a certainty be prosecuted by Sir James Scarlett . . . Myn Diawl! I had no idea, till I had read him in English, that Elis Wyn had been such a terrible fellow.'" [87a]

With this Borrow had to be content and retire from the presence of the little bookseller, who told him he was "much obliged . . . for the trouble you have given yourself on my account," [87b] and his bundle of manuscript, containing nearly three thousand lines, the work probably of some months, was to be put aside for thirty years before eventually appearing in a limited edition.

It cannot be determined with exactness when Borrow relinquished the unequal struggle against adverse circumstances in London. He had met with sufficient discouragement to dishearten him from further effort. Perhaps his greatest misfortune was his disinclination to make friends with anybody save vagabonds. He could attract and earn the friendship of an apple-woman, thimble-riggers, tramps, thieves, gypsies, in short with any vagrant he chose to speak to; but his hatred of gentility was a great and grave obstacle in the way of his material advancement. His brother John seemed to recognise this; for in 1831 he wrote, "I am convinced that *your want of success in life* is more owing to your being unlike other people than to any other cause."

It would appear that, finding nothing to do in London, Borrow once more became a wanderer. He was in London in March; but on 27th, 28th, and 29th

July 1830 he was unquestionably in Paris. Writing about the Revolution of La Granja (August 1836) and of the energy, courage and activity of the war correspondents, he says:

> "I saw them [the war correspondents] during the three days at Paris, mingled with *canaille* and *gamins* behind the barriers, whilst the *mitraille* was flying in all directions, and the desperate cuirassiers were dashing their fierce horses against these seemingly feeble bulwarks. There stood they, dotting down their observations in their pocket-books as unconcernedly as if reporting the proceedings of a reform meeting in Covent Garden or Finsbury Square." [88a]

This can have reference only to the "Three Glorious Days" of Revolution, 27th to 29th July 1830, during which Charles X. lost, and Louis-Philippe gained, a throne. He returned to Norwich sometime during the autumn of 1830. [88b] In November he was entering upon his epistolary duel with the Army Pay Office in connection with John's half-pay as a lieutenant in the West Norfolk Militia.

In 1826 John had gone to Mexico, then looked upon as a land of promise for young Englishmen, who might expect to find fortunes in its silver mines. Allday, brother of Roger Kerrison, was there, and John Borrow determined to join him. Obtaining a year's leave of absence from his colonel, together with permission to apply for an extension, he entered the service of the Real del Monte Company, receiving

a salary of three hundred pounds a year. He arranged that his mother should have his half-pay, and it was in connection with this that George entered upon a correspondence with the Army Pay Office that was to extend over a period of fifteen months.

Originally John had arranged for the amounts to be remitted to Mexico, and he sent them back again to his mother. This involved heavy losses in connection with the bills of exchange, and wishing to avoid this tax, John sent to his brother an official copy of a Mexican Power of Attorney, which George strove to persuade the Army Pay Office was the original.

Tact was unfortunately not one of George Borrow's acquirements at this period, and in this correspondence he adopted an attitude that must have seriously prejudiced his case. "I am a solicitor myself, Sir," he states, and proceeds to threaten to bring the matter before Parliament. He writes to the Solicitor of the Treasury "as a member of the same honourable profession to which I was myself bred up," and demands whether he has not law, etc., on his side. The outcome of the correspondence was that the disembodied allowance was refused on the plea "that Lieutenant Borrow having been absent without Leave from the Training of the West Norfolk Militia has, under the provisions of the 12th Section of the Militia Pay and Clothing Act, forfeited his Allowance." In consequence, payment was made only for the amount due from 25th June 1829 to 24th December 1830. The whole tone of Borrow's letters was unfortunate for the cause he pleaded. He wrote to the Secretary of State for War as he might have written to the little Welsh bookseller with "the small heart." He was indignant at what he conceived

to be an injustice, and was unable to dissemble his anger.

George had thought of joining his brother, but had not received any very marked encouragement to do so. John despised Mexican methods. On one occasion he writes apropos of George's suggestion of the army, "If you can raise the pewter, come out here rather than that, and *rob*." One sage thing at least John is to be credited with, when he wrote to his brother, "Do not enter the army; it is a bad spec." It would have been for George Borrow.

Among the papers left at Borrow's death was a fragment of a political article in dispraise of the Radicals. The editorial "We" suggests that Borrow might possibly have been engaged in political journalism. The statement made by him that he "frequently spoke up for Wellington" [90] may or may not have had reference to contributions to the press. The fragment itself proves nothing. Many would-be journalists write "leaders" that never see the case-room.

It is useless to speculate further regarding the period that Borrow himself elected to veil from the eyes, not only of his contemporaries, but those of another generation. Men who have overcome adverse conditions and achieved fame are not as a rule averse from publishing, or at least allowing to be known, the difficulties that they had to contend with. Borrow was in no sense of the word an ordinary man. He unquestionably suffered acutely during the years of failure, when it seemed likely that his life was to be wasted, barren of anything else save the acquirement of a score or more languages; keys that could open literary storehouses that

nobody wanted to explore, to the very existence of which, in fact, the public was frigidly indifferent.

“Poor George . . . I wish he was making money . . . He works hard and remains poor,” is the comment of his brother John, written in the autumn of 1830. To no small degree Borrow was responsible for his own failure, or perhaps it would be more just to say that he had been denied many of the attributes that make for success. His independence was aggressive, and it offended people. Even with the Welsh Preacher and his wife he refused to unbend.

“‘What a disposition!’” Winifred had exclaimed, holding up her hands; “‘and this is pride, genuine pride—that feeling which the world agrees to call so noble. Oh, how mean a thing is pride! never before did I see all the meanness of what is called pride!’” [91a]

This pride, magnificent as the loneliness of kings, and about as unproductive of a sympathetic view of life, always constituted a barrier in the way of Borrow’s success. There were innumerable other obstacles: his choice of friends, his fierce denunciatory hatred of gentility, together with humbug, which he always seemed to confuse with it, the attacks of the “Horrors,” his grave bearing, which no laugh ever disturbed, and, above all, his uncompromising hostility to the things that the world chose to consider excellent. The world in return could make nothing of a man who was a mass of moods and sensibilities, strange tastes and pursuits. It is not remarkable that he should fail to make the stir that he had hoped to make.

With the unerring instinct of a hypersensitive nature, he knew his merit, his honesty, his capacity—knew

that he possessed one thing that eventually commands success, which "through life has ever been of incalculable utility to me, and has not unfrequently supplied the place of friends, money, and many other things of almost equal importance—iron perseverance, without which all the advantages of time and circumstance are of very little avail in any undertaking." [91b] It was this dogged determination that was to carry him through the most critical period of his life, enable him to earn the approval of those in whose interests he worked, and eventually achieve fame and an unassailable place in English literature.

CHAPTER VI
JANUARY–JULY 1833

It is not a little curious that no one should have thought of putting Borrow's undoubted gifts as a linguist to some practical use. He himself had frequently cast his eyes in the direction of a political appointment abroad. It remained, however, for the Rev. Francis Cunningham, [92] vicar of Lowestoft, in Suffolk, to see in this young man against whom the curse of Babel was inoperative, a sword that, in the hands of the British and Foreign Bible Society, might be wielded with considerable effect against the heathen.

Borrow appears to have become acquainted with the Rev. Francis Cunningham through the Skeppers of

Oulton Hall, near Lowestoft, of whom it is necessary to give some account. Edmund Skepper had married Anne Breame of Beetley, who, on the death of her father, came into £9000. She and her husband purchased the Oulton Hall estate, upon which Anne Skepper seems to have been given a five per cent. mortgage. There were two children of the marriage, Breame (born 1794) and Mary (born 1796). The boy inherited the estate, and the girl the mortgage, worth about £450 per annum. Mary married Henry Clarke, a lieutenant in the Navy (26th July 1817), who within eight months died of consumption. Two months later Mrs Clarke gave birth to a daughter, who was christened Henrietta Mary. Mrs Clarke became acquainted with the Cunninghams while they were at Pakefield, and there is every reason to believe that she was instrumental in introducing Borrow to Cunningham. It is most probable that they met during Borrow's visit at Oulton Hall in November 1832.

The Rev. Francis Cunningham appears to have been impressed by Borrow's talent for languages, and fully alive to his value to an institution such as the Bible Society, of which he, Cunningham, was an active member. He accordingly addressed [93a] to the secretary, the Rev. Andrew Brandram, the following letter:

LOWESTOFT VICARAGE,
27*th Dec.* 1832.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

A young farmer in this neighbourhood has introduced me to-day to a person of whom I have long heard, who appears to me to

promise so much that I am induced to offer him to you as a successor of Platt and Greenfield. [93b] He is a person without University education, but who has read the Bible in thirteen languages. He is independent in circumstances, of no very defined denomination of Christians, but I think of certain Christian principle. I shall make more enquiry about him and see him again. Next week I propose to meet him in London, and I could wish that you should see him, and, if you please, take him under your charge for a few days. He is of the middle order in Society, and a very produceable person.

I intend to be in town on Tuesday morning to go to the Socy. P. C. K. On Wednesday is Dr Wilson's meeting at Islington. He may be in town on Monday evening, and will attend to any appointment.

Will you write me word by return of post, and believe me ever

Most truly and affectionately yours,

F. CUNNINGHAM.

The recommendation was well-timed, for the Bible Society at that particular moment required such a man as Borrow for a Manchu-Tartar project it had in view. In 1821 the Bible Society had commissioned Stepán Vasiliévitch Lipovzoff, [94a] of St Petersburg,

to translate the New Testament into Manchu, the court and diplomatic language of China. A year later, an edition of 550 copies of the First Gospel was printed from type specially cast for the undertaking. A hundred copies were despatched to headquarters in London, and the remainder, together with the type, placed with the Society's bankers at St Petersburg, [94b] until the time should arrive for the distribution of the books.

Three years after (1824), the overflowing Neva flooded the cellars in which the books were stored, causing their irretrievable ruin, and doing serious damage to the type. This misfortune appeared temporarily to discourage the authorities at home, although Mr Lipovzoff was permitted to proceed with the work of translation, which he completed in two years from the date of the inundation.

In 1832 the Rev. Wm. Swann, of the London Missionary Society, discovered in the famous library of Baron Schilling de Canstadt at St Petersburg the manuscript of a Manchu translation of "the principal part of the Old Testament," and two books of the New. The discovery was considered to be so important that Mr Swann decided to delay his departure for his post in Siberia and make a transcription, which he did. The Manchu translation was the work of Father Puerot, "originally a Jesuit emissary at Pekin [who] passed the latter years of his life in the service of the Russian Mission in the capacity of physician." [95]

The immediate outcome of Mr Cunningham's letter was an interview between Borrow and the Bible Society's officials. With characteristic energy and determination, Borrow trudged up to London,

covering the 112 miles on foot in 27.5 hours. His expenses by the way amounted to fivepence-halfpenny for the purchase of a roll, two apples, a pint of ale and a glass of milk. On reaching London he proceeded direct to the Bible Society's offices in Earl Street, in spite of the early hour, and there awaited the arrival of the Rev. Andrew Brandram (Secretary), and the Rev. Joseph Jowett (Literary Superintendent).

The story of Borrow's arrival at Earl Street was subsequently told, by one of the secretaries at a provincial meeting in connection with the Bible Society. The Rev. Wentworth Webster writes:

> "I was little more than a boy when I first heard George Borrow spoken of at the annual dinner given by a connection of my family to the deputation of the British and Foreign Bible Society in a country town near London . . . I can distinctly recall one of the secretaries telling of his first meeting with Borrow, whom he found waiting at the offices of the Society one morning;—how puzzled he was by his appearance; how, after he had read his letter of introduction, he wished to while away the time until a brother secretary should arrive, and did not want to say anything to commit himself to such a strange applicant; so he began by politely hoping that Borrow had slept well. 'I am not aware that I fell asleep on the road,' was the reply; I have walked from

Norwich to London.'" [96a]

It would appear that this conference took place on Friday, 4th January; for on that day there is an entry in the records of the Society of the loan to George Borrow of several books from the Society's library. On this and subsequent occasions, Borrow was examined as to his capabilities, the result appearing to be quite satisfactory. To judge from the books lent to Borrow, one of the subjects would seem to have been Arabic.

Borrow appeared before the Committee on 14th January, with the result that they seemed to be "quite satisfied with me and my philological capabilities," which they judged of from the report given by the Secretary and his colleague. A more material sign of approval was found in the undertaking to defray "the expenses of my journey to and from London, and also of my residence in that city, in the most handsome manner." [96b] That is to say, the Committee voted him the sum of ten pounds.

Borrow had been formally asked if he were prepared to learn Manchu sufficiently well to edit, or translate, into that language such portions of the Scriptures as the Society might decide to issue, provided means of acquiring the language were put within his reach, and employment should follow as soon as he showed himself proficient. To this Borrow had willingly agreed. At this period, the idea appears to have been to execute the work in London.

Shortly after appearing before the Committee Borrow returned to Norwich, this time by coach, with several books in the Manchu-Tartar dialect, including the Gospel of St Matthew and Amyot's Manchu-French Dictionary. His instructions were to learn the

language and come up for examination in six months' time. Possibly the time limit was suggested by Borrow himself, for he had said that he believed he could master any tongue in a few months.

After two or three weeks of incessant study of a language that Amyot says "one may acquire in five or six years," Borrow, who, it should be remembered, possessed no grammar of the tongue, wrote to Mr Jowett:

> "It is, then, your opinion that, from the lack of anything in the form of Grammar, I have scarcely made any progress towards the attainment of Manchu: [97] perhaps you will not be perfectly miserable at being informed that you were never more mistaken in your life. I can already, with the assistance of Amyot, translate Manchu with no great difficulty, and am perfectly qualified to write a critique on the version of St Matthew's Gospel, which I brought with me into the country . . . I will now conclude by beseeching you to send me, as soon as possible, *whatever can serve to enlighten me in respect to Manchu Grammar*, for, had I a Grammar, I should in a month's time be able to send a Manchu translation of *Jonah*."

The racy style of Borrow's letters must have been something of a revelation to the Bible Society's officers, who seem to have shown great tact and consideration in dealing with their self-confident

correspondent There is something magnificent in the letters that Borrow wrote about this period; their directness and virility, their courage and determination suggest, not a man who up to the thirtieth year of his age has been a conspicuous failure, as the world gauges failure; but one who had grown confident through many victories and is merely proceeding from one success to another.

Whilst in London, Borrow had discussed with Mr Brandram "the Gypsies and the profound darkness as to religion and morality that envolved them." [98] The Secretary told him of the Southampton Committee for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Gypsies that had recently been formed by the Rev. James Crabbe for the express purpose of enlightening and spreading the Gospel among the Romanys. Furthermore, Mr Brandram, on hearing of Borrow's interest in, and knowledge of, the gypsies, had requested him immediately on his return to Norwich to draw up a vocabulary of Mr Petulengro's language, during such time as he might have free from his other studies. Borrow showed himself, as usual, prolific of suggestions, all of which involved him in additional labour. He enquired through Mr Jowett if Mr Brandram would write about him to the Southampton Committee. He wished to translate into the gypsy tongue the Gospel of St John, "which I could easily do," he tells Mr Jowett, "with the assistance of one or two of the old people, but then they must be paid, for the gypsies are more mercenary than the Jews."

He also informed Mr Jowett that he had a brother in Mexico, subsequently assuring him that he had no doubt of John's willingness to assist the Society in "flinging the rays of scriptural light o'er that most

benighted and miserable region." He sent to his brother, at Mr Jowett's request, first a sheet, and afterwards a complete copy, of the Gospel of St Luke translated into Nahuatl, the prevailing dialect of the Mexican Indians, by Mariano Paz y Sanchez. [99a]

In addition to learning Manchu, Borrow is credited with correcting and passing for press the Nahuatl version of St. Luke. [99b] The Bible Society's records, however, point to the fact that this work was carried through by John Hattersley, who later was to come up with Borrow for examination in Manchu. In the light of this, the following passage from one of John's letters is puzzling in the extreme:—"I have just received your letter of the 16th of February, together with your translation of St Luke. I am glad you have got the job, but I must say that the Bible Society are just throwing away their time."

He goes on to explain how many dialects there are in Mexico. "The job" can only refer to the Mexican translation, as, at that period, Borrow was merely studying Manchu. He had received no appointment from the Society. It may have happened that Borrow expressed a wish to look through the proofs and that a set was sent to him for this purpose; but there seems no doubt that the actual official responsibility for the work rested with Hattersley. A very important point in support of this view is that there is no record of Borrow being paid anything in connection with this Mexican translation, beyond the amount of fifteen shillings and fivepence, which he had expended in postage on the advance sheet and complete copy sent to John. To judge from the subsequent financial arrangements between the Society and its agent, it is very improbable that he was given work to do without payment.

After seven weeks' study Borrow wrote again to Mr Jowett:

> "I am advancing at full gallop, and . . . able to translate with pleasure and facility the specimens of the best authors who have written in the language contained in the compilation of the Klaproth. But I confess that the want of a Grammar has been, particularly in the beginning of my course, a great clog to my speed, and I have little doubt that had I been furnished with one I should have attained my present knowledge of Manchu in half the time. I was determined, however, not to be discouraged, and, not having a hatchet at hand to cut down the tree with, to attack it with my knife; and I would advise every one to make the most of the tools which happen to be in his possession until he can procure better ones, and it is not improbable that by the time the good tools arrive he will find he has not much need of them, having almost accomplished his work." [100a]

There is a hint of the difficulties he was experiencing in his confession that tools would still be of service to him, in particular "this same tripartite Grammar which Mr Brandram is hunting for, my ideas respecting Manchu construction being still very vague and wandering." [100b] There is also a request for "the original grammatical work of Amyot, printed

in the *Memoires*." [100c]

Borrow had been studying Manchu for seven weeks when, feeling that his glowing report of the progress he was making might be regarded as "a piece of exaggeration and vain boasting," he enclosed a specimen translation from Manchu into English. This he accompanied with an assurance that, if required, he could at that moment edit any book printed in the Manchu dialect. About this period Mr Jowett and his colleagues passed from one sensation to another. The calm confidence of this astonishing man was more than justified by his performance. His attitude towards life was strange to Earl Street.

Nineteen weeks from the date of commencing his study of Manchu, Borrow wrote again to Mr Jowett with unmistakable triumph: "I have mastered Manchu, and I should feel obliged by your informing the Committee of the fact, and also my excellent friend Mr Brandram." He proceeds to indicate some of the many difficulties with which he has had to contend, the absolute difference of Manchu from all the other languages that he has studied, with the single exception of Turkish; the number of its idiomatic phrases, which must of necessity be learnt off by heart; the little assistance he has had in the nature of books. Finally he acknowledges "the assistance of God," and asks "to be regularly employed, for though I am not in want, my affairs are not in a very flourishing condition."

The response to this letter was an invitation to proceed to London to undergo an examination. His competitor was John Hattersley, upon whom, in the event of Borrow's failure, would in all probability have devolved the duty of assisting Mr Lipovzoff. A

Manchu hymn, a pæan to the great Fûtsa, was the test. Each candidate prepared a translation, which was handed to the examiners, who in turn were to report to the Sub-Committee. Borrow returned to Norwich to await the result. This was most probably towards the end of June. [101]

Mr Jowett wrote encouragingly to Borrow of his prospects of obtaining the coveted appointment. In acknowledgment of this letter, Borrow dashed off a reply, magnificent in its confidence and manly sincerity. It was a defiance to the fate that had so long dogged his footsteps.

> "What you have written has given me great pleasure," he wrote, "as it holds out hope that I may be employed usefully to the Deity, to man, and myself. I shall be very happy to visit St Petersburg and to become the coadjutor of Lipovzoff, [102] and to avail myself of his acquirements in what you very happily designate a most singular language, towards obtaining a still greater proficiency in it. I flatter myself that I am for one or two reasons tolerably well adapted for the contemplated expedition, for besides a competent knowledge of French and German, I possess some acquaintance with Russian, being able to read without much difficulty any printed Russian book, and I have little doubt that after a few months intercourse with the natives, I should be able to speak it fluently.

> It would ill become me to bargain like a Jew or a Gypsy as to terms; all I wish to say on that point is, that I have nothing of my own, having been too long dependent on an excellent mother, who is not herself in very easy circumstances."

Whilst still waiting for the confirmation by the General Committee of the Sub-Committee's resolution, which was favourable to Borrow, Mr Jowett wrote to him (5th July), telling him how good were his prospects; but warning him not to be too confident of success. The Sub-Committee had recommended that Borrow's services should be engaged that he might go to St Petersburg and assist Mr Lipovzoff in editing St Luke and the Acts and any other portions of the New Testament that it was thought desirable to publish in Manchu. Should the Russian Government refuse to permit the work to be proceeded with, Borrow was to occupy himself in assisting the Rev. Wm. Swan to transcribe and collate the manuscript of the Old Testament in Manchu that had recently come to light. At the same time, he was to seize every opportunity that presented itself of perfecting himself in Manchu. For this he was to receive a salary of two hundred pounds a year to cover all expenses, save those of the journey to and from St Petersburg, for which the Society was to be responsible. Borrow was advised to think carefully over the proposal, and, if it should prove attractive to him, to hold himself in readiness to start as soon as the General Committee should approve of the recommendation that was to be placed before it. In conclusion, Mr Jowett proceeded to administer a gentle rebuke to the confident pride with which the

candidate indited his letters. Only a quotation can show the tact with which the admonition was conveyed.

"Excuse me," wrote the Literary Superintendent, "if as a clergyman, and your senior in years though not in talent, I venture, with the kindest of motives, to throw out a hint which may not be without its use. I am sure you will not be offended if I suggest that there is occasionally a tone of confidence in speaking of yourself, which has alarmed some of the excellent members of our Committee. It may have been this feeling, more than once displayed before, which prepared one or two of them to stumble at an expression in your letter of yesterday, in which, till pointed out, I confess I was not struck with anything objectionable, but at which, nevertheless, a humble Christian might not unreasonably take umbrage. It is where you speak of the prospect of becoming 'useful to the Deity, to man, and to yourself.' Doubtless you meant the prospect of glorifying God."

Borrow had yet to learn the idiom of Earl Street, which he showed himself most anxious to acquire. He clearly recognised that the Bible Society required different treatment from the Army Pay Office, or the Solicitor of the Treasury. It was accustomed to humility in those it employed, and a trust in a higher power, and Borrow's self-confident letters alarmed the members of the Committee. How thoroughly Borrow appreciated what was required is shown in a letter that he wrote to his mother from Russia, when anticipating the return of his brother. "Should John return home," he warns her, "by no means let him go near the Bible Society, for he would not do for them."

Borrow's reply to the Literary Superintendent's kindly worded admonition was entirely satisfactory and "in harmony with the rule laid down by Christ himself." It was something of a triumph, too, for Mr Jowett to rebuke a man of such sensitiveness as Borrow, without goading him to an impatient retort.

The meeting of the General Committee that was to decide upon Borrow's future was held on 22nd July, and on the following day Mr Jowett informed him that the recommendation of the Sub-Committee had been adopted and confirmed, at the same time requesting him to be at Earl Street on the morning of Friday, 26th July, that he might set out for St Petersburg the following Tuesday. On 25th July Borrow took the night coach to London. On the 29th he appeared before the Editorial Sub-Committee and heard read the resolution of his appointment, and drafts of letters recommending him to the Rev. Wm. Swan and Dr I. J. Schmidt, a correspondent of the Society's in St Petersburg and a member of the Russian Board of Censors. Finally, there was impressed upon him "the necessity of confining himself closely to the one object of his mission, carefully abstaining from mingling himself with political or ecclesiastical affairs during his residence in Russia. Mr Borrow assured them of his full determination religiously to comply with this admonition, and to use every prudent method for enlarging his acquaintance with the Manchu language." [104]

The salary was to date from the day he embarked, and on account of expenses to St Petersburg he drew the sum of £37. The actual amount he expended was £27, 7s. 6d., according to the account he submitted, which was dated 2nd October 1834. It is to be

feared that Borrow was not very punctual in rendering his accounts, as Mr Brandram wrote to him (18th October 1837):—"I know you are no accountant, but do not forget that there are some who are. My memory was jogged upon this subject the other day, and I was expected to say to you that a letter of figures would be acceptable."

It is not unnatural that those who remembered Borrow as one of William Taylor's "harum-scarum" young men, who at one time intended to "abuse religion and get prosecuted," should find in his appointment as an agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society a subject for derisive mirth. Harriet Martineau's voice was heard well above the rest. "When this polyglott gentleman appeared before the public as a devout agent of the Bible Society in foreign parts," she wrote, "there was one burst of laughter from all who remembered the old Norwich days." [105] Like hundreds of other men, Borrow had, in youth, been led to somewhat hasty and ill-considered conclusions; but this in itself does not seem to be sufficiently strong reason why he should not change his views. Many young men pass through an aggressively irreligious phase without suffering much harm. Harriet Martineau was rather too precipitate in assuming that what a man believes, or disbelieves, at twenty, he holds to at thirty; such a view negatives the reformer. Perhaps the chief cause of the change in Borrow's views was that he had touched the depths of failure. Here was an opening that promised much. He was a diplomatist when it suited his purpose, and if the old poison were not quite gone out of his system, he would hide his wounds, or allow the secretaries to bandage them with mild reproof.

Very different from the attitude of Harriet Martineau was that of John Venning, an English merchant resident at Norwich and recently returned from St Petersburg, where his charity and probity had placed him in high favour with the Emperor and the Goverment officials. Mr Venning gave Borrow letters of introduction to a number of influential personages at St Petersburg, including Prince Alexander Galitzin and Baron Schilling de Canstadt. Dr Bowring obtained a letter from Lord Palmerston to someone whose name is not known. There were letters of introduction from other hands, so that when he was ready to sail Borrow found himself "loaded with letters of recommendation to some of the first people in Russia. Mr Venning's packet has arrived with letters to several of the Princes, so that I shall be protected if I am seized as a spy; for the Emperor is particularly cautious as to the foreigners whom he admits. It costs £2, 7s. 6d. merely for permission to go to Russia, which alone is enough to deter most people." [106]

Before leaving England, Borrow paid into his mother's account at her bank the sum of seventeen pounds, an amount that she had advanced to him either during his unproductive years, or on account of his expenses in connection with the expedition to St Petersburg.

CHAPTER VII
AUGUST 1833–JANUARY 1834

On 19th/31st July 1833 Borrow set out on a journey that was to some extent to realise his ambitions. He was to be trusted and encouraged and, what was most important of all, praised for what he accomplished; for Borrow's was a nature that responded best to the praise and entire confidence of those for whom he worked.

Travelling second class for reasons of economy, he landed at Hamburg at seven in the morning of the fourth day, after having experienced "a disagreeable passage of three days, in which I suffered much from sea-sickness." [107a] Exhausted by these days of suffering and want of sleep, the heat of the sun brought on "a transient fit of delirium," [107b] in other words, an attack of the "Horrors." Two fellow-passengers (Jews), with whom he had become acquainted, conveyed him to a comfortable hotel, where he was visited by a physician, who administered forty drops of laudanum, caused his head to be swathed in wet towels, ordered him to bed, and charged a fee of seven shillings. The result was that by the evening he had quite recovered.

One of Borrow's first duties was to write a lengthy letter to Mr Jowett, telling him of his movements, describing the city, the service at a church he

attended, the lax morality of the Hamburgers in permitting rope-dancers in the park, and the opening of dancing-saloons, "most infamous places," on the Lord's day. "England, with all her faults," he proceeds, "has still some regard to decency, and will not tolerate such a shameless display of vice on so sacred a season, when a decent cheerfulness is the freest form in which the mind or countenance ought to invest themselves." In conclusion, he announced his intention of leaving for Lübeck on the sixth, [108a] and he would be on the Baltic two days later en route for St Petersburg. "My next letter, provided it pleases the Almighty to vouchsafe me a happy arrival, will be from the Russian capital." By "a fervent request that you will not forget me in your prayers," he demonstrated that Mr Jowett's hint had not been forgotten.

The distance between Hamburg and Lübeck is only about thirty miles, yet it occupied Borrow thirteen hours, so abominable was the road, which "was paved at intervals with huge masses of unhewn rock, and over this pavement the carriage was very prudently driven at a snail's pace; for, had anything approaching speed been attempted, the entire demolition of the wheels in a few minutes must have been the necessary result. No sooner had we quitted this terrible pavement than we sank to our axle-trees in sand, mud, and water; for, to render the journey perfectly delectable, the rain fell in torrents and ceaselessly." [108b] The state of the road Borrow attributed to the ill-nature of the King of Denmark, for immediately on leaving his dominions it improved into an excellent carriageway.

On 28th July/9th August Borrow took steamer from Travemünde, and three days later landed at St

Petersburg. His first duty was to call upon Mr Swan, whom he found “one of the most amiable and interesting characters” he had ever met. The arrival of a coadjutor caused Mr Swan considerable relief, as he had suffered in health in consequence of his uninterrupted labours in transcribing the Manchu manuscript.

Borrow was enthusiastic in his admiration of the capital of “our dear and glorious Russia.” St Petersburg he considered “the finest city in the world” [109] other European capitals were unworthy of comparison. The enormous palaces, the long, straight streets, the grandeur of the public buildings, the noble Neva that flows majestically through “this Queen of the cities,” the three miles long Nevsky Prospect, paved with wood; all aroused in him enthusiasm and admiration. “In a word,” he wrote to his mother, “I can do little else but look and wonder.” All that he had read and heard of the capital of All the Russias had failed to prepare him for this scene of splendour. The meeting and harmonious mixing of East and West early attracted his attention. The Oriental cultivation of a twelve-inch beard among the middle and lower classes, placed them in marked contrast with the moustached or clean-shaven patricians and foreigners. In short, Russia gripped hold of and warmed Borrow’s imagination. Here were new types, curious blendings of nationalities unthought of and strange to him, a mine of wealth to a man whose studies were never books, except when they helped him the better to understand men.

Another thing that attracted him to Russia was the great kindness with which he was received, both by the English Colony and the natives: to the one he

appealed by virtue of a common ancestry; to the other, on account of his knowledge of the Russian tongue, not to speak of his mission, which acted as a strong recommendation to their favour. On his part Borrow reciprocated the esteem. If he were an implacable enemy, he was also a good friend, and he thoroughly appreciated the manner in which he was welcomed by his countrymen, especially the invitation he received from one of them to make his house his home until he found a suitable dwelling. To his mother he wrote:

> "The Russians are the best-natured, kindest people in the world, and though they do not know as much as the English [he was not referring to the Colony], they have not their fiendish, spiteful dispositions, and if you go amongst them and speak their language, however badly, they would go through fire and water to do you a kindness." Later, when in Portugal, he heartily wished himself "back in Russia . . . where I had left cherished friends and warm affections."

High as was his opinion of the Russians, he was at a loss to understand how they had earned their reputation as "the best general linguists in the world." He found Russian absolutely necessary to anyone who wished to make himself understood. French and German as equivalents were of less value in St Petersburg than in England.

At first Borrow took up his residence "for nearly a fortnight in a hotel, as the difficulty of procuring

lodgings in this place is very great, and when you have procured them you have to furnish them yourself at a considerable expense . . . eventually I took up my abode with Mr Egerton Hubbard, a friend of Mr Venning's [at 221 Galernoy Ulitza], where I am for the present very comfortably situated." [110] He stayed with Mr Hubbard for three months; but was eventually forced to leave on account of constant interruptions, probably by his fellow-boarders, in consequence of which he could neither perform his task of transcription nor devote himself to study. He therefore took a small lodging at a cost of nine shillings a week, including fires, where he could enjoy quiet and solitude. His meals he got at a Russian eating-house, dinner costing fivepence, "consequently," he writes to his mother, "I am not at much expense, being able to live for about sixty pounds a year and pay a Russian teacher, who has five shillings for one lesson a week."

One of Borrow's earliest thoughts on arriving at St Petersburg had been to present his letters of introduction. Within two days of landing he called upon Prince Alexander Galítzin, [111] accompanied by his fellow-lodger, young Venning. One of the most important, and at the same time useful, friendships that he made was with Baron Schilling de Canstadt, the philologist and savant, who, later, with his accustomed generosity, was to place his unique library at Borrow's disposition. The Baron was one of the greatest bibliophiles of his age, and possessed a collection of Eastern manuscripts and other priceless treasures that was world-famous. He spared neither expense nor trouble in procuring additions to his collection, which after his death was acquired by the Imperial Academy of Science at St Petersburg. In this literary treasure-house Borrow

found facilities for study such as he nowhere else could hope to obtain.

Another friendship that Borrow made was with John P. Hasfeldt, a man of about his own age attached to the Danish Legation, who also gave lessons in languages. Borrow seems to have been greatly attracted to Hasfeldt, who wrote to him with such cordiality. It was Hasfeldt who gave to Borrow as a parting gift the silver shekel that he invariably carried about with him, and which caused him to be hailed as blessed by the Gibraltar Jews.

In his letter Hasfeldt shows himself a delightful correspondent. His generous camaraderie seemed to warm Borrow to response, as indeed well it might. Who could resist the breezy good humour of the following from a letter addressed to Borrow by Hasfeldt years later?—

> "Do you still eat Pike soup? Do you remember the time when you lived on that dish for more than six weeks, and came near exterminating the whole breed? And the pudding that accompanied it, that always lay as hard as a stone on the stomach? This you surely have not forgotten. Yes, your kitchen was delicately manipulated by Machmoud, your Tartar servant, who only needed to give you horse-meat to have merited a diploma. Do you still sing when you are in a good humour? Doubtless you are not troubled with many friends to visit you, for you are not of the sort who are easily

> understood, nor do you care to have everyone understand you; you prefer to have people call you grey and let you gae."

Other friends Borrow made, including Nikolai Ivánovitch Gretch, [112a] the grammarian, and Friedrich von Adelung, [112b] who assisted him with the loan of books and MSS. in Oriental tongues.

The story of Borrow's labours in connection with the printing of the Manchu version of the New Testament, forms a remarkable study of unswerving courage and will-power triumphing over apparently insurmountable obstacles. The mere presence of difficulties seemed to increase his eagerness and determination to overcome them. Disappointments he had in plenty; but his indomitable courage and untiring energy, backed up by the earnest support he received from Earl Street, enabled him to emerge from his first serious undertaking with the knowledge that he had succeeded where failure would not have been discreditable.

He threw himself into his work with characteristic eagerness. At the end of the first two months he had transcribed the Second Book of Chronicles and the Gospel of St Matthew. He formed a very high opinion of the work of the translator, and took the opportunity of paying a tribute to the followers of Ignatius Loyola (Father Puerot was a Jesuit). "When," he writes, "did a Jesuit any thing which he undertook, whether laudable or the reverse, not far better than any other person?" yet they laboured in vain, for "they thought not of His glory, but of the glory of their order." [113]

Borrow discovered that Mr Lipovzoff knew nothing

of the Bible Society's scheme for printing the New Testament in Manchu; but he found, what was of even greater importance to him, that the old man knew no European language but Russian. Thus the frequent conversations and explanations all tended to improve Borrow's knowledge of the language of the people among whom he was living.

Mr Lipovzoff struck Borrow as being "rather a singular man," as he took occasion to inform Mr Jowett, apparently utterly indifferent as to the fate of his translation, excellent though it was. As a matter of fact, Mr Lipovzoff was occupied with his own concerns, and, as an official in the Russian Foreign Office, most likely saw the inexpediency of a too eager enthusiasm for the Bible Society's Manchu-Tartar programme. He was probably bewildered by the fierce energy of its honest and compelling agent, who had descended upon St Petersburg to do the Society's bidding with an impetuosity and determination foreign to Russian official life. Borrow was on fire with zeal and impatient of the apathy of those around him.

He soon began to show signs of that singleness of purpose and resourcefulness that, later, was to arouse so much enthusiasm among the members of the Bible Society at home. The transcribing and collating Puerot's version of the Scriptures occupied the remainder of the year. On the completion of this work, it had been arranged that Mr Swan should return to his mission-station in Siberia. The next step was to obtain official sanction to print the Lipovzoff version of the New Testament. Dr Schmidt, to whom Borrow turned for advice and information, was apparently very busily occupied with his own affairs, which included the compilation

of a Mongolian Grammar and Dictionary. The Doctor was optimistic, and promised to make enquiries about the steps to be taken to obtain the necessary permission to print; but Borrow heard nothing further from him.

> "Thus circumstanced, and being very uneasy in my mind," he writes, "I determined to take a bold step, and directly and without further feeling my way, to petition the Government in my own name for permission to print the Manchu Scriptures. Having communicated this determination to our beloved, sincere, and most truly Christian friend Mr Swan (who has lately departed to his station in Siberia, shielded I trust by the arm of his Master), it met with his perfect approbation and cordial encouragement. I therefore drew up a petition, and presented it with my own hand to His Excellence Mr Bludoff, Minister of the Interior." [114a]

The minister made reply that he doubted his jurisdiction in the matter; but that he would consider. Fearful lest the matter should miscarry or be shelved, Borrow called on the evening of the same day upon the British Minister, the Hon. J. D. Bligh, "a person of superb talents, kind disposition, and of much piety," [114b] whose friendship Borrow had "assiduously cultivated," and who had shown him "many condescending marks of kindness." [114c] But Mr Bligh was out. Nothing daunted, Borrow wrote a note entreating his interest with the Russian

officials. On calling for an answer in the morning, he was received by Mr Bligh, when "he was kind enough to say that if I desired it he would apply officially to the Minister, and exert all his influence in his official character in order to obtain the accomplishment of my views, but at the same time suggested that it would, perhaps, be as well at a private interview to beg it as a personal favour." [115a]

There was hesitation, perhaps suspicion, in official quarters. It is easy to realise that the Government was not eager to assist the agent of an institution closely allied to the Russian Bible Society, which it had recently been successful in suppressing. It might with impunity suppress a Society; but in George Borrow it soon became evident that the officials had to deal with a man of purpose and determination who used a British Minister as a two-edged sword. Borrow was invited to call at the Asiatic Department: he did so, and learned that if permission were granted, Mr Lipovzoff (who was a clerk in the Department) was to be censor (over his own translation!) and Borrow editor. There was still the "If." Borrow waited a fortnight, then called on Mr Bligh. By great good chance Mr Bludoff was dining that evening with the British Minister. The same night Borrow received a message requesting him to call on Mr Bludoff the next day. On presenting himself he was given a letter to the Director of Worship, which he delivered without delay, and was told to call again on the first day of the following week.

"On calling there *I found that permission had been granted to print the Manchu Scripture*." [115b] Baron Schilling had rendered some assistance in getting the

permission, and Borrow was requested to inform him of “the deep sense of obligation” of the Bible Society, to which was added a present of some books.

Borrow clearly viewed this as only a preliminary success; he had in mind the eventual printing of the whole Bible. He was beginning to feel conscious of his own powers. Mr Swan had gone, and upon Borrow’s shoulders rested the whole enterprise. A mild wave of enthusiasm passed over the Head Office at Earl Street on receipt of the news that permission to print had been obtained.

“You cannot conceive,” Borrow wrote to Mr Jowett, “the cold, heartless apathy in respect to the affair, on which I have been despatched hither as an *assistant*, which I have found in people to whom I looked not unreasonably for encouragement and advice.” [116] Well might he underline the word “assistant.” In this same letter, with a spasmodic flicker of the old self-confidence, he adds, “In regard to what we have yet to do, let it be borne in mind, that we are by no means dependent upon Mr Lipovzoff, though certainly to secure the services, which he is capable of performing, would be highly desirable, and though he cannot act outwardly in the character of Editor (he having been appointed censor), he may privately be of great utility to us.” Borrow seems to have formed no very high opinion of Mr Lipovzoff’s capacity for affairs, although he recognised his skill as a translator.

At first Borrow seems to have found the severity of the winter very trying. “The cold when you go out into it,” he writes to his mother (1st/13th Feb. 1834), “cuts your face like a razor, and were you not to cover it with furs the flesh would be bitten off.

The rooms in the morning are heated with a stove as hot as ovens, and you would not be able to exist in one for a minute; but I have become used to them and like them much, though at first they made me dreadfully sick and brought on bilious headaches."

There was still at the Sarepta House, the premises of the Bible Society's bankers in St Petersburg, the box of Manchu type, which had not been examined since the river floods. In addition to this, the only other Manchu characters in St Petersburg belonged to Baron Schilling, who possessed a small fount of the type, which he used "for the convenience of printing trifles in that tongue," as Borrow phrased it. This was to be put at Borrow's disposal if necessary; but first the type at the Sarepta House had to be examined. Borrow's plan was, provided the type were not entirely ruined, to engage the services of a printer who was accustomed to setting Mongolian characters, which are very similar to those of Manchu, who would, he thought, be competent to undertake the work. He suggested following the style of the St Matthew's Gospel already printed, giving to each Gospel and the Acts a volume and printing the Epistles and the Apocalypse in three more, making eight volumes in all.

These he proposed putting "in a small thin wooden case, covered with blue stuff, precisely after the manner of Chinese books, in order that they may not give offence to the eyes of the people for whom they are intended by a foreign and unusual appearance, for the mere idea that they are barbarian books would certainly prevent them being read, and probably cause their destruction if ever they found their way into the Chinese Empire." [117] Borrow left nothing to chance; he thought out every detail

with great care before venturing to put his plans into execution.

Although busily occupied in an endeavour to stimulate Russian government officials to energy and decision, Borrow was not neglecting what had been so strongly urged upon him, the perfecting of himself in the Manchu dialect. In reply to an enquiry from Mr Jowett as to what manner of progress he was making, he wrote:—

> "For some time past I have taken lessons from a person who was twelve years in Pekin, and who speaks Manchu and Chinese with fluency. I pay him about six shillings English for each lesson, which I grudge not, for the perfect acquirement of Manchu is one of my most ardent wishes." [118a]

This person Borrow subsequently recommended to the Society "to assist me in making a translation into Manchu of the Psalms and Isaiah," but the pundit proved "of no utility at all, but only the cause of error."

Borrow was soon able to transcribe the Manchu characters with greater facility and speed than he could English. In addition to being able to translate from and into Manchu, he could compose hymns in the language, and even prepared a Manchu rendering of the second Homily of the Church of England, "On the Misery of Man." He had, however, made the discovery that Manchu was far less easy to him than it had at first appeared, and that Amyot was to some extent justified in his view of the difficulties it

presented. "It is one of those deceitful tongues," he confesses in a letter to Mr Jowett, "the seeming simplicity of whose structure induces you to suppose, after applying to it for a month or two, that little more remains to be learned, but which, should you continue to study a year, as I have studied this, show themselves to you in their veritable colours, amazing you with their copiousness, puzzling with their idioms."[118b] Its difficulties, however, did not discourage him; for he had a great admiration for the language which "for majesty and grandeur of sound, and also for general copiousness is unequalled by any existing tongue." [118c]

However great his exertions or discouragements, Borrow never forgot his mother, to whom he was a model son. On 1st/13th February he sent her a draft for twenty pounds, being the second since his arrival six months previously. Thus out of his first half-year's salary of a hundred pounds, he sent to his mother forty pounds (in addition to the seventeen pounds he had paid into her account before sailing), and with it a promise that "next quarter I shall try and send you thirty," lest in the recent storms of which he had heard, some of her property should have suffered damage and be in need of repair. The larger remittance, however, he was unable to make on account of the illness that had necessitated the drinking of a bottle of port wine each day (by doctor's orders); but he was punctual in remitting the twenty pounds. The attack which required so drastic a remedy originated in a chill caught as the ice was breaking up. "I went mad," he tells his mother, "and when the fever subsided, I was seized with the 'Horrors,' which never left me day or night for a week." [119] During this illness everyone seems to have been extremely kind and attentive, the

Emperor's apothecary, even, sending word that Borrow was to order of him anything, medical or otherwise, that he found himself in need of.

CHAPTER VIII
FEBRUARY–OCTOBER 1834

BORROW had at last found work that was thoroughly congenial to him. It was not in his nature to exist outside his occupations, and his whole personality became bound up in the mission upon which he was engaged. Not content with preparing the way for printing the New Testament in Manchu, he set himself the problem of how it was to be distributed when printed. He foresaw serious obstacles to its introduction into China, on account of the suspicion with which was regarded any and everything European. With a modest disclaimer that his suggestion arose "from a plenitude of self-conceit and a disposition to offer advice upon all matters, however far they may be above my understanding," he proceeds to deal with the difficulties of distribution with great clearness.

To send the printed books to Canton, to be distributed by English missionaries, he thought would be productive of very little good, nor would it achieve the object of the Society, to distribute copies at seaports along the coasts, because it was unlikely that there would be many Tartars or people there who understood Manchu. There was a further

obstacle in the suspicion in which the Chinese held all things English. On the other hand, he tells Mr Jowett,

> "there is a most admirable opening for the work on the Russian side of the Chinese Empire. About five thousand miles from St Petersburg, on the frontiers of Chinese Tartary, and only nine hundred miles distant from Pekin, the seat of the Tartar Monarchy, stands the town of Kiakhta, [121a] which properly belongs to Russia, but the inhabitants of which are a medley of Tartary, Chinese, and Russ (*sic*). As far as this town a Russian or foreigner is permitted to advance, but his further progress is forbidden, and if he make the attempt he is liable to be taken up as a spy or deserter, and sent back under guard. This town is the emporium of Chinese and Russian trade. Chinese caravans are continually arriving and returning, bringing and carrying away articles of merchandise. There are likewise a Chinese and a Tartar Mandarin, also a school where Chinese and Tartar are taught, and where Chinese and Tartar children along with Russian are educated." [121b]

The advantages of such a town as a base of operations were obvious. Borrow was convinced that he could dispose "of any quantity of Testaments to

the Chinese merchants who arrive thither from Pekin and other places, and who would be glad to purchase them on speculation." [121c]

Russia and China were friendly to each other, so much so, that there was at Pekin a Russian mission, the only one of its kind. These good relations rendered Borrow confident that books from Russia, especially books which had not an outlandish appearance, would be purchased without scruple. "In a word, were an agent for the Bible Society to reside at this town [Kiakhta] for a year or so, it is my humble opinion, and the opinion of much wiser people, that if he were active, zealous and likewise courageous, the blessings resulting from his labours would be incalculable." [121d]

He might even make excursions into Tartary, and become friendly with the inhabitants, and eventually perhaps, "with a little management and dexterity," he might "penetrate even to Pekin, and return in safety, after having examined the state of the land. I can only say that if it were my fortune to have the opportunity, I would make the attempt, and should consider myself only to blame if I did not succeed." Borrow was to revert to this suggestion on many occasions, in fact it seems to have been in his mind during the whole period of his association with the Bible Society.

Acting upon instructions from Earl Street, Borrow proceeded to find out the approximate cost of printing the Manchu New Testament. He early discovered that in Russia "the wisdom of the serpent is quite as necessary as the innocence of the dove," as he took occasion to inform Mr Jowett. The Russians rendered him estimates of cost as if of the

opinion that “Englishmen are made of gold, and that it is only necessary to ask the most extravagant price for any article in order to obtain it.”

In St Petersburg Borrow was taken for a German, a nation for which he cherished a cordial dislike. This mistake as to nationality, however, did not hinder the Russian tradesmen from asking exorbitant prices for their services or their goods. At first Borrow “was quite terrified at the enormous sums which some of the printers . . . required for the work.” At length he applied to the University Press, which asked 30 roubles 60 copecks (24s. 8d.) per sheet of two pages for composition and printing. A young firm of German printers, Schultz & Beneze, was, however, willing to undertake the same work at the rate of 12.5 roubles (10s.) per two sheets.

In contracting for the paper Borrow showed himself quite equal to the commercial finesse of the Russian. He scoured the neighbourhood round St Petersburg in a calash at a cost of about four pounds. Russian methods of conducting business are amazing to the English mind. At Peterhof, a town about twenty miles out of St Petersburg, he found fifty reams of a paper such as he required. “Concerning the price of this paper,” he writes, “I could obtain no positive information, for the Director and first and second clerks were invariably absent, and the place abandoned to ignorant understrappers (according to the custom of Russia). And notwithstanding I found out the Director in St Petersburg, he himself could not tell me the price.” [123a]

Eventually 75 roubles (£3) a ream was quoted for the stock, and 100 roubles (£4) a ream for any further quantity required. Thus the paper for a thousand

copies would run to 40,000 roubles (£1600), or 32s. a copy. Borrow found that the law of commerce prevalent in the East was that adopted in St Petersburg. A price is named merely as a basis of negotiation, and the customer beats it down to a figure that suits him, or he goes elsewhere. Borrow was a master of such methods. The sum he eventually paid for the paper was 25 roubles (£1) a ream! Of all these negotiations he kept Mr Jowett well informed. By June he had received from Earl Street the official sanction to proceed, together with a handsome remittance.

For some time past Borrow had been anxious on account of his brother John. On 9th/21st November, he had written to his mother telling her to write to John urging him to come home at once, as he had seen in the Russian newspapers how the town of Guanajuato had been taken and sacked by the rebels, and also that cholera was ravaging Mexico. Later [123b] he tells her of that nice house at Lakenham, [123c] which he means to buy, and how John can keep a boat and amuse himself on the river, and adds, “I dare say I shall continue for a long time with the Bible Society, as they see that I am useful to them and can be depended upon.”

On the day following that on which Borrow wrote asking his mother to urge his brother to return home, viz., 10th/22nd November, John died. He was taken ill suddenly in the morning and passed away the same afternoon.

In February 1832 John Borrow had, much against the advice of his friends, left the United Mexican Company, which he had become associated with the previous year. He was of a restless disposition, never

content with what he was doing. Thinking he could better himself, and having saved a few hundred dollars, he resigned his post. He appears soon to have discovered his mistake. First he indulged in an unfortunate speculation, by which he was a considerable loser, then cholera broke out. Without a thought of himself he turned nurse and doctor, witnessing terrible scenes of misery and death and ministering to the poor with an energy and humanity that earned for him the admiration of the whole township. Finally, finding himself in serious financial difficulties, he entered the service of the Colombian Mining Company, and was to be sent to Colombia "for the purpose of introducing the Mexican system of beneficiating there." It only remained for the agreement to be signed, when he was taken ill.

In the letter in which she tells George of their loss, Mrs Borrow expresses fear that he does "not live regular. When you find yourself low," she continues, "take a little wine, but not too much at one time; it will do you the more good; I find that by myself." Her solicitude for George's health is easily understandable. He is now her "only hope," as she pathetically tells him. "Do not grieve, my dear George," she proceeds tenderly, "I trust we shall all meet in heaven. Put a crape on your hat for some time."

George wrote immediately to acknowledge his mother's letter containing the news of John's death, which had given him "the severest stroke I ever experienced. It [the letter] quite stunned me, and since reading its contents I have done little else but moan and lament . . . O that our darling John had taken the advice which I gave him nearly three years

since, to abandon that horrid country and return to England! . . . Would that I had died for him! for I loved him dearly, dearly." Borrow's affection for his bright and attractive brother is everywhere manifest in his writings. He never showed the least jealousy when his father held up his first-born as a model to the strange and incomprehensible younger son. His love for and admiration of John were genuine and deep-rooted. In the same letter he goes on to assure his mother that he was never better in his life, and that experience teaches him how to cure his disorders. "The 'Horrors,' for example. Whenever they come I must drink strong Port wine, and then they are stopped instantly. But do not think that I drink habitually, for you ought to know that I abhor drink. The 'Horrors' are brought on by weakness."

He goes on to reassure his mother as to the care he takes of himself, telling her that he has three meals a day, although, as a rule, dinner is a poor one, "for the Russians, in the first place, are very indifferent cooks, and the meat is very bad, as in fact are almost all the provisions." The fish is without taste, Russian salmon having less savour than English skate; the fowls are dry because no endeavour is made to fatten them, and the "mutton stinks worst than carrion, for they never cut the wool."

With great thought and tenderness he tells her that he wishes her "to keep a maid, for I do not like that you should live alone. Do not take one of the wretched girls of Norwich," he advises her, but rather the daughter of one of her tenants. "What am I working for here and saving money, unless it is for your comfort? for I assure you that to make you comfortable is my greatest happiness, almost my only one." Urging her to keep up her spirits and

read much of the things that interest her, he concludes with a warning to her not to pay any debts contracted by John. [126a] The letter concludes with the postscript: “I have got the crape.”

In July 1834 Borrow again changed his quarters, taking an unfurnished floor, [126b] at the same time hiring a Tartar servant named Mahmoud, “the best servant I ever had.” [126c] The wages he paid this prince of body-servants was thirty shillings a month, out of which Mahmoud supplied himself “with food and everything.” Borrow’s reason for making this change in his lodgings was that he wanted more room than he had, and furnished apartments were very expensive. The actual furnishing was not a very costly matter to a man of Borrow’s simple wants; for the expenditure of seven pounds he provided himself with all he required.

After the letter of 27th June/9th July the Bible Society received no further news of what was taking place in St Petersburg. Week after week passed without anything being heard of its Russian agent’s movements or activities. On 25th September/7th October Mr Jowett wrote an extremely moderate letter beseeching Borrow to remember “the very lively interest” taken by the General Committee in the printing of the Manchu version of the New Testament; that people were asking, “What is Mr Borrow doing?” that the Committee stands between its agents and an eager public, desirous of knowing the trials and tribulations, the hopes and fears of those actively engaged in printing or disseminating the Scriptures. “You can have no difficulty,” he continues, “in furnishing me with such monthly information as may satisfy the Committee that they are not expending a large sum of money in vain.”

There was also a request for information as to how "some critical difficulty has been surmounted by the translator, or editor, or both united, not to mention the advance already made in actual printing." On 1st/13th Oct. Borrow had written a brief letter giving an account of his disbursements during the journey to St Petersburg *fifteen months previously*; but he made no mention of what was taking place with regard to the printing.

The letter in which Borrow replied to Mr Jowett is probably the most remarkable he ever wrote. It presents him in a light that must have astonished those who had been so eager to ridicule his appointment as an agent of the Bible Society. The letter runs:—

ST PETERSBURG,
8*th* [20*th*] *October* 1834.

> I have just received your most kind epistle, the perusal of which has given me both pain and pleasure—pain that from unavoidable circumstances I have been unable to gratify eager expectation, and pleasure that any individual should have been considerate enough to foresee my situation and to make allowance for it. The nature of my occupations during the last two months and a half has been such as would have entirely unfitted me for correspondence, had I been aware that it was necessary, which, on my sacred word, I was not. Now, and only now, when by the blessing of

God I have surmounted all my troubles and difficulties, I will tell, and were I not a Christian I should be proud to tell, what I have been engaged upon and accomplished during the last ten weeks. I have been working in the printing-office, as a common compositor, between ten and thirteen hours every day during that period; the result of this is that St Matthew's Gospel, printed from such a copy as I believe nothing was ever printed from before, has been brought out in the Manchu language; two rude Esthonian peasants, who previously could barely compose with decency in a plain language which they spoke and were accustomed to, have received such instruction that with ease they can each compose at the rate of a sheet a day in the Manchu, perhaps the most difficult language for composition in the whole world. Considerable progress has also been made in St Mark's Gospel, and I will venture to promise, provided always the Almighty smiles upon the undertaking, that the entire work of which I have the superintendence will be published within eight months from the present time. Now, therefore, with the premise that I most unwillingly speak of myself and what I have done and suffered for some time past, all of which I

wished to keep locked up in my own breast, I will give a regular and circumstantial account of my proceedings from the day when I received your letter, by which I was authorised by the Committee to bespeak paper, engage with a printer, and cause our type to be set in order.

My first care was to endeavour to make suitable arrangements for the obtaining of Chinese paper. Now those who reside in England, the most civilised and blessed of countries, where everything is to be obtained at a fair price, have not the slightest idea of the anxiety and difficulty which, in a country like this, harass the foreigner who has to disburse money not his own, if he wish that his employers be not shamefully and outrageously imposed upon. In my last epistle to you I stated that I had been asked 100 roubles per ream for such paper as we wanted. I likewise informed you that I believed that it was possible to procure it for 35 roubles, notwithstanding our Society had formerly paid 40 roubles for worse paper than the samples I was in possession of. Now I have always been of opinion that in the expending of money collected for sacred purposes, it behoves the agent to be extraordinarily

circumspect and sparing. I therefore was determined, whatever trouble it might cost me, to procure for the Society unexceptionable paper at a yet more reasonable rate than 35 roubles. I was aware that an acquaintance of mine, a young Dane, was particularly intimate with one of the first printers of this city, who is accustomed to purchase vast quantities of paper every month for his various publications. I gave this young gentleman a specimen of the paper I required, and desired him (he was under obligations to me) to inquire of his friend, *as if from curiosity*, the least possible sum per ream at which *the printer himself* (who from his immense demand for paper should necessarily obtain it cheaper than any one else) could expect to purchase the article in question. The answer I received within a day or two was 25 roubles. Upon hearing this I prevailed upon my acquaintance to endeavour to persuade his friend to bespeak the paper at 25 roubles, and to allow me, notwithstanding I was a perfect stranger, to have it at that price. All this was brought about. I was introduced to the printer, Mr Pluchard, by the Dane, Mr Hasfeldt, and between the former gentleman and myself a contract was made to the effect that by the end of October

he should supply me with 450 reams of Chinese paper at 25 roubles per ream, the first delivery to be made on the 1st of August; for as my order given at an advanced period of the year, when all the paper manufactories were at full work towards the executing of orders already received, it was but natural that I should verify the old apophthegm, 'Last come, last served.' As no orders are attended to in Russia unless money be advanced upon them, I deposited in the hands of Mr Pluchard the sum of 2000 roubles, receiving his receipt for that amount.

Having arranged this most important matter to my satisfaction, I turned my attention to the printing process. I accepted the offer of Messrs Schultz & Beneze to compose and print the Manchu Testament at the rate of 25 roubles per sheet [of four pages], and caused our fount of type to be conveyed to their office. I wish to say here a few words respecting the state in which these types came into my possession. I found them in a kind of warehouse, or rather cellar. They had been originally confined in two cases; but these having burst, the type lay on the floor trampled amidst mud and filth. They were, moreover, not improved by having been immersed within the waters of

the inundation of ’27 [1824]. I caused them all to be collected and sent to their destination, where they were purified and arranged—a work of no small time and difficulty, at which I was obliged to assist. Not finding with the type what is called ‘Durchschuss’ by the printers here, consisting of leaden wedges of about six ounces weight each, which form the spaces between the lines, I ordered 120 pounds weight of those at a rouble a pound, being barely enough for three sheets. [129] I had now to teach the compositors the Manchu alphabet, and to distinguish one character from another. This occupied a few days, at the end of which I gave them the commencement of St Matthew’s Gospel to copy. They no sooner saw the work they were called upon to perform than there were loud murmurs of dissatisfaction, and . . . ‘It is quite impossible to do the like,’ was the cry—and no wonder. The original printed Gospel had been so interlined and scribbled upon by the author, in a hand so obscure and irregular, that, accustomed as I was to the perusal of the written Manchu, it was not without the greatest difficulty that I could decipher the new matter myself. Moreover, the corrections had been so carelessly made that they

themselves required far more correction than the original matter. I was therefore obliged to be continually in the printing-office, and to do three parts of the work myself. For some time I found it necessary to select every character with my own fingers, and to deliver it to the compositor, and by so doing I learnt myself to compose. We continued in this way till all our characters were exhausted, for no paper had arrived. For two weeks and more we were obliged to pause, the want of paper being insurmountable. At the end of this period came six reams; but partly from the manufacturers not being accustomed to make this species of paper, and partly from the excessive heat of the weather, which caused it to dry too fast, only one ream and a half could be used, and this was not enough for one sheet; the rest I refused to take, and sent back. The next week came fifteen reams. This paper, from the same causes, was as bad as the last. I selected four reams, and sent the rest back. But this paper enabled us to make a beginning, which we did not fail to do, though we received no more for upwards of a fortnight, which caused another pause. At the end of that time, owing to my pressing remonstrances and entreaties, a

regular supply of about twelve reams per week of most excellent paper commenced. This continued until we had composed the last five sheets of St Matthew, when some paper arrived, which in my absence was received by Mr Beneze, who, without examining it, as was his duty, delivered it to the printers to use in the printing of the said sheets, who accordingly printed upon part of it. But the next day, when my occupation permitted me to see what they were about, I observed that the last paper was of a quality very different from that which had been previously sent. I accordingly instantly stopped the press, and, notwithstanding eight reams had been printed upon, I sent all the strange paper back, and caused Mr Beneze to recompose three sheets, which had been broken up, at his own expense. But this caused the delay of another week.

This last circumstance made me determine not to depend in future for paper on one manufactory alone. I therefore stated to Mr P[luchard] that, as his people were unable to furnish me with the article fast enough, I should apply to others for 250 reams, and begged him to supply me with the rest as fast as possible. He made no objection. Thereupon I prevailed upon my most

excellent friend, Baron Schilling, to speak to his acquaintance, State-Councillor Alquin, who is possessed of a paper-factory, on the subject. M. Alquin, as a personal favour to Baron Schilling (whom, I confess, I was ashamed to trouble upon such an affair, and should never have done so had not zeal for the cause induced me), consented to furnish me with the required paper on the same terms as Mr P. At present there is not the slightest risk of the progress of our work being retarded —at present, indeed, the path is quite easy; but the trouble, anxiety, and misery which have till lately harassed me, alone in a situation of great responsibility, have almost reduced me to a skeleton.

My dearest Sir, do me the favour to ask our excellent Committee, Would it have answered any useful purpose if, instead of continuing to struggle with difficulties and using my utmost to overcome them, I had written in the following strain—and what else could I have written if I had written at all?—'I was sent out to St Petersburg to assist Mr Lipovzoff in the editing of the Manchu Testament. That gentleman, who holds three important Situations under the Russian Government, and who is far advanced in years, has neither time,

inclination, nor eyesight for the task, and I am apprehensive that my strength and powers unassisted are incompetent to it' (praised be the Lord, they were not!), 'therefore I should be glad to return home. Moreover, the compositors say they are unaccustomed to compose in an unknown tongue from such scribbled and illegible copy, and they will scarcely assist me to compose. Moreover, the working printers say (several went away in disgust) that the paper on which they have to print is too thin to be wetted, and that to print on dry requires a twofold exertion of strength, and that they will not do such work for double wages, for it ruptures them.' Would that have been a welcome communication to the Committee? Would that have been a communication suited to the public? I was resolved 'to do or die,' and, instead of distressing and perplexing the Committee with complaints, to write nothing until I could write something perfectly satisfactory, as I now can; [132a] and to bring about that result I have spared neither myself nor my own money. I have toiled in a close printing-office the whole day, during ninety degrees of heat, for the purpose of setting an example, and have bribed people to work when

nothing but bribes would induce them so to do.

I am obliged to say all this in self-justification. No member of the Bible Society would ever have heard a syllable respecting what I have undergone but for the question, 'What has Mr Borrow been about?' I hope and trust that question is now answered to the satisfaction of those who do Mr Borrow the honour to employ him. In respect to the expense attending the editing of such a work as the New Testament in Manchu, I beg leave to observe that I have obtained the paper, the principal source of expense, at fifteen roubles per ream less than the Society formerly paid for it—that is to say, at nearly half the price.

As St Matthew's Gospel has been ready for some weeks, it is high time that it should be bound; for if that process be delayed, the paper will be dirtied and the work injured. I am sorry to inform you that book-binding in Russia is incredibly dear, [132b] and that the expenses attending the binding of the Testament would amount, were the usual course pursued, to two-thirds of the entire expenses of the work. Various book-binders to whom I have applied have demanded one rouble and a half for the binding of

every section of the work, so that the sum required for the binding of one Testament alone would be twelve roubles. Doctor Schmidt assured me that one rouble and forty copecks, or, according to the English currency, fourteenpence halfpenny, were formerly paid for the binding of every individual copy of St Matthew's Gospel.

I pray you, my dear Sir, to cause the books to be referred to, for I wish to know if that statement be correct. In the meantime arrangements have to be made, and the Society will have to pay for each volume of the Testament the comparatively small sum of forty-five copecks, or fourpence halfpenny, whereas the usual price here for the most paltry covering of the most paltry pamphlet is fivepence. Should it be demanded how I have been able to effect this, my reply is that I have had little hand in the matter. A nobleman who honours me with particular friendship, and who is one of the most illustrious ornaments of Russia and of Europe, has, at my request, prevailed on his own book-binder, over whom he has much influence, to do the work on these terms. That nobleman is Baron Schilling.

Commend me to our most respected Committee. Assure them that in

> whatever I have done or left undone, I have been influenced by a desire to promote the glory of the Trinity and to give my employers ultimate and permanent satisfaction. If I have erred, it has been from a defect of judgment, and I ask pardon of God and them. In the course of a week I shall write again, and give a further account of my proceedings, for I have not communicated one-tenth of what I have to impart; but I can write no more now. It is two hours past midnight; the post goes away to-morrow, and against that morrow I have to examine and correct three sheets of St Mark's Gospel, which lie beneath the paper on which I am writing. With my best regards to Mr Brandram,
>
> I remain, dear Sir,
>
> Most truly yours,
>
> G. Borrow.
>
> Rev. Joseph Jowett.

Closely following upon this letter, and without waiting for a reply, Borrow wrote again to Mr Jowett, 13th/25th October, enclosing a certificate from Mr Lipovzoff, which read:—

> "Testifio:—Dominum Burro ab initio usque ad hoc tempus summa cum diligentia et studio in re Mantshurica laborasse, Lipovzoff."

He also reported progress as regards the printing, and promised (D.V.) that the entire undertaking should be completed by the first of May; but the letter was principally concerned with the projected expedition to Kiakhta, to distribute the books he was so busily occupied in printing. He repeated his former arguments, urging the Committee to send an agent to Kiakhta. "I am a person of few words," he assured Mr Jowett, "and will therefore state without circumlocution that I am willing to become that agent. I speak Russ, Manchu, and the Tartar or broken Turkish of the Russian Steppes, and have also some knowledge of Chinese, which I might easily improve." As regards the danger to himself of such a hazardous undertaking, the conversion of the Tartar would never be achieved without danger to someone. He had become acquainted with many of the Tartars resident in St Petersburg, whose language he had learned through conversing with his servant (a native of Bucharia [Bokhara]), and he had become "much attached to them; for their conscientiousness, honesty, and fidelity are beyond all praise."

To this further offer Mr Jowett replied:—

> "Be not disheartened, even though the Committee postpone for the present the consideration of your enterprising, not to say intrepid, proposal. Thus much, however, I may venture to say: that the offer is more likely to be accepted now, than when you first made it. If, when the time approaches for executing such a plan, you give us reason to believe that a more mature consideration of it in all its bearings still leaves you

in hope of a successful result, and in heart for making the attempt, my own opinion is that the offer will ultimately be accepted, and that very cordially."

CHAPTER IX
NOVEMBER 1834–SEPTEMBER 1835

BORROW was an unconventional editor. He foresaw the interminable delays likely to arise from allowing workmen to incorporate his corrections in the type. To obviate these, he first corrected the proof, then, proceeding to the printing office, he made with his own hands the necessary alterations in the type. This involved only two proofs, the second to be submitted to Mr Lipovzoff, instead of some half a dozen that otherwise would have been necessary. During these days Borrow was ubiquitous. Even the binder required his assistance, "for everything goes wrong without a strict surveillance."

Borrow had passed through *the* crisis in his career. Stricken with fever, which was followed by an attack of the "Horrors" (only to be driven away by port wine), he had scarcely found time in which to eat or sleep. He had emerged triumphantly from the ordeal, and if he had "almost killed Beneze and his lads"[135a] with work, he had not spared himself. If he had to report, as he did, that "my two

compositors, whom I had instructed in all the mysteries of Manchu composition, are in the hospital, down with the brain fever," [135b] he himself had grown thin from the incessant toil.

The simple manliness and restrained dignity of his justification had produced a marked effect upon the authorities at home. If the rebuke administered by Mr Jowett had been mild, his acknowledgment of the reply that it had called forth was most cordial and friendly. After assuring Borrow of the Committee's high satisfaction at the way in which its interests had been looked after, he proceeds sincerely to deprecate anything in his previous letter which may have caused Borrow pain, and continues:

> "Yet I scarcely know how to be sorry for what has been the occasion of drawing from you (what you might otherwise have kept locked up in your own breast) the very interesting story of your labours, vexations, disappointments, vigilance, address, perseverance, and successes. How you were able in your solitude to keep up your spirits in the face of so many impediments, apparently insurmountable, I know not . . . Do not fear that *we* should in any way interrupt your proceedings. We know our interest too well to interfere with an agent who has shown so much address in planning, and so much diligence in effecting, the execution of our wishes."

These encouraging words were followed by a request

that he would keep a careful account of all extraordinary expenses, that they might be duly met by the Society:—

> "I allude, you perceive, to such things," the letter goes on to explain, "as your journies *huc et illuc* in quest of a better market, and to the occasional bribes to disheartened workmen. In all matters of this kind the Society is clearly your debtor." Borrow replied with a flash of his old independent spirit: "I return my most grateful thanks for this most considerate intimation, which, nevertheless, I cannot avail myself of, as, according to one of the articles of my agreement, my salary of £200 was to cover all extra expenses. Petersburg is doubtless the dearest capital in Europe, and expenses meet an individual, especially one situated as I have been, at every turn and corner; but an agreement is not to be broken on that account." [136]

That the Committee, even before this proof of his ability, had been well pleased with their engagement of Borrow is shown by the acknowledgment made in the Society's Thirtieth Annual Report: "Mr Borrow has not disappointed the expectation entertained."

There were other words of encouragement to cheer him in his labours. His mother wrote in September of that year, telling him how, at a Bible Society's gathering at Norwich, which had lasted the whole of

a week, his name "was sounded through the Hall by Mr Gurney and Mr Cunningham"; telling how he had left his home and his friends to do God's work in a foreign land, calling upon their fellow-citizens to offer up prayers beseeching the Almighty to vouchsafe to him health and strength that the great work he had undertaken might be completed. "All this is very pleasing to me," added the proud old lady. "God bless you!"

From Mrs Clarke of Oulton Hall, with whom he kept up a correspondence, he heard how his name had been mentioned at many of the Society's meetings during the year, and how the Rev. Francis Cunningham had referred to him as "one of the most extraordinary and interesting individuals of the present day." Even at that date, viz., before the receipt of the remarkable account of his labours, the members and officials of the Bible Society seem to have come to the conclusion that he had achieved far more than they had any reason to expect of him. Their subsequent approval is shown by the manner in which they caused his two letters of 8th/20th and 13th/25th October to be circulated among the influential members of the Society, until at last they had reached the Rev. F. Cunningham and Mrs Clarke.

About the middle of January (old style) 1835, Borrow placed in the hands of Baron Schilling a copy of each of the four Gospels in Manchu, to be conveyed to the Bible Society by one of the couriers attached to the Foreign Department at St Petersburg; but they did not reach Earl Street until several weeks later. There were however, still the remaining four volumes to complete, and many more difficulties to overcome.

One vexation that presented itself was a difference of opinion between Borrow and Lipovzoff, who "thought proper, when the Father Almighty is addressed, to erase the personal and possessive pronouns *thou* or *thine*, as often as they occur, and in their stead to make use of the noun as the case may require. For example, 'O Father! thou art merciful' he would render, 'O Father! the Father is merciful.'" Borrow protested, but Lipovzoff, who was "a gentleman, whom the slightest contradiction never fails to incense to a most incredible degree," told him that he talked nonsense, and refused to concede anything. [138a] Lipovzoff, who had on his side the Chinese scholars and unlimited powers as official censor (from whose decree there was no appeal) over his own work, carried his point. He urged that "amongst the Chinese and Tartars, none but the dregs of society were ever addressed in the second person; and that it would be most uncouth and indecent to speak of the Almighty as if He were a servant or a slave." This difficulty of the verbal ornament of the East was one that the Bible Society had frequently met with in the past. It was rightly considered as ill-fitting a translation of the words of Christ. Simplicity of diction was to be preserved at all costs, whatever might be the rule with secular books. Mr Jowett had warned Borrow to "beware of confounding the two distinct ideas of translation and interpretation!" [138b] and also informed him that "the passion for honorific-abilitudinity is a vice of Asiatic languages, which a Scripture translator, above all others, ought to beware of countenancing." [139a]

Well might Borrow write to Mr Jowett, "How I have been enabled to maintain terms of friendship and familiarity with Mr Lipovzoff, and yet fulfil the part

which those who employ me expect me to fulfil, I am much at a loss to conjecture; and yet such is really the case." [139b] On the whole, however, the two men worked harmoniously together, the censor-translator being usually amenable to editorial reason and suggestion; and Borrow was able to assure Mr Jowett that with the exception of this one instance "the word of God has been rendered into Manchu as nearly and closely as the idiom of a very singular language would permit."

Borrow's mind continued to dwell upon the project of penetrating into China and distributing the Scriptures himself. He wrote again, repeating "the assurance that I am ready to attempt anything which the Society may wish me to execute, and, at a moment's warning, will direct my course towards Canton, Pekin, or the court of the Grand Lama." [139c] The project had, however, to be abandoned. The Russian Government, desirous of maintaining friendly relations with China, declined to risk her displeasure for a missionary project in which Russia had neither interest nor reasonable expectation of gain. In agreeing to issue a passport such as Borrow desired, it stipulated that he should carry with him "not one single Manchu Bible thither." [139d] In spite of this discouragement, Borrow wrote to Mr Jowett with regard to the Chinese programme, "*I again repeat that I am at command.*" [139e]

This determination on Borrow's part to become a missionary filled his mother with alarm. She had only one son now, and the very thought of his going into wild and unknown regions seemed to her tantamount to his going to his death. Mrs Clarke also expressed strong disapproval of the project. "I must tell you," she wrote, "that your letter chilled

me when I read your intention of going as a Missionary or Agent, with the Manchu Scriptures in your hand, to the Tartars, the land of incalculable dangers."

By the middle of May 1835 Borrow saw the end of his labours in sight. On 3rd/15th May he wrote asking for instructions relative to the despatch of the bulk of the volumes, and also as to the disposal of the type. "As for myself," he continues, "I suppose I must return to England, as my task will be speedily completed. I hope the Society are convinced that I have served them faithfully, and that I have spared no labour to bring out the work, which they did me the honor of confiding to me, correctly and within as short a time as possible. At my return, if the Society think that I can still prove of utility to them, I shall be most happy to devote myself still to their service. I am a person full of faults and weaknesses, as I am every day reminded by bitter experience, but I am certain that my zeal and fidelity towards those who put confidence in me are not to be shaken." [140]

On 15th/27th June he reported the printing completed and six out of the eight volumes bound, and that as soon as the remaining two volumes were ready, he intended to take his departure from St Petersburg; but a new difficulty arose. The East had laid a heavy hand upon St Petersburg. "To-morrow, please God!" met the energetic Westerner at every turn. The bookbinder delayed six weeks because he could not procure some paper he required. But the real obstacle to the despatch of the books was the non-arrival of the Government sanction to their shipment. Nothing was permitted to move either in or out of the sacred city of the Tsars without official permission. Probably those responsible for the

administration of affairs had never in their experience been called upon to deal with a man such as Borrow. To apply to him the customary rules of procedure was to bring upon "the House of Interior Affairs" a series of visits and demands that must have left it limp with astonishment.

On 16th/28th July Borrow wrote to the Bible Society, "I herewith send you a bill of lading for six of the eight parts of the New Testament, which I have at last obtained permission to send away, after having paid sixteen visits to the House of Interior Affairs." [141a] He expresses a hope that in another fortnight he will have despatched the remaining two volumes and have "bidden adieu to Russia"; but it was dangerous to anticipate the official course of events in Russia. Even to the last Borrow was tormented by red tape. Early in August the last two volumes were ready for shipment to England; but he could not obtain the necessary permission. He was told that he ought never to have printed the work, in spite of the license that had been granted, and that grave doubts existed in the official mind as to whether or no he really were an agent of the Bible Society. At length Borrow lost patience and told the officials that during the week following the books would be despatched, with or without permission, and he warned them to have a care how they acted. These strong measures seem to have produced the desired result.

Despite his many occupations on behalf of the Bible Society, Borrow found time in which to translate into Russian the first three Homilies of the Church of England, and into Manchu the Second. His desire was that the Homily Society should cause these translations to be printed, and in a letter to the Rev.

Francis Cunningham he strove to enlist his interest in the project, offering the translations without fee to the Society if they chose to make use of them. [141b] As "a zealous, though most unworthy, member of the Anglican Church," he found that his "cheeks glowed with shame at seeing dissenters, English and American, busily employed in circulating Tracts in the Russian tongue, whilst the members of the Church were following their secular concerns, almost regardless of things spiritual in respect to the Russian population." [142a]

Borrow also translated into English "one of the sacred books of Boudh, or Fo," from Baron Schilling de Canstadt's library. The principal occupation of his leisure hours, however, was a collection of translations, which he had printed by Schultz & Beneze, and published (3rd/ 15th June 1835) under the title of *Targum, or Metrical Translations from Thirty Languages and Dialects*. [142b] In a prefatory note, the collection is referred to as "selections from a huge and undigested mass of translation, accumulated during several years devoted to philological pursuits." Three months later he published another collection entitled *The Talisman, From the Russian of Alexander Pushkin. With Other Pieces*. [143a] There were seven poems in all, two after Pushkin, one from the Malo-Russian, one from Mickiewicz, and three "ancient Russian Songs." Again the printers were Schultz & Beneze. Each of these editions appears to have been limited to one hundred copies. [143b]

Writing in the *Athenæum*, [143c] J. P. H[asfeldt] says: —"The work is a pearl in literature, and, like pearls, derives value from its scarcity, for the whole edition was limited to about a hundred copies." W. B.

Donne admired the translations immensely, considering "the language and rhythm as vastly superior to Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*." [143d]

Whilst the last two volumes of the Manchu New Testament were waiting for paper (probably for end-papers), Borrow determined to pay a hurried visit to Moscow, "by far the most remarkable city it has ever been my fortune to see." One of his principal objects in visiting the ancient capital of Russia was to see the gypsies, who flourished there as they flourished nowhere else in Europe. They numbered several thousands, and many of them inhabited large and handsome houses, drove in their carriages, and were "distinguishable from the genteel class of the Russians only . . . by superior personal advantages and mental accomplishments." [143e] For this unusual state of prosperity the women were responsible, "having from time immemorial cultivated their vocal powers to such an extent that, although in the heart of a country in which the vocal art has arrived at greater perfection than in any other part of the world, the principal Gypsy choirs in Moscow are allowed by the general voice of the public to be unrivalled and to bear away the palm from all competitors. It is a fact notorious in Russia that the celebrated Catalani was so filled with admiration for the powers of voice displayed by one of the Gypsy songsters, who, after the former had sung before a splendid audience at Moscow, stepped forward and with an astonishing burst of melody ravished every ear, that she [Catalani] tore from her own shoulders a shawl of immense value which had been presented to her by the Pope, and embracing the Gypsy, compelled her to accept it, saying that it had been originally intended for the matchless singer, which she now discovered was not herself."

[144a]

These Russian gypsy singers lived luxurious lives and frequently married Russian gentry or even the nobility. It was only the successes, however, who achieved such distinction, and there were "a great number of low, vulgar, and profligate females who sing in taverns, or at the various gardens in the neighbourhood, and whose husbands and male connections subsist by horse-jobbing and such kinds of low traffic." [144b]

One fine evening Borrow hired a calash and drove out to Marina Rotze, "a kind of sylvan garden," about one and a half miles out of Moscow, where this particular class of Romanys resorted. "Upon my arriving there," he writes, "the Gypsies swarmed out of their tents and from the little *tracteer* or tavern, and surrounded me. Standing on the seat of the calash, I addressed them in a loud voice in the dialect of the English Gypsies, with which I have some slight acquaintance. A scream of wonder instantly arose, and welcomes and greetings were poured forth in torrents of musical Romany, amongst which, however, the most pronounced cry was: *ah kak mi toute karmuma* [145a]—'Oh how we love you'; for at first they supposed me to be one of their brothers, who, they said, were wandering about in Turkey, China, and other parts, and that I had come over the great *pawnee*, or water, to visit them." [145b]

On several other occasions during his stay at Moscow, Borrow went out to Marina Rotze, to hold converse with the gypsies. He "spoke to them upon their sinful manner of living," about Christianity and the advent of Christ, to which the gypsies listened with attention, but apparently not much profit. The promise that they would soon be able to obtain the

teachings of Jesus of Nazareth in their own tongue interested them far more on account of the pleasurable strangeness of the idea, than from any anticipation that they might derive spiritual comfort from such writings.

Returning to St Petersburg from Moscow, after four-days' absence, Borrow completed his work, settled up his affairs, bade his friends good-bye, and on 28th August/9th September left for Cronstadt to take the packet for Lübeck. The authorities seem to have raised no objection to his departure. His passport bore the date 28th August O/S (the actual day he left) and described him as "of stature, tall—hair, grey —face, oval—forehead, medium—eyebrows, blonde —eyes, brown—nose and mouth, medium—chin, round."

Borrow's work at St Petersburg gave entire satisfaction to the Bible Society. The Official Report for the year 1835 informed the members that—

> "The printing of the Manchu New Testament in St Petersburg is now drawing to a conclusion. Mr G. Borrow, who has had to superintend the work, has in every way afforded satisfaction to the Committee. They have reason to believe that his acquirements in the language are of the most respectable order; while the devoted diligence with which he has laboured, and the skill he has shown in surmounting difficulties, and conducting his negotiations for the advantage of the Society, justly entitle him to this public

> acknowledgment of his services." [146a]

Of the actual work itself John Hasfeldt justly wrote:

> "I can only say, that it is a beautiful edition of an oriental work—that it is printed with great care on a fine imitation of Chinese paper, made on purpose. At the outset, Mr Borrow spent weeks and months in the printing office to make the compositors acquainted with the intricate Manchu types; and that, as for the contents, I am assured by well-informed persons, that this translation is remarkable for the correctness and fidelity with which it has been executed." [146b]

The total cost to the Society of his labours in connection with the transcription of Puerot's MS., and printing and binding one thousand copies of Lipovzoff's New Testament had reached the very considerable sum of £2600. What the amount would have been if Borrow had not proved a prince of bargainers, it is impossible to imagine. The entire edition was sent to Earl Street, and eventually distributed in China as occasion offered. An edition of the Gospels in this version has recently been reprinted, and is still in use among certain tribes in Mongolia.

Borrow arrived in London somewhere about 20th September (new style), after an absence of a little more than two years. He went to St Petersburg "prejudiced against the country, the government, and

the people; the first is much more agreeable than is generally supposed; the second is seemingly the best adapted for so vast an empire; and the third, even the lowest classes, are in general kind, hospitable, and benevolent." [147]

On 23rd September Borrow was still in London writing his report to the General Committee upon his recent labours. In all probability he left immediately afterwards for Norwich, there to await events.

CHAPTER X
OCTOBER 1835–JANUARY 1836

BORROW had strong hopes that the Bible Society would continue to employ him. Mr Brandram had written (5th June 1835) that the Committee "will not very willingly suffer themselves to be deprived of your services. From Russia Borrow had written to his mother: [148]

> "They [the Bible Society] place great confidence in me, and I am firmly resolved to do all in my power to prove that they have not misplaced that confidence. I dare say that when I return home they will always be happy to employ me to edit their Bibles, and there is no employment in the whole world which I should prefer and for which I am better fitted. I shall, moreover, endeavour

to get ordained."

On another occasion he wrote, also to his mother:

> "I hope that the Bible Society will employ me upon something new, for I have of late led an active life, and dread the thought of having nothing to do except studying as formerly, and I am by no means certain that I could sit down to study now. I can do anything if it is to turn to any account; but it is very hard to dig holes in the sand and fill them up again, as I used to do. However, I hope God will find me something on which I can employ myself with credit and profit. I should like very much to get into the Church, though I suppose that that, like all other professions, is overstocked."

Mrs Borrow reminded him that he had a good home ready to receive him, and a mother grown lonely with long waiting. She told him, among other things, that she had spent none of the money that he had so generously and unsparingly sent her.

Borrow certainly had every reason to expect further employment. He had proved himself not only a thoroughly qualified editor; but had discovered business qualities that must have astonished and delighted the General Committee. Above all he had brought to a most successful conclusion a venture that, but for his ability and address, would in all probability have failed utterly. The application for permission to proceed with the distribution had, it is

true, been unsuccessful; but there was, as Mr Brandram wrote, the "seed laid up in the granary; but 'it is not yet written' that the sowers are to go forth to sow."

After remaining for a short time with his mother at Norwich, Borrow appears to have paid a visit to his friends the Skeppers of Oulton. Old Mrs Skepper, Mrs Clarke's mother, had just died, and it is a proof of Borrow's intimacy with the family that he should be invited to stay with them whilst they were still in mourning. Although there is no record of the date when he arrived at Oulton, he is known to have been there on 9th October, when he addressed a Bible Society meeting, about which he wrote the following delectable postscript to a letter he addressed to Mr Brandram: [149]

> "There has been a Bible meeting at Oulton, in Suffolk, to which I was invited. The speaking produced such an effect, that some of the most vicious characters in the neighbourhood have become weekly subscribers to the Branch Society. So says the Chronicle of Norfolk in its report." The actual paragraph read:
>
> "It will doubtless afford satisfaction to the Christian public to learn that many poor individuals in this neighbourhood, who previous to attending this meeting were averse to the cause or indifferent to it, had their feelings so aroused by what was communicated to them, that

> they have since voluntarily subscribed to the Bible Society, actuated by the hope of becoming humbly instrumental in extending the dominion of the true light, and of circumscribing the domains of darkness and of Satan."

On returning to the quiet of the old Cathedral city, Borrow had an opportunity of resting and meditating upon the events of the last two years; but he soon became restless and tired of inaction. [150a] "I am weary of doing nothing, and am sighing for employment," [150b] he wrote. He had impatiently awaited some word from Earl Street, where, seemingly, he had discussed various plans for the future, including a journey to Portugal and Spain, as well as the printing in Armenian of an edition of the New Testament. Hearing nothing from Mr Jowett, he wrote begging to be excused for reminding him that he was ready to undertake any task that might be allotted to him.

On the day following, he received a letter from Mr Brandram telling of how a resolution had been passed that he should go to Portugal. Then the writer's heart misgave him. In his mind's eye he saw Borrow set down at Oporto. What would he do? Fearful that the door was not sufficiently open to justify the step, he had suggested the suspension of the resolution. Borrow was asked what he himself thought. What did he think of China, and could he foresee any prospect for the distribution of the Scriptures there? "Favour us with your thoughts," Mr Brandram wrote. "Experimental agency in a Society like ours is a formidable undertaking." Borrow replied the same day, [150c]

"As you ask me to favour you with my thoughts, I certainly will; for I have thought much upon the matters in question, and the result I will communicate to you in a very few words. I decidedly approve (and so do all the religious friends whom I have communicated it to) of the plan of a journey to Portugal, and am sorry that it has been suspended, though I am convinced that your own benevolent and excellent heart was the cause, unwilling to fling me into an undertaking which you supposed might be attended with peril and difficulty. Therefore I wish it to be clearly understood that I am perfectly willing to undertake the expedition, nay, to extend it into Spain, to visit the town and country, to discourse with the people, especially those connected with institutions for infantine education, and to learn what ways and opportunities present themselves for conveying the Gospel into those benighted countries. I will moreover undertake, with the blessing of God, to draw up a small volume of what I shall have seen and heard there, which cannot fail to be interesting, and if patronised by the Society will probably help to cover the expenses of the expedition. On my return I can commence the Armenian Testament, and whilst I am editing

> that, I may be acquiring much vulgar Chinese from some unemployed Lascar or stray Cantonman whom I may pick up upon the wharves, and then . . . to China. I have no more to say, for were I to pen twenty pages, and I have time enough for so doing, I could communicate nothing which would make my views more clear."

The earnestness of this letter seems effectually to have dissipated Mr Brandram's scruples, for events moved forward with astonishing rapidity. Four days after the receipt of Borrow's letter, a resolution was adopted by the Committee to the following effect:—

> "That Mr Borrow be requested to proceed forthwith to Lisbon and Oporto for the purpose of visiting the Society's correspondents there, and of making further enquiries respecting the means and channels which may offer for promoting the circulation of the Holy Scriptures in Portugal." [151]

Mr Brandram gave Borrow two letters of introduction, one to John Wilby, a merchant at Lisbon, and the other to the British Chaplain, the Rev. E. Whiteley. Having explained to Mr Whiteley how Borrow had recently been eventually going to be employed in St Petersburg in editing the Manchu New Testament, he wrote:—

> "We have some prospect of his eventually going to China; but

having proved by experience that he possesses an order of talent remarkably suited to the purposes of our Society, we have felt unwilling to interrupt our connection with him with the termination of his engagement at St Petersburg. In the interval we have thought that he might advantageously visit Portugal, and strengthen your hands and those of other friends, and see whether he could not extend the promising opening at present existing. He has no specific instructions, though he is enjoined to confer very fully with yourself and Mr Wilby of Lisbon.

"I have mentioned his recent occupation at St Petersburg, and you may perhaps think that there is little affinity between it and his present visit to Portugal. But Mr Borrow possesses no little tact in addressing himself to anything. With Portugal he is already acquainted, and speaks the language. He proposes visiting several of the principal cities and towns . . .

"Our correspondence about Spain is at this moment singularly interesting, and if it continues so, and the way seems to open, Mr Borrow will cross the frontier and go and enquire what can be done there. We believe him to be one who is endowed with no small

> portion of address and a spirit of enterprise. I recommend him to your kind attentions, and I anticipate your thanks for so doing, after you shall have become acquainted with him. Do not, however, be too hasty in forming your judgment."

This letter outlines very clearly what was in the minds of the Committee in sending Borrow to Portugal. He was to spy out the land and advise the home authorities in what direction he would be most likely to prove useful. He was in particular to direct his attention to schools, and was "authorised to be liberal in *giving* New Testaments." Furthermore, he was to be permitted to draw upon the Society's agents to the extent of one hundred pounds.

The most significant part of this letter is the passage relating to China. It leaves no doubt that Borrow's reiterated requests to be employed in distributing the Manchu New Testament had appealed most strongly to the General Committee. Mr Brandram was evidently in doubt as to how Borrow would strike his correspondent as an agent of the Bible Society, hence his warning against a hasty judgment. Apparently this letter was never presented, as it was found among Borrow's papers, and Mr Whiteley had to form his opinion entirely unaided.

On 6th November Borrow sailed from the Thames for Lisbon in the steamship *London Merchant*. The voyage was fair for the time of year, and was marked only by the tragic occurrence of a sailor falling from the cross-trees into the sea and being drowned. The man had dreamed his fate a few minutes previously, and had told Borrow of the circumstances on coming

up from below. [153]

Borrow had scarcely been in Lisbon an hour before he heartily wished himself "back in Russia . . . where I had left cherished friends and warm affections." The Customs-house officers irritated him, first with their dilatoriness, then by the minuteness with which they examined every article of which he was possessed. Again, there was the difficulty of obtaining a suitable lodging, which when eventually found proved to be "dark, dirty and exceedingly expensive without attendance." Mr Wilby was in the country and not expected to return for a week. It would also appear that the British Chaplain was likewise away. Thus Borrow found himself with no one to advise him as to the first step he should take. This in itself was no very great drawback; but he felt very much a stranger in a city that struck him as detestable.

Determined to commence operations according to the dictates of his own judgment, he first engaged a Portuguese servant that he might have ample opportunities of perfecting himself in the language. He was fortunate in his selection, for Antonio turned out an excellent fellow, who "always served me with the greatest fidelity, and . . . exhibited an assiduity and a wish to please which afforded me the utmost satisfaction." [154a]

When Borrow arrived in Portugal, it was to find it gasping and dazed by eight years of civil war (1826–1834). In 1807, when Junot invaded the country, the Royal House of Braganza had sailed for Brazil. In 1816 Dom João succeeded to the thrones of Brazil and Portugal, and six years later he arrived in Portugal, leaving behind him as Viceroy his son Dom

Pedro, who promptly declared himself Emperor of Brazil. Dom João died in 1826, leaving, in addition to the self-styled Emperor of Brazil, another son, Miguel. Dom Pedro relinquished his claim to the throne of Portugal in favour of his seven years old daughter, Maria da Gloria, whose right was contested by her uncle Dom Miguel. In 1834 Dom Miguel resigned his imaginary rights to the throne by the Convention of Evora, and departed from the country that for eight years had been at war with itself, and for seven with a foreign invader.

Borrow proceeded to acquaint himself with the state of affairs in Lisbon and the surrounding country, that he might transmit a full account to the Bible Society. He visited every part of the city, losing no opportunity of entering into conversation with anyone with whom he came in contact. The people he found indifferent to religion, the lower orders in particular. They laughed in his face when he enquired if ever they confessed themselves, and a muleteer on being asked if he reverenced the cross, "instantly flew into a rage, stamped violently, and, spitting on the ground, said it was a piece of stone, and that he should have no more objection to spit upon it than the stones on which he trod." [154b]

Many of the people could read, as they proved when asked to do so from the Portuguese New Testament; but of all those whom he addressed none appeared to have read the Scriptures, or to know anything of what they contain.

After spending four or five days at Lisbon, Borrow, accompanied by Antonio, proceeded to Cintra. [155a] Here he pursued the same method, also visiting the schools and enquiring into the nature of the religious

instruction. During his stay of four days, he "traversed the country in all directions, riding into the fields, where I saw the peasants at work, and entering into discourse with them, and notwithstanding many of my questions must have appeared to them very singular, I never experienced any incivility, though they frequently answered me with smiles and laughter." [155b]

From Cintra he proceeded on horseback to Mafra, a large village some three leagues distant. Everywhere he subjected the inhabitants to a searching cross-examination, laying bare their minds upon religious matters, experiencing surprise at the "free and unembarrassed manner in which the Portuguese peasantry sustain a conversation, and the purity of the language in which they express their thoughts," [155c] although few could read or write.

On the return journey from Mafra to Cintra he nearly lost his life, owing to the girth of his saddle breaking during his horse's exertions in climbing a hill. Borrow was cast violently to the ground; but fortunately on the right side, otherwise he would in all probability have been bruised to death by tumbling down the steep hill-side. As it was, he was dazed, and felt the effects of his mishap for several days.

On his return to Lisbon, Borrow found that Mr Wilby was back, and he had many opportunities of taking counsel with him as to the best means to be adopted to further the Society's ends. He learned that four hundred copies of the Bible and the New Testament had arrived, and it was decided to begin operations at once. Mr Wilby recommended the booksellers as the best medium of distribution; but Borrow urged

strongly that at least half of the available copies "should be entrusted to colporteurs," who were to receive a commission upon every copy sold. To this Mr Wilby agreed, provided the operations of the colporteurs were restricted to Lisbon, as there was considerable danger in the country, where the priests were very powerful and might urge the people to mishandle, or even assassinate, the bearers of the Word.

By nature Borrow was not addicted to half measures. His whole record as an agent of the Bible Society was of a series of determined onslaughts upon the obstacles animate and inanimate, that beset his path. Sometimes he took away the breath of his adversaries by the very vigour of his attack, and, like the old Northern leaders, whose deeds he wished to give to an uneager world in translated verse, he faced great dangers and achieved great ends. Recognising that the darkest region is most in need of light, he enquired of Mr Wilby in what province of Portugal were to be found the most ignorant and benighted people, and on being told the Alemtejo (the other side of the Tagus), he immediately announced his intention of making a journey through it, in order to discover how dense spiritual gloom could really be in an ostensibly Christian country.

The Alemtejo was an unprepossessing country, consisting for the most part of "heaths, broken by knolls and gloomy dingles, swamps and forests of stunted pine," with but few hills and mountains. The place was infested with banditti, and robberies, accompanied by horrible murders, were of constant occurrence. On 6th December, accompanied by his servant Antonio, Borrow set out for Evora, the principal town, formerly a seat of the dreaded

Inquisition, which lies about sixty miles east of Lisbon. After many adventures, which he himself has narrated, including a dangerous crossing of the Tagus, and a meeting with Dom Geronimo Jozé d'Azveto, secretary to the government of Evora, Borrow arrived at his destination, having spent two nights on the road. During the journey he had been constantly mindful of his mission; beside the embers of a bandit's fire he left a New Testament, and the huts that mark the spot where Dom Pedro and Dom Miguel met, he sweetened with some of "the precious little tracts."

He had brought with him to Evora twenty Testaments and two Bibles, half of which he left with an enlightened shopkeeper, to whom he had a letter of introduction. The other half he subsequently bestowed upon Dom Geronimo, who proved to be a man of great earnestness, deeply conscious of his countrymen's ignorance of true Christianity. Each day during his stay at Evora, Borrow spent two hours beside the fountain where the cattle were watered, entering into conversation with all who approached, the result being that before he left the town, he had spoken to "about two hundred . . . of the children of Portugal upon matters connected with their eternal welfare." Sometimes his hearers would ask for proofs of his statements that they were not Christians, being ignorant of Christ and his teaching, and that the Pope was Satan's prime minister. He invariably replied by calling attention to their own ignorance of the Scripture, for if the priests were in reality Christ's ministers, why had they kept from their flocks the words of their Master?

When not engaged at the fountain, Borrow rode about the neighbourhood distributing tracts. Fearful

lest the people might refuse them if offered by his own hand, he dropped them in their favourite walks, in the hope that they would be picked up out of curiosity. He caused the daughter of the landlady of the inn at which he stopped to burn a copy of Volney's *Ruins of Empire*, because the author was an "emissary of Satan," the girl standing by telling her beads until the book were entirely consumed.

Borrow had been greatly handicapped through the lack of letters of introduction to influential people in Portugal. He wrote, therefore, to Dr Bowring, now M.P. for Kilmarnock, telling him of his wanderings among the rustics and banditti of Portugal, with whom he had become very popular; but, he continues:

> "As it is much more easy to introduce oneself to the cottage than the hall (though I am not utterly unknown in the latter), I want you to give or procure me letters to the most liberal and influential minds in Portugal. I likewise want a letter from the Foreign Office to Lord [Howard] de Walden. In a word, I want to make what interest I can towards obtaining the admission of the Gospel of Jesus into the public schools of Portugal, which are about to be established. I beg leave to state that this is *my plan* and no other person's, as I was merely sent over to Portugal to observe the disposition of the people, therefore I do not wish to be named as an Agent of the B.S., but as a person who has

> plans for the mental improvement of the Portuguese; should I receive *these letters* within the space of six weeks it will be time enough, for before setting up my machine in Portugal, I wish to lay the foundations of something similar in Spain."
>
> P.S.—"I start for Spain to-morrow, and I want letters something similar (there is impudence for you) for Madrid, *which I should like to have as soon as possible*. I do not much care at present for an introduction to the Ambassador at Madrid, as I shall not commence operations seriously in Spain until I have disposed of Portugal. I will not apologise for writing to you in this manner, for you know me, but I will tell you one thing, which is, that the letter which you procured for me, on my going to St Petersburg, from Lord Palmerston, assisted me wonderfully; I called twice at your domicile on my return; the first time you were in Scotland—the second in France, and I assure you I cried with vexation. Remember me to Mrs Bowring, and God bless you." [159a]

In this letter Borrow gives another illustration of his shrewdness. He saw clearly the disadvantage of appealing for assistance as an agent of the Bible Society, a Protestant institution which was anathema in a Roman Catholic country, whereas if he posed

merely as “a gentleman who has plans for the mental improvement of the Portuguese,” he could enlist the sympathetic interest of any and every broad-minded Portuguese mindful of his country’s intellectual gloom. In response to this request Dr Bowring, writing from Brussels, sent two letters of introduction, one each for Lisbon and Madrid.

After remaining at Evora for a week (8th to 17th December) Borrow returned to Lisbon, thoroughly satisfied with the results of his journey. The next fortnight he spent in a further examination of Lisbon, and becoming acquainted with the Jews of the city, by whom he was welcomed as a powerful rabbi. He favoured the mistake, with the result that in a few days he “knew all that related to them and their traffic in Lisbon.” [159b]

Borrow’s methods seem to have impressed Earl Street most favourably. In a letter of acknowledgment Mr Brandram wrote:—

> “We have been much interested by your two communications. [159c] They are both very painful in their details, and you develop a truly awful state of things. You are probing the wound, and I hope preparing the way for our pouring in by and by the healing balsam of the Scripture. We shall be anxious to hear from you again. We often think of you in your wanderings. We like your way of communicating with the people, meeting them in their own walks.”

Thoroughly convinced as to the irreligious state of Portugal, Borrow determined to set out for Spain, in order that he might examine into the condition of the people, and report to the Bible Society their state of preparedness to receive the Scriptures. On the afternoon of 1st January 1836 he set out, bound for Badajos, a hundred miles south of Lisbon. From Badajos he intended to take the diligence on to Madrid, which he decided to make his headquarters.

Having taken leave of his servant Antonio (who had accompanied him as far as Aldéa Galléga) almost with tears, Borrow mounted a hired mule, and with no other companion than an idiot lad, who, when spoken to, made reply only with an uncouth laugh, he plunged once more into the dangerous and desolate Alemtejo on a four days' journey "over the most savage and ill-noted track in the whole kingdom." At first he was overwhelmed with a sense of loneliness, and experienced a great desire for someone with whom to talk. There was no one to be seen—he was hemmed in by desolation and despair.

At Montemôr Novo Borrow appears in a new light when he kisses his hand repeatedly to the tittering nuns who, with "dusky faces and black waving hair," [160a] strove to obtain a glance of the stranger who, a few minutes previously, had dared to tell one of their number that he had come "to endeavour to introduce the gospel of Christ into a country where it is not known." [160b]

One adventure befel him that might have ended in tragedy. Soon after leaving Arrayólos he overtook a string of carts conveying ammunition into Spain. One of the Portuguese soldiers of the guard began to curse foreigners in general and Borrow, whom he

mistook for a Frenchmen, in particular, because "the devil helps foreigners and hates the Portuguese." When about forty yards ahead of the advance guard, with which the discontented soldier marched, Borrow had the imprudence to laugh, with the result that the next moment two well-aimed bullets sang past his ears. Taking the hint, Borrow put spurs to his mule, and, followed by the terrified guide, soon outdistanced these official banditti. With great *naïveté* he remarks, "Oh, may I live to see the day when soldiery will no longer be tolerated in any civilised, or at least Christian country!" [161a]

For two and a half days the idiot guide had met Borrow's most dexterous cross-examination with a determined silence; but on reaching a hill overlooking Estremóz he suddenly found tongue, and, in an epic of inspiration, told of the wonderful hunting that was to be obtained on the Serre Dorso, the Alemtejo's finest mountain. "He likewise described with great minuteness a wonderful dog, which was kept in the neighbourhood for the purpose of catching the wolves and wild boars, and for which the proprietor had refused twenty *moidores*." [161b] From this it would appear that the idiocy of the guide was an armour to be assumed at will by one who preferred the sweetness of his own thoughts to the cross-questionings of his master's clients.

At Elvas, which he reached on 5th January, Borrow showed very strongly one rather paradoxical side of his character. Never backward in his dispraise of Englishmen and things English, in particular those responsible for the administration of the nation's affairs, past and present, he demonstrated very clearly, in his expressions of indignation at the

Portuguese attitude towards England, that he reserved this right of criticism strictly to himself. At the inn where he stayed, he thoroughly discomfited a Portuguese officer who dared to criticise the English Government for its attitude in connection with the Spanish civil war. When refused entrance to the fort, where he had gone in order to satisfy his curiosity, Borrow exclaims, "This is one of the beneficial results of protecting a nation, and squandering blood and treasure in its defence." [162a]

Borrow was essentially an Englishman and proud of his blood, prouder perhaps of that which came to him from Norfolk, [162b] and although permitting himself and his fellow-countrymen considerable license in the matter of caustic criticism of public men and things, there the matter must end. Let a foreigner, a Portuguese, dare to say a word against his, Borrow's, country, and he became subjected to either a biting cross-examination, or was denounced in eloquent and telling periods. "I could not command myself," he writes in extenuation of his unchristian conduct in discomfiting the officer at Elvas, "when I heard my own glorious land traduced in this unmerited manner. By whom? A Portuguese? A native of a country which has been twice liberated from horrid and detestable thraldom by the hands of Englishmen." [162c]

On 6th January 1836, [162d] having sent back the "idiot" guide with the two mules, Borrow "spurred down the hill of Elvas to the plain, eager to arrive in old, chivalrous, romantic Spain," and having forded the stream that separates the two countries, he crossed the bridge over the Guadiana and entered the North Gate of Badajos, immortalised by Wellington and the British Army. He had reached

Spain “in the humble hope of being able to cleanse some of the foul stains of Popery from the minds of its children.” [162e]

CHAPTER XI
JANUARY–OCTOBER 1836

WHEN Borrow entered Spain she was in the throes of civil war. In 1814 British blood and British money had restored to the throne Ferdinand VII., who, immediately he found himself secure, and forgetting his pledges to govern constitutionally, dissolved the Cortes and became an absolute monarch. All the old abuses were revived, including the re-establishment of the Inquisition. For six years the people suffered their King’s tyranny, then they revolted, with the result that Ferdinand, bending to the wind, accepted a re-imposition of the Constitution. In 1823 a French Army occupied Madrid in support of Ferdinand, who promptly reverted to absolutism.

In 1829 Ferdinand married for the fourth time, and, on the birth of a daughter, declared that the Salic law had no effect in Spain, and the young princess was recognised as heir-apparent to the throne. This drew from his brother, Don Carlos, who immediately left the country, a protest against his exclusion from the succession. When his daughter was four years of age, Ferdinand died, and the child was proclaimed Queen as Isabel II.

A bitter war broke out between the respective

adherents of the Queen and her uncle Don Carlos. Prisoners and wounded were massacred without discrimination, and an uncivilised and barbarous warfare waged when Borrow crossed the Portuguese frontier "to undertake the adventure of Spain."

Spain had always appealed most strongly to Borrow's imagination.

> "In the day-dreams of my boyhood," he writes, "Spain always bore a considerable share, and I took a particular interest in her, without any presentiment that I should, at a future time, be called upon to take a part, however humble, in her strange dramas; which interest, at a very early period, led me to acquire her noble language, and to make myself acquainted with the literature (scarcely worthy of the language), her history and traditions; so that when I entered Spain for the first time I felt more at home than I should otherwise have done." [164a]

Whilst standing at the door of the Inn of the Three Nations on the day following his arrival at Badajos, meditating upon the deplorable state of the country he had just entered, Borrow recognised in the face of one of two men who were about to pass him the unmistakable lineaments of Egypt. Uttering "a certain word," he received the reply he expected and forthwith engaged in conversation with the two men, who both proved to be gypsies. These men spread the news abroad that staying at the Inn of the Three Nations was a man who spoke Romany. "In less than

half an hour the street before the inn was filled with the men, women, and children of Egypt." Borrow went out amongst them, and confesses that "so much vileness, dirt, and misery I had never seen among a similar number of human beings; but worst of all was the evil expression of their countenances." [164b] He soon discovered that their faces were an accurate index to their hearts, which were capable of every species of villainy. The gypsies clustered round him, fingering his hands, face and clothes, as if he were a holy man.

Gypsies had always held for Borrow a strange attraction, [164c] and he determined to prolong his stay at Badajos in order that he might have an opportunity of becoming "better acquainted with their condition and manners, and above all to speak to them of Christ and His Word; for I was convinced, that should I travel to the end of the universe, I should meet with no people more in need of a little Christian exhortation." [165a]

Intimate though his acquaintance with the gypsies of other countries had been, Borrow was aghast at the depravity of those of Spain. The men were drunkards, brigands, and murderers; the women unchaste, and inveterate thieves. Their language was terrifying in its foulness. They seemed to have no religion save a misty glimmering of metempsychosis, which had come down to them through the centuries, and having been very wicked in this world they asked, with some show of reason, why they should live again. They were incorrigible heathens, keenly interested in the demonstration that their language was capable of being written and read, but untouched by the parables of Lazarus or the Prodigal Son, which Borrow read and expounded to them.

"Brother," exclaimed one woman, "you tell us strange things, though perhaps you do not lie; a month since I would sooner have believed these tales, than that this day I should see one who could read Romany." [165b]

Neither by exhortation nor by translating into Romany a portion of the Gospel of St Luke could Borrow make any impression upon the minds of the gypsies, therefore when one of them, Antonio by name, announced that "the affairs of Egypt" called for his presence "on the frontiers of Costumbra," and that he and Borrow might as well journey thus far together, he decided to avail himself of the opportunity. It was arranged that Borrow's luggage should be sent on ahead, for, as Antonio said, "How the *Busné* [the Spaniards] on the road would laugh if they saw two *Calés* [Gypsies] with luggage behind them." [166a] Thus it came about that an agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society, mounted upon a most uncouth horse "of a spectral white, short in the body, but with remarkably long legs" and high in the withers, set out from Badajos on 16th January 1836, escorted by a smuggler astride a mule; for the affairs of Egypt on this occasion were the evasion of the Customs dues.

Towards evening on the first day the curiously assorted pair arrived at Mérida, and proceeded to a large and ruinous house, a portion of which was occupied by some connections of the gypsy Antonio's. In the large hall of the old mansion they camped, and here, acting on the gypsy's advice, Borrow remained for three days. Antonio himself was absent from early morning until late at night, occupied with his own affairs. [166b]

The fourth night was spent in the forest by the campfire of some more of Antonio's friends. On one occasion, but for the fortunate possession of a passport, the affairs of Egypt would have involved Borrow in some difficulties with the authorities. At another time, for safety's sake, he had to part from Antonio and proceed on his way alone, picking up the *contrabandista* further on the road.

When some distance beyond Jaraicéjo, it was discovered that the affairs of Egypt had ended disastrously in the discomfiture and capture of Antonio's friends by the authorities. The news was brought by the gypsy's daughter. Antonio must return at once, and as the steed Borrow was riding, which belonged to Antonio, would be required by him, Borrow purchased the daughter's donkey, and having said good-bye to the smuggler, he continued his journey alone.

By way of Almaráz and Oropésa Borrow eventually reached Talavéra (24th Jan.). On the advice of a Toledo Jew, with whom he had become acquainted during the last stage of his journey, he decided to take the diligence from Talavéra to Madrid, the more willingly because the Jew amiably offered to purchase the donkey. On the evening of 25th Jan. Borrow accordingly took his place on the diligence, and reached the capital the next morning.

On arriving at Madrid, Borrow first went to a Posada; but a few days later he removed to lodgings in the Calle de la Zarza (the Street of the Brambles),—"A dark and dirty street, which, however, was close to the Puerta del Sol, the most central point of Madrid, into which four or five of the principal streets debouche, and which is, at all times of the year, the

great place of assemblage for the idlers of the capital, poor or rich." [167a]

The capital did not at first impress Borrow very favourably. [167b] "Madrid is a small town," he wrote to his mother, [167c] "not larger than Norwich, but it is crammed with people, like a hive with bees, and it contains many fine streets and fountains . . . Everything in Madrid is excessively dear to foreigners, for they are made to pay six times more than natives . . . I manage to get on tolerably well, for I make a point of paying just one quarter of what I am asked."

He suffered considerably from the frost and cold. From the snow-covered mountains that surround the city there descend in winter such cold blasts "that the body is drawn up like a leaf." [167d] Then again there were the physical discomforts that he had to endure.

"You cannot think," he wrote, [168a] "what a filthy, uncivilised set of people the Spanish and Portuguese are. There is more comfort in an English barn than in one of their palaces; and they are rude and ill-bred to a surprising degree."

Borrow was angry with Spain, possibly for being so unlike his "dear and glorious Russia." He saw in it a fertile and beautiful country, inhabited by a set of beings that were not human, "almost as bad as the Irish, with the exception that they are not drunkards." [168b] They were a nation of thieves and extortioners, who regarded the foreigner as their legitimate prey. Even his own servant was "the greatest thief and villain that ever existed; who, if I would let him, would steal the teeth out of my head," [168c] and who seems actually to have

destroyed some of his master's letters for the sake of the postage. Being forced to call upon various people whose addresses he did not know, Borrow found it necessary to keep the man, in spite of his thievish proclivities, for he was clever, and had he been dismissed his place would, in all probability, have been taken by an even greater rogue.

At night he never went out, for the streets were thronged with hundreds of people of the rival factions, bent on "cutting and murdering one another; . . . for every Spaniard is by nature a cruel, cowardly tiger. Nothing is more common than to destroy a whole town, putting man, woman, and child to death, because two or three of the inhabitants have been obnoxious." [168d] Thus he wrote to his mother, all-unconscious of the anxiety and alarm that he was causing her lest he, her dear George, should be one of the cut or murdered.

Later, Borrow seems to have revised his opinion of Madrid and of its inhabitants. He confesses that of all the cities he has known Madrid interested him the most, not on account of its public buildings, squares or fountains, for these are surpassed in other cities; but because of its population. "Within a mud wall scarcely one league and a half in circuit, are contained two hundred thousand human beings, certainly forming the most extraordinary vital mass to be found in the entire world." [169] In the upper classes he had little interest. He mixed but little with them, and what he saw did not impress him favourably. It was the Spaniard of the lower orders that attracted him. He regarded this class as composed not of common beings, but of extraordinary men. He admired their spirit of proud independence, and forgave them their ignorance.

His first impressions of Spain had been unfavourable because, as a stranger, he had been victimised by the amiable citizens, who were merely doing as their fathers had done before them. Once, however, he got to know them, he regarded with more indulgence their constitutional dishonesty towards the stranger, a weakness they possessed in common with the gypsies, and hailed them as "extraordinary men." Borrow's impulsiveness frequently led him to ill-considered and hasty conclusions, which, however, he never hesitated to correct, if he saw need for correction.

The disappointment he experienced as regards Madrid and the Spaniards is not difficult to understand. He arrived quite friendless and without letters of introduction, to find the city given over to the dissensions and strifes of the supporters of Isabel II. and Don Carlos. His journey had been undertaken in "the hope of obtaining permission from the Government to print the New Testament in the Castilian language, without the notes insisted on by the Spanish clergy, for circulation in Spain," and there seemed small chance of those responsible for the direction of affairs listening to the application of a foreigner for permission to print the unannotated Scriptures. For one thing, any acquiescence in such a suggestion would draw forth from the priesthood bitter reproaches and, most probably, active and serious opposition. It is only natural that despondency should occasionally seize upon him who sought to light the lamp of truth amidst such tempests.



The man to approach was the premier, Juan Álvarez y Mendizábal, [170a] a Christianised Jew. He was enormously powerful, and Borrow decided to appeal to him direct; for, armed with the approval of Mendizábal, no one would dare to interfere with his plans or proceedings. Borrow made several attempts to see Mendizábal, who "was considered as a man of almost unbounded power, in whose hands were placed the destinies of the country." Without interest or letters of introduction, he found it utterly impossible to obtain an audience. Recollecting the assistance he had received from the Hon. J. D. Bligh

at St Petersburg, Borrow determined to make himself known to the British Minister at Madrid, the Hon. George Villiers, [170b] and, "with the freedom permitted to a British subject . . . ask his advice in the affair." Borrow was received with great kindness, and, after conversing upon various topics for some time, he introduced the subject of his visit. Mr Villiers willingly undertook to help him as far as lay in his power, and promised to endeavour to procure for him an audience with the Premier. In this he was successful, and Borrow had an interview with Mendizábal, who was almost inaccessible to all but the few.

At eight o'clock on the morning of 7th February Borrow presented himself at the palace, where Mendizábal resided, and after waiting for about three hours, was admitted to the presence of the Prime Minister of Spain, whom he found—"A huge athletic man, somewhat taller than myself, who measure six foot two without my shoes. His complexion was florid, his features fine and regular, his nose quite aquiline, and his teeth splendidly white; though scarcely fifty years of age, his hair was remarkably grey. He was dressed in a rich morning gown, with a gold chain round his neck, and morocco slippers on his feet." [171]

Borrow began by assuring Mendizábal that he was labouring under a grave error in thinking that the Bible Society had sought to influence unduly the slaves of Cuba, that they had not sent any agents there, and they were not in communication with any of the residents. Mr Villiers had warned Borrow that the premier was very angry on account of reports that had reached him of the action in Cuba of certain people whom he insisted were sent there by the Bible

Society. In vain Borrow suggested that the disturbers of the tranquillity of Spain's beneficent rule in the Island were in no way connected with Earl Street; he was several times interrupted by Mendizábal, who insisted that he had documentary proof. Borrow with difficulty restrained himself from laughing in the premier s face. He pointed out that the Committee was composed of quiet, respectable English gentlemen, who attended to their own concerns and gave a little of their time to the affairs of the Bible Society.

On Borrow asking for permission to print at Madrid the New Testament in Spanish without notes, he was met with an unequivocal refusal. In spite of his arguments that the whole tenor of the work was against bloodshedding and violence, he could not shake the premier's opinion that it was "an improper book."

At first Borrow had experienced some difficulty in explaining himself, on account of the Spaniard's habit of persistent interruption, and at last he was forced in self-defence to hold on in spite of Mendizábal's remarks. The upshot of the interview was that he was told to renew his application when the Carlists had been beaten and the country was at peace. Borrow then asked permission to introduce into Spain a few copies of the New Testament in the Catalan dialect, but was refused. He next requested to be allowed to call on the following day and submit a copy of the Catalan edition, and received the remarkable reply that the prime-minister refused his offer to call lest he should succeed in convincing him, and Mendizábal did not wish to be convinced. This seemed to show that the Mendizábal was something of a philosopher and a little of a humorist.

With this Borrow had to be content, and after an hour's interview he withdrew. The premier was unquestionably in a difficult position. On the one hand, he no doubt desired to assist a man introduced to him by the representative of Great Britain, to whom he looked for assistance in suppressing Carlism; on the other hand, he had the priesthood to consider, and they would without question use every means of which they stood possessed to preserve the prohibition against the dissemination of the Scriptures, without notes, a prohibition that had become almost a tradition.

But Borrow was not discouraged. He wrote in a most hopeful strain that he foresaw the speedy and successful termination of the Society's negotiations in the Peninsula. He looked forward to the time when only an agent would be required to superintend the engagement of colporteurs, and to make arrangements with the booksellers. He proceeds to express a hope that his exertions have given satisfaction to the Society.

Borrow received an encouraging letter from Mr Brandram, telling him of the Committee's appreciation of his work, but practically leaving with him the decision as to his future movements. They were inclined to favour a return to Lisbon, but recognised that "in these wondrous days opportunities may open unexpectedly." In the matter of the Gospel of St Luke in Spanish Romany, the publication of extracts was authorised, but there was no enthusiasm for the project. "We say," wrote Mr Brandram, "*festina lente*. You will be doing well to occupy leisure hours with this work; but we are not prepared for printing anything beyond portions at present."

In the meantime, however, an article in the Madrid newspaper, *El Español*, upon the history, aims, and achievements of the British and Foreign Bible Society, had determined Borrow to remain on at Madrid for a few weeks at least.

> "Why should Spain, which has explored the New World, why should she alone be destitute of Bible Societies," asked the *Español*. "Why should a nation eminently Catholic continue isolated from the rest of Europe, without joining in the magnificent enterprise in which the latter is so busily engaged?" [173a]

This article fired Borrow, and with the promise of assistance from the liberal-minded *Español*, he set to work "to lay the foundation of a Bible Society at Madrid." [173b] As a potential head of the Spanish organization, Borrow's eyes were already directed towards the person of "a certain Bishop, advanced in years, a person of great piety and learning, who has himself translated the New Testament" [173c] and who was disposed to print and circulate it.

Nothing, however, came of the project. Mr Brandram wrote to Borrow:—"With regard to forming a Bible Society in Madrid, and appointing Dr Usoz Secretary, it is so out of our usual course that the Committee, for various reasons, cannot comply with your wishes—of the desirableness of forming such a Society at present, you and your friend must be the best judges. If it is to be an independent society, as I suppose must be the case," Mr Brandram continues, and the Bible Society's aid or that of its agent is sought, the new Society must be formed on

the principles of the British and Foreign Bible Society, admitting, “on the one hand, general cooperation, and on the other, that it does not circulate Apocryphal Bibles.” There was doubt at Earl Street as to whether the time was yet ripe; so the decision was very properly left with Borrow, and he was told that he “need not fear to hold out great hopes of encouragement in the event of the formation of such a Society.” [174]

A serious difficulty now arose in the resignation of Mendizábal (March 1836). Two of his friends and supporters, in the persons of Francisco de Isturitz and Alcala Galiano, seceded from his party, and, under the name of *moderados*, formed an opposition to their Chief in the Cortes. They had the support of the Queen Regent and General Cordova, whom Mendizábal had wished to remove from his position as head of the army on account of his great popularity with the soldiers, whose comforts and interests he studied. Isturitz became Premier, Galiano Minister of Marine (a mere paper title, as there was no navy at the time), and the Duke of Rivas Minister of the Interior.

Conscious of the advantage of possessing powerful friends, especially in a country such as Spain, Borrow had used every endeavour to enlarge the circle of his acquaintance among men occupying influential positions, or likely to succeed those who at present filled them. The result was that he was able to announce to Mr Brandram that the new ministry, which had been formed, was composed “entirely of *my* friends.” [175a] With Galiano in particular he was on very intimate terms. Everything promised well, and the new Cabinet showed itself most friendly to Borrow and his projects, until the actual moment

arrived for writing the permission to print the Scriptures in Spanish. Then doubts arose, and the decrees of the Council of Trent loomed up, a threatening barrier, in the eyes of the Duke of Rivas and his secretary.

So hopeful was Borrow after his first interview with the Duke that he wrote:—"I shall receive the permission, the Lord willing, in a few days . . . The last skirts of the cloud of papal superstition are vanishing below the horizon of Spain; whoever says the contrary either knows nothing of the matter or wilfully hides the truth." [175b]

At Earl Street the good news about the article in the *Español* gave the liveliest satisfaction. "Surely a new and wonderful thing in Spain," wrote Mr Brandram [175c] in a letter in which he urged Borrow to "guard against becoming too much committed to one political party," and asked him to write more frequently, as his letters were always most welcome. This letter reached Madrid at a time when Borrow found himself absolutely destitute.

"For the last three weeks," he writes, [175d] "I have been without money, literally without a farthing." Everything in Madrid was so dear. A month previously he had been forced to pay £12, 5s. for a suit of clothes, "my own being so worn that it was impossible to appear longer in public with them." [175e] He had written to Mr Wilby, but in all probability his letter had gone astray, the post to Estremadura having been three times robbed. "The money may still come," he continues, [176a] "but I have given up all hopes of it, and I am compelled to write home, though what I am to do till I can receive your answer I am at a loss to conceive . . . whatever I

undergo, I shall tell nobody of my situation, it might hurt the Society and our projects here. I know enough of the world to be aware that it is considered as the worst of crimes to be without money." [176b]

For weeks Borrow devoted himself to the task of endeavouring to obtain permission to print the Scriptures in Spanish. The Duke of Rivas referred him to his secretary, saying, "He will do for you what you want!" But the secretary retreated behind the decrees of the Council of Trent. Then Mr Villiers intervened, saw the Duke and gave Borrow a letter to him. Again the Council of Trent proved to be the obstacle. Galiano took up the matter and escorted Borrow to the Bureau of the Interior, and had an interview with the Duke's secretary. When Galiano left, there remained nothing for the conscientious secretary to do but to write out the formal permission, all else having been satisfactorily settled; but no sooner had Galiano departed, than the recollection of the Council of Trent returned to the secretary with terrifying distinctness, and no permission was given.

Tired of the Council of Trent and the Duke's secretary, Borrow would sometimes retire to the banks of the canal and there loiter in the sun, watching the gold and silver fish basking on the surface of its waters, or gossiping with the man who sold oranges and water under the shade of the old water-tower. Once he went to see an execution—anything to drive from his mind the conscientious secretary and the Council of Trent, the sole obstacles to the realisation of his plans.

Borrow informed Mr Brandram at the end of May that the Cabinet was unanimously in favour of

granting his request; nothing happened. There seems no doubt that the Cabinet's policy was one of subterfuge. It could not afford to offend the British Minister, nor could it, at that juncture, risk the bitter hostility of the clergy, consequently it promised and deferred. A petition to the Ecclesiastical Committee of Censors, although strongly backed by the Civil Governor of Madrid (within whose department lay the censorship), produced no better result. There was nothing heard but "To-morrow, please God!"

Foiled for the time being in his constructive policy, Borrow turned his attention to one of destruction. He had already announced to the Bible Society that the authority of the Pope was in a precarious condition.

> "Little more than a breath is required to destroy it," he writes, [177] "and I am almost confident that in less than a year it will be disowned. I am doing whatever I can in Madrid to prepare the way for an event so desirable. I mix with the people, and inform them who and what the Pope is, and how disastrous to Spain his influence has been. I tell them that the indulgences, which they are in the habit of purchasing, are of no more intrinsic value than so many pieces of paper, and were merely invented with the view of plundering them. I frequently ask: 'Is it possible that God, who is good, would sanction the sale of sin? and, supposing certain things are sinful, do you

> think that God, for the sake of your money, would permit you to perform them?' In many instances my hearers have been satisfied with this simple reasoning, and have said that they would buy no more indulgences."

Mr Brandram promptly wrote warning Borrow against becoming involved in any endeavour to hasten the fall of the Pope. Although deeply interested in what their agent had to say, there was a strong misgiving at headquarters that for a few moments Borrow had "forgotten that our hopes of the fall of — are founded on the simple distribution of the Scriptures," [178a] and he was told that, as their agent, he must not pursue the course that he described. The warning was carefully worded, so that it might not wound Borrow's feelings or lessen his enthusiasm.

Borrow had found that the climate of Madrid did not agree with him. It had proved very trying during the winter; but now that summer had arrived the heat was suffocating and the air seemed to be filled with "flaming vapours," and even the Spaniards would "lie gasping and naked upon their brick floors." [178b] In spite of the heat, however, he was occupied "upon an average ten hours every day, dancing attendance on one or another of the Ministers." [178c]

Sometimes the difficulties that he had to contend with reduced him almost to despair of ever obtaining the permission he sought. "Only those," he writes, [178d] "who have been in the habit of dealing with Spaniards, by whom the most solemn promises are habitually broken, can form a correct idea of my

reiterated disappointments, and of the toil of body and agony of spirit which I have been subjected to. One day I have been told, at the Ministry, that I had only to wait a few moments and all I wished would be acceded to; and then my hopes have been blasted with the information that various difficulties, which seemed insurmountable, had presented themselves, whereupon I have departed almost broken-hearted; but the next day I have been summoned in a great hurry and informed that 'all was right,' and that on the morrow a regular authority to print the Scriptures would be delivered to me, but by that time fresh and yet more terrible difficulties had occurred—so that I became weary of my life."

Mr Villiers evidently saw through the Spanish Cabinet's policy of delay; for he spoke to the ministers collectively and individually, strongly recommending that the petition be granted. He further pointed out the terrible condition of the people, who lacked religious instruction of any kind, and that a nation of atheists would not prove very easy to govern. It may have been these arguments, or, what is more likely, a desire on the part of the Cabinet to please the representative of Great Britain, in any case a greater willingness was now shown to give the necessary permission. Measures were accordingly taken to evade the law and protect the printer into whose hands the work was to be entrusted, until an appropriate moment arrived for repealing the existing statute.

Borrow forwarded to Earl Street the following interesting letter that he had received from Mr Villiers, which confirms his words as to the keen interest taken by the British Minister in the endeavour to obtain the permission to print the New

Testament in Spanish

> DEAR SIR,
>
> I have had a long conversation with Mr Isturitz upon the subject of printing the Testament, in which he showed himself to be both sagacious and liberal. He assured me that the matter should have his support whenever the Duque de Ribas brought it before the Cabinet, and that as far as he was concerned the question *might be considered as settled*.
>
> You are quite welcome to make any use you please of this note with the D. de Ribas or Mr Olivan. [179a]
>
> I am, Dear Sir,
>
> Yours faithfully,
>
> GEORGE VILLIERS.
>
> *June* 23*rd* [1836].

It was unquestionably Borrow's personality that was responsible for Mr Villiers' interest in the scheme, as when Lieutenant Graydon [179b] had applied to him on a previous occasion he declined to interfere.

At Borrow's suggestion the President of the Bible Society, Lord Bentley, wrote to Mr Villiers thanking him for the services he had rendered in connection with the Spanish programme. It was characteristic of Borrow that he added to his letter as a reason for his request, that "I may be again in need of Mr V's.

assistance before I leave Spain." [180] Borrow was always keenly alive to the advantage of possessing influential friends who would be likely to assist him in his labours for the Society. He was not a profound admirer of the Society of Jesus for nothing, and although he would scorn to exercise tact in regard to his own concerns, he was fully prepared to make use of it in connection with those of the Bible Society. He was a Jesuit at heart, and would in all probability have preferred a good compositor who had been guilty of sacrilege to a bad one who had not. He saw that besides being something of a diplomatist, an agent of the Bible Society had also to be a good business man. He has been called tactless, until the word seems to have become permanently identified with his name; how unjustly is shown by a very hasty examination of his masterly diplomacy, both in Russia and Spain. Diplomacy, as Borrow understood it, was the art of being persuasive when persuasion would obtain for him his object, and firm, even threatening, when strong measures were best calculated to suit his ends. It is only the fool who defines tact as the gentle art of pleasing everybody. Diplomacy is the art of getting what you want at the expense of displeasing as few people as possible.

"The affair is settled—thank God!!! and we may begin to print whenever we think proper." With these words Borrow announces the success of his enterprise. "Perhaps you have thought," he continues, "that I have been tardy in accomplishing the business which brought me to Spain; but to be able to form a correct judgment you ought to be aware of all the difficulties which I have had to encounter, and which I shall not enumerate. I shall content myself with observing that for a thousand pounds I would not undergo again all the

mortifications and disappointments of the last two months." [181a]

There were moments when Borrow forgot the idiom of Earl Street and reverted to his old, self-confident style, which had so alarmed some of the excellent members of the Committee. He had achieved a great triumph, how great is best shown by the suggestion made by the prime minister that if determined to avail himself of the permission that had been obtained, he had better employ "the confidential printer of the Government, who would keep the matter secret; as in the present state of affairs he [the prime minister] would not answer for the consequences if it were noised abroad." [181b] By giving the license to print the New Testament without notes, the Cabinet was assuming a very grave responsibility. All this shows how great was the influence of the British Minister upon the Isturitz Cabinet, and how considerable that of Borrow upon the British Minister.

Now that his object was gained, there was nothing further to keep Borrow in Spain, and he accordingly asked for instructions, suggesting that, as soon as the heats were over, Lieutenant Graydon might return to Madrid and take charge, "as nothing very difficult remains to be accomplished, and I am sure that Mr Villiers, at my entreaty, would extend to him the patronage with which he has honoured me." [181c] In conclusion he announced himself as ready to do "whatever the Bible Society may deem expedient." [181d]

Borrow now began to suffer from the reaction after his great exertions. He became so languid as scarcely to be able to hold a pen. He had no books, and conversation was impossible, for the heat had

driven away all who could possibly escape, among them his acquaintances, and he frequently remembered with a sigh the happy days spent in St Petersburg.

A few days later (25th July) he wrote proposing as a member of the Bible Society Dr Luis de Usoz y Rio, "a person of great respectability and great learning." [182a] Dr Usoz, who was subsequently to be closely associated with Borrow in his labours in Spain, was a man of whom he was unable to "speak in too high terms of admiration; he is one of the most learned men in Spain, and is become in every point a Christian according to the standard of the New Testament." [182b]

Dr Usoz also addressed a letter to the Society asking to be considered as a correspondent and entrusted with copies of the Scriptures, which he was convinced he could circulate in every province of Spain. The advantage of having one of the editors of the principal newspaper of Spain on the side of the Society did not fail to appeal to Borrow. Dr Usoz not only became a member of the Bible Society, but earned from Borrow a splendid tribute in the Preface to *The Bible in Spain*.

Before advantage could be taken of the hardly earned permission to print the New Testament in Madrid, the Revolution of La Granja [182c] broke out, resulting in the proclamation of the Constitution of 1812, by which the press became free. In Madrid chaos reigned as a result. Borrow himself has given a vivid account of how Quesada, by his magnificent courage, quelled for the time being the revolution, how the ministers fled, how eventually the heroic tyrant was recognised and killed, and, finally, how,

at a celebrated coffee-house in Madrid, Borrow saw the victorious Nationals drink to the Constitution from a bowl of coffee, which had first been stirred with one of the mutilated hands of the hated Quesada. [183a]

Now that no obstacle stood in the way of the printing of the Spanish New Testament, Borrow was requested to return to England that he might confer with the authorities at Earl Street. "You may now consider yourself under marching orders to return home as soon as you have made all the requisite arrangements; . . . you have done, we are persuaded, a good and great work," [183b] Mr Brandram wrote. It was thought by the Committee that the advantages to be derived from a conference with Borrow would be well worth the expense involved in his having to return again to Spain.

To this request for his immediate presence in London Borrow replied:

> "I shall make the provisional engagement as desired [as regards the printing of the New Testament] and shall leave Madrid as soon as possible; but I must here inform you, that I shall find much difficulty in returning to England, as all the provinces are disturbed in consequence of the Constitution of 1812 having been proclaimed, and the roads are swarming with robbers and banditti. It is my intention to join some muleteers, and attempt to reach Granada, from whence, if possible, I shall proceed to Malaga

> or Gibraltar, and thence to Lisbon, where I left the greatest part of my baggage. Do not be surprised, therefore, if I am tardy in making my appearance; it is no easy thing at present to travel in Spain. But all these troubles are for the benefit of the Cause, and must not be repined at." [183c]

Leaving Madrid on 20th August, Borrow was at Granada on the 30th, as proved by the Visitors' Book, in which he signed himself

> "George Borrow Norvicensis."

The real object of this visit appears to have been his desire to study more closely the Spanish gypsies. From Granada he proceeded to Malaga. Neither place can be said to be on the direct road to England; but the disturbed state of the country had to be taken into consideration, and it was a question not of the shortest road but the safest.

On his return to London, early in October, Borrow wrote a report [184] upon his labours, roughly sketching out his work since he left Badajos. He repeated his view that the Papal See had lost its power over Spain, and that the present moment was a peculiarly appropriate one in which to spread the light of the Gospel over the Peninsula. Forgetting the thievish propensities of the race, he wrote glowingly of the Spaniards and their intellectual equipment, the clearness with which they expressed themselves, and the elegance of their diction. The mind of the Spaniard was a garden run to waste, and it was for the British and Foreign Bible Society to

cultivate it and purge it of the rank and bitter weeds.

He foresaw no difficulty whatever in disposing of 5000 copies of the New Testament in a short time in the capital and provincial towns, in particular Cadiz and Seville where the people were more enlightened. He was not so confident about the rural districts, where those who assured him that they were acquainted with the New Testament said that it contained hymns addressed to the Virgin which were written by the Pope.

CHAPTER XII
NOVEMBER 1836–MAY 1837

BORROW remained in England for a month (3rd October/4th November), during which time he conferred with the Committee and Officials at Earl Street as to the future programme in Spain. On 4th November, having sent to his mother £130 of the £150 he had drawn as salary, and promising to write to Mr Brandram from Cadiz, he sailed from London in the steamer *Manchester*, bound for Lisbon and Cadiz.

In a letter to his mother, he describes his fellow passengers as invalids fleeing from the English winter. "Some of them are three parts gone with consumption," he writes, "some are ruptured, some have broken backs; I am the only sound person in the ship, which is crowded to suffocation. I am in a little hole of a berth where I can scarcely breathe, and

every now and then wet through."

The horrors of the voyage from Falmouth to Lisbon he has described with terrifying vividness; [185a] how the engines broke down and the vessel was being driven on to Cape Finisterre; how all hope had been abandoned, and the Captain had told the passengers of their impending fate; how the wind suddenly "*veered right about*, and pushed us from the horrible coast faster than it had previously driven us towards it." [185b]

During the whole of that terrible night Borrow had remained on deck, all the other passengers having been battened down below. He was almost drowned in the seas that broke over the vessel, and, on one occasion, was struck down by a water cask that had broken away from its lashings. Even after he had escaped Cape Finisterre, the ordeal was not over; for the ship was in a sinking condition, and fire broke out on board. Eventually the engines were repaired, the fire extinguished, and Lisbon was reached on the 13th, where Borrow landed with his water-soaked luggage, and found on examination that the greater part of his clothes had been ruined. In spite of this experience, he determined to continue his voyage to Cadiz in the *Manchester*, probably for reasons of economy, indifferent to the fact that she was utterly unseaworthy, and that most of the other passengers had abandoned her. During his enforced stay in Lisbon, whilst the ship was being patched up, Borrow saw Mr Wilby and made enquiry into the state of the Society's affairs in Portugal. Many changes had taken place and the country was in a distracted state.

After a week's delay at Lisbon the *Manchester* continued her voyage to Cadiz, where she arrived

without further mishap on the 21st. During this voyage a fellow passenger with Borrow was the Marqués de Santa Coloma. "According to the expression of the Marqués, when they stepped on to the quay at Cadiz, Borrow looked round, saw some Gitanos lounging there, said something that the Marqués could not understand, and immediately 'that man became *une grappe de Gitanos*.' They hung round his neck, clung to his knees, seized his hands, kissed his feet, so that the Marqués hardly liked to join his comrade again after such close embraces by so dirty a company." [186]

Borrow now found himself in his allotted field—unhappy, miserable, distracted Spain. Gomez, the Carlist leader, had been sweeping through Estremadura like a pestilence, and Borrow fully expected to find Seville occupied by his banditti; but Carlists possessed no terrors for him. Unless he could do something to heal the spiritual wounds of the wretched country, he assured Mr Brandram, he would never again return to England.

On 1st December Mr Brandram wrote to Borrow expressing deep sympathy with all he had been through, and adding: "If you go forward . . . we will help you by prayer. If you retreat we shall welcome you cordially." He appears to have written before consulting with the Committee, who, on hearing of the actual state of affairs in Spain, became filled with misgiving and anxiety for the safety of their agent, who seemed to be destitute of fear. Mr Brandram had been content for Borrow to go forward if he so decided, but, as he wrote later, "your prospective dangers, while they created an absorbing interest, were viewed in different lights by the Committee," who thought they had "no right to commit you to

such perils. My own feeling was that, while I could not urge you forward, there were peculiarities in your history and character that I would not keep you back if you were minded to go. A few felt with me—most, however, thought that you should have been restrained." [187] It was decided therefore to forbid him to proceed on his hazardous adventure, and accordingly a letter was addressed to him care of the British Consul at Cadiz. If Borrow received this he disregarded the instructions it contained.

Cadiz proved to be in a state of great confusion. It was reported that numerous bands of Carlists were in the neighbourhood, and the whole city was in a state of ferment in consequence. In the coffee-houses the din of tongues was deafening; would-be orators, sometimes as many as six at one time, sprang up upon chairs and tables and ventilated their political views. The paramount, nay, the only, interest was not in the words of Christ; but the probable doings of the Carlists.

On the night of his arrival Borrow was taken ill with what, at the time, he thought to be cholera, and for some time in the little "cock-loft or garret" that had been allotted to him at the over-crowded French hotel, he was "in most acute pain, and terribly sick," drinking oil mixed with brandy. For two days he was so exhausted as to be able to do nothing.

On the morning of the 24th he embarked in a small Spanish steamer bound for Seville, which was reached that same night. The sun had dissipated the melancholy and stupor left by his illness, and by the time he arrived at Seville he was repeating Latin verses and fragments of old Spanish ballads to a brilliant moon. The condition of affairs at Seville

was as bad if not worse than at Cadiz. There was scarcely any communication with the capital, the diligences no longer ran, and even the fearless *arrieros* (muleteers) declined to set out. Famine, plunder and murder were let loose over the land. Bands of banditti robbed, tortured and slew in the name of Don Carlos. They stripped the peasantry of all they possessed, and the poor wretches in turn became brigands and preyed upon those weaker than themselves. Through all this Borrow had to penetrate in order to reach Madrid. Had the road been familiar to him he would have performed the journey alone, dressed either as a beggar or as a gypsy. It is obvious that he appreciated the hazardous nature of the journey he was undertaking, for he asked Mr Brandram, in the event of his death, to keep the news from old Mrs Borrow as long as possible and then to go down to Norwich and break it to her himself.

At Seville Borrow encountered Baron Taylor, [188] whom he states that he had first met at Bayonne (during the "veiled period"), and later in Russia, beside the Bosphorus, and finally in the South of Ireland. Than Baron Taylor there was no one for whom Borrow entertained "a greater esteem and regard . . . There is a mystery about him which, wherever he goes, serves not a little to increase the sensation naturally created by his appearance and manner." [189] Borrow was much attracted to this mysterious personage, about whom nothing could be asserted "with downright positiveness."

From Seville Borrow proceeded to Cordoba, accompanied by "an elderly person, a Genoese by birth," whose acquaintance he had made and whom he hoped later to employ in the distribution of the

Testaments. Borrow had hired a couple of miserable horses. The Genoese had not been in the saddle for some thirty years, and he was an old man and timid. His horse soon became aware of this, and neither whip nor spur could persuade it to exert itself. When approaching night rendered it necessary to make a special effort to hasten forward, the bridle of the discontented steed had to be fastened to that of its fellow, which was then urged forward "with spur and cudgel." Both the Genoese and his mount protested against such drastic measures, the one by entreaties to be permitted to dismount, the other by attempting to fling itself down. The only notice Borrow took of these protests was to spur and cudgel the more.

On the night of the third day the party arrived at Cordoba, and was cordially welcomed by the Carlist innkeeper, who, although avowing himself strictly neutral, confessed how great had been his pleasure at welcoming the Carlists when they occupied the City a short time before. It was at this inn that Borrow explained to the elderly Genoese, who had indiscreetly resented his host's disrespectful remarks about the young Queen Isabel, how he invariably managed to preserve good relations with all sorts of factions. "My good man," he said, "I am invariably of the politics of the people at whose table I sit, or beneath whose roof I sleep; at least I never say anything which can lead them to suspect the contrary; by pursuing which system I have more than once escaped a bloody pillow, and having the wine I drank spiced with sublimate." [190a]

Borrow remained at Cordoba much longer than he had intended, because of the reports that reached him of the unsafe condition of the roads. He sent back the old Genoese with the horses, and spent the

time in thoroughly examining the town and making acquaintances among its inhabitants. At length, after a stay of ten or eleven days, despairing of any improvement in the state of the country, he continued his journey in the company of a *contrabandista*, temporarily retired from the smuggling trade, from whom he hired two horses for the sum of forty-two dollars. Borrow allowed no compunction to assail him as to the means he employed when he was thoroughly convinced as to the worthiness of the end he had in view. To further his projects he would cheerfully have travelled with the Pope himself.

The journey to Madrid proved dismal in the extreme. The *contrabandista* was sullen and gloomy, despite the fact that his horses had been insured against loss and the handsome fee he was to receive for his services. The Despeñaperros in the Sierra Morena through which Borrow had to pass, had, even in times of peace, a most evil reputation; but by great good luck for Borrow, the local banditti had during the previous day "committed a dreadful robbery and murder by which they sacked 40,000 *reals*." [190b] They were in all probability too busily occupied in dividing their spoil to watch for other travellers. Another factor that was much in Borrow's favour was a change in the weather.

> "Suddenly the Lord breathed forth a frozen blast," Borrow writes, "the severity of which was almost intolerable. No human being but ourselves ventured forth. We traversed snow-covered plains, and passed through villages and towns to all appearance deserted. The

> robbers kept close to their caves and hovels, but the cold nearly killed us. We reached Aranjuez late on Christmas day, and I got into the house of an Englishman, where I swallowed nearly a pint of brandy: [191a] it affected me no more than warm water." [191b]

Borrow arrived at Madrid on 26th December, having almost by a miracle avoided death or capture by the human wolves that infested the country. He took up his quarters at 16 Calle de Santiago at the house of Maria Díaz, who was to prove so loyal a friend during many critical periods of his work in Spain. His first care was to call upon the British Minister, and enquire if he considered it safe to proceed with the printing without special application to the new Government. Mr Villiers' answer is interesting, as showing how thoroughly he had taken Borrow under his protection.

> "You obtained the permission of the Government of Isturitz," he replied, "which was a much less liberal one than the present; I am a witness to the promise made to you by the former Ministers, which I consider sufficient; you had best commence and complete the work as soon as possible without any fresh application, and should anyone attempt to interrupt you, you have only to come to me, whom you may command at any time." [191c]

Having saved the Bible Society 9000 *reals* in its

paper bill alone, [191d] Borrow proceeded to arrange for the printing. He had already opened negotiations with Charles Wood, who was associated with Andréas Borrégo, [192a] the most fashionable printer in Madrid, who not only had the best printing-presses in Spain, but had been specially recommended by Isturitz. It had been tentatively arranged that an edition of 5000 copies of the New Testament should be printed from the version of Father Felipe Scio de San Miguel, confessor to Ferdinand VII., without notes or commentaries, and delivered within three months.

Remembering the advice of Isturitz, Borrow determined to entrust the work to Borrégo, including the binding. He was the Government printer, and, furthermore, enjoyed the good opinion of Mr Villiers. Having persuaded Borrégo to reduce his price to 10 *reals* a sheet, he placed the order. It was agreed that the work should be completed in ten weeks from 20th January.

Each sheet was to be passed by Borrow. As a matter of fact he read every word three times; but in order to insure absolute accuracy, he engaged the services of Dr Usoz, “the first scholar in Spain,” [192b] who was to be responsible for the final revision, leaving the question of the remuneration to the generosity of the Bible Society. The result of all this care was that, according to Borrow the edition exhibited scarcely one typographical error. [192c]

The question of systematic distribution had next to be considered. After much musing and cogitation, Borrow came to the conclusion that the only satisfactory method was for him to “ride forth from Madrid into the wildest parts of Spain,” where the

word is most wanted and where it seems next to an impossibility to introduce it, and this he proposed to the Committee.

> "I will take with me 1200 copies," he wrote, [193] "which I will engage to dispose of for little or much to the wild people of the wild regions which I intend to visit; as for the rest of the edition, it must be disposed of, if possible, in a different way—I may say the usual way; part must be entrusted to booksellers, part to colporteurs, and a depôt must be established at Madrid. Such work is every person's work, and to anyone may be confided the execution of it; it is a mere affair of trade. What I wish to be employed in is what, I am well aware, no other individual will undertake to do: namely, to scatter the Word upon the mountains, amongst the valleys and the inmost recesses of the worst and most dangerous parts of Spain, where the people are more fierce, fanatic and, in a word, Carlist."

In the same letter Borrow shows how thoroughly he understood his own character when he wrote:

> "I shall not feel at all surprised should it [the plan] be disapproved of all-together; but I wish it to be understood that in that event I could do nothing further than see the work through the press, as I am confident

> that whatever ardour and zeal I at present feel in the cause would desert me immediately, and that I should neither be able nor willing to execute anything which might be suggested. I wish to engage in nothing which would not allow me to depend entirely on myself. It would be heart-breaking to me to remain at Madrid expending the Society's money, with almost the certainty of being informed eventually by the booksellers and their correspondents that the work has no sale. In a word, to make sure that some copies find their way among the people, I must be permitted to carry them to the people myself."

He goes on to inform Mr Brandram that in anticipation of the acquiescence of the Committee in his schemes, he has purchased, for about £12, one of the smuggler's horses, which he has preferred to a mule, on account of the expense of the popular hybrid, and also because of its enormous appetite, to satisfy which two pecks of barley and a proportionate amount of straw are required each twenty-four hours, as the beast must be fed every four hours, day and night. Thus the members of the Committee learned something about the ways of the mule.

The response to this suggestion was a resolution passed by the Sub-Committee for General Purposes, by which Borrow was permitted to enter into correspondence with the principal booksellers and

other persons favourable to the dissemination of the Scriptures. In a covering letter [194a] Mr Brandram very pertinently enquired, “Can the people in these wilds read?” Whilst not wishing to put a final negative to the proposal, the Secretary asked if there were no middle course. Could Borrow not establish a depôt at some principal place, and from it make excursions occupying two or three days each, “instead of devoting yourself wholly to the wild people.”

Borrow assured Mr Brandram that he had misunderstood. The care of “the wild people” was only to be incidental on his visits to towns and villages to establish depôts or agencies. “On my way,” he wrote, “I intended to visit the secret and secluded spots amongst the rugged hills and mountains, and to talk to the people, after my manner, of Christ.” [194b]

It was on 3rd April that Borrow had received the letter from Earl Street authorising him “to undertake the tour suggested . . . for the purpose of circulating the Spanish New Testament in some of the principal cities of Spain.” He was requested to write as frequently as possible, giving an account of his adventures. At the same time Mr Brandram wrote: “You will perceive by the Resolution that nearly all your requests are complied with. You have authority to go forth with your horses, and may you have a prosperous journey . . . Pray for wisdom to discern between presumptuousness and want of Faith.” [195a]

The printing of the 5000 copies of the New Testament in Spanish was completed early in April, but there was considerable delay over the binding. The actual date of publication was 1st May. The

work had been well done, and was "allowed by people who have perused it, and with no friendly feeling, to be one of the most correct works that have ever issued from the press in Spain, and to be an exceedingly favourable specimen of typography and paper." [195b]

In addition to the *contrabandista's* horse, Borrow had acquired "a black Andalusian stallion of great size and strength, and capable of performing a journey of a hundred leagues in a week's time." [195c] In spite of his unbroken state, Borrow decided to purchase the animal, relying upon "a cargo of bibles" to reduce him to obedience. It was with this black Andalusian that he created a sensation by riding about Madrid, "with a Russian skin for a saddle, and without stirrups. Altogether making so conspicuous a figure that [the Marqués de] Santa Coloma hesitated, and it needed all his courage to be seen riding with him. At this period Borrow spent a good deal of money and lived very freely (i.e., luxuriously) in Spain. From the point of view of the Marqués, a Spanish Roman Catholic, Borrow was excessively bigoted, and fond of attacking Roman Catholics and Catholicism. He evidently, however, liked him as a companion; but he says Borrow never, as far as he saw or could learn, spoke of religion to his Gypsy friends, and that he soon noticed his difference of attitude towards them. He was often going to the British Embassy, and he thinks was considered a great bore there." [195d]

The unanimous advice of Borrow's friends, Protestant and Roman Catholic, was "that for the present I should proceed with the utmost caution, but without concealing the object of my mission." [196a] He was to avoid offending people's prejudices and endeavour

everywhere to keep on good terms with the clergy, "at least one-third of whom are known to be anxious for the dissemination of the Word of God, though at the same time unwilling to separate themselves from the discipline and ceremonials of Rome." [196b]

Thus equipped with sage counsel, Borrow was just about to start upon his journey into the North, when he found it necessary to dismiss his servant owing to misconduct. This caused delay. Through Mr O'Shea, the banker, he got to know Antonio Buchini, the Greek of Constantinople, who, of all the strange characters Borrow had met he considered "the most surprising." [196c] Antonio's vices were sufficiently obvious to discourage anyone from attempting to discover his virtues. He loved change, quarrelled with everybody, masters, mistresses, and fellow-servants. Borrow engaged him; but looked to the future with misgiving. Antonio unquestionably had his bad points; yet he was a treasure compared with the Spaniard whom he succeeded. This man was much given to drink and was always engaged in some quarrel. He drew his terrible knife, such as all Spaniards carry, upon all who offended him. On one occasion Borrow saved from his wrath a poor maid-servant who had incurred his ire by burning a herring she was toasting for him. Antonio's virtues comprised an unquestioned honesty and devotion, and on the whole he was a desirable servant in a country where such virtues were extremely rare.

It was not until 15th May that Borrow, accompanied by Antonio, was able to get away from Madrid. A few days previously he had contracted "a severe cold which terminated in a shrieking, disagreeable cough." This, following on a fortnight's attack of influenza, proved difficult to shake off. Finding

himself scarcely able to stand, he at length appealed to a barber-surgeon, who drew 16 oz. of blood, assuring his patient that on the following day he would be well enough to start.

That same evening Mr Villiers sent round to Borrow's lodgings informing him that he had decided to help him by every means in his power. He announced his intention of purchasing a large number of the Testaments, and despatching them to the various British Consuls in Spain, with instructions "to employ all the means which their official situation should afford them to circulate the books in question, and to assure their being noticed." [197a] They were also to render every assistance in their power to Borrow "as a friend of Mr Villiers, and a person in the success of whose enterprise he himself took the warmest interest." [197b] Mr Villiers' interest in Borrow's mission seems to have led him into a diplomatic indiscretion. Borrow himself confesses that he could scarcely believe his ears. Although assured of the British Minister's friendly attitude, he "could never expect that he would come forward in so noble, and to say the least of it, considering his high diplomatic situation, so bold and decided a manner." [197c] This act of friendliness becomes a personal tribute to Borrow, when it is remembered that at first Mr Villiers had been by no means well disposed towards the Bible Society.

Before leaving Madrid, Borrow had circularised all the principal booksellers, offering to supply the New Testament at fifteen *reals* a copy, the actual cost price; but he was not sanguine as to the result, for he found the Spaniard "short-sighted and . . . so utterly unacquainted with the rudiments of business." [198] Advertisements had been inserted in all the principal

newspapers stating that the booksellers of Madrid were now in a position to supply the New Testament in Spanish, unencumbered by obscuring notes and comments. Borrow also provided for an advertisement to be inserted each week during his absence, which he anticipated would be about five months. After that he knew not what would happen —there was always China.

CHAPTER XIII
MAY–OCTOBER 1837

THE prediction of the surgeon-barber was fulfilled; by the next morning the fever and cough had considerably abated, although the patient was still weak from loss of blood. This, however, did not hinder him from mounting his black Andalusian, and starting upon his initial journey of distribution. On arriving at Salamanca, his first objective, he immediately sought out the principal bookseller and placed with him copies of the New Testament. He also inserted an advertisement in the local newspaper, stating that the volume was the only guide to salvation; at the same time he called attention to the great pecuniary sacrifices that the Bible Society was making in order to proclaim Christ crucified. This advertisement he caused to be struck off in considerable numbers as bills and posted in various parts of the town, and he even went so far as to affix one to the porch of the church. He also distributed them as he progressed through the

villages. [199]

From Salamanca (10th June) Borrow journeyed to Valladolid, and from thence to León, [200a] (a hotbed of Carlism), where the people were ignorant and brutal and refused to the stranger a glass of water, unless he were prepared to pay for it. At León he was seized by a fever that prostrated him for a week. He also experienced marked antagonism from the clergy, who threatened every direful consequence to whosoever read or purchased "the accursed books" which he brought. A more serious evidence of their displeasure was shown by the action they commenced in the ecclesiastical court against the bookseller whom Borrow had arranged with to act as agent for his Testaments. The bookseller himself did not mend matters by fixing upon the doors of the cathedral itself one of the advertisements that he had received with the books.

When sufficiently recovered to travel, Borrow proceeded to Astorga, which he reached with the utmost difficulty owing to bad roads and the fierce heat.

> "We were compelled to take up our abode," he writes, [200b] "in a wretched hovel full of pigs' vermin and misery, and from this place I write, for this morning I felt myself unable to proceed on my journey, being exhausted with illness, fatigue and want of food, for scarcely anything is to be obtained; but I return God thanks and glory for being permitted to undergo these crosses and troubles for His Word's

> sake. I would not exchange my present situation, unenviable as some may think it, for a throne."

Thus Borrow wrote when burning with fever, after having just been told to vacate his room at the *posada*, and having his luggage flung into the yard to make room for the occupants of the "waggon" from Madrid to Coruña.

From Astorga he proceeded by way of Puerto de Manzanál, Bembibre, Cacabélos, Villafranca, Puerto de Fuencebadón and Nogáles, "through the wildest mountains and wildernesses" to Lugo.

Owing to the unsafety of the roads, it was customary for travellers to attach themselves to the Grand Post, which was always guarded by an escort. At Nogáles Borrow joined the mail courier; but as a rule he was too independent, too much in a hurry, and too indifferent to danger to wait for such protection against the perils of the robber-infested roads. He has given the following graphic account "of the grand post from Madrid to Coruña, attended by a considerable escort, and an immense number of travellers . . . We were soon mounted and in the street, amidst a confused throng of men and quadrupeds. The light of a couple of flambeaus, which were borne before the courier, shone on the arms of several soldiers, seemingly drawn up on either side of the road; the darkness, however, prevented me from distinguishing objects very clearly. The courier himself was mounted on a little shaggy pony; before and behind him were two immense portmanteaus, or leather sacks, the ends of which nearly touched the ground. For about a quarter of an hour there was much hubbub,

shouting, and trampling, at the end of which period the order was given to proceed. Scarcely had we left the village when the flambeaus were extinguished, and we were left in almost total darkness. In this manner we proceeded for several hours, up hill and down dale, but generally at a very slow pace. The soldiers who escorted us from time to time sang patriotic songs . . . At last the day began to break, and I found myself amidst a train of two or three hundred people, some on foot, but the greater part mounted, either on mules or the pony mares: I could not distinguish a single horse except my own and Antonio's. A few soldiers were thinly scattered along the road." [201]

After about a week's stay at Lugo, Borrow again attached himself to the Grand Post; but tiring of its slow and deliberate progress, he decided to push on alone, and came very near to falling a prey to the banditti. He was suddenly confronted by two of the fraternity, who presented their carbines, "which they probably intended to discharge into my body, but they took fright at the noise of Antonio's horse, who was following a little way behind." [202]

The night was spent at Betanzos, where the black Andalusian was stricken with "a deep, hoarse cough." Remembering a prophetic remark that had been made by a roadside acquaintance to the effect that "the man must be mad who brings a horse to Galicia, and doubly so he who brings an *entero*," Borrow, determined to have the animal bled, sent for a farrier, meanwhile rubbing down his steed with a quart of *anis* brandy. The farrier demanded an ounce of gold for the operation, which decided Borrow to perform it himself. With a large fleam that he possessed, he twice bled the Andalusian, to the

astonishment of the discomfited farrier, and saved its valuable life, also an ounce of gold. Next day he and Antonio walked to Coruña, leading their horses.

At Coruña were five hundred copies of the New Testament that had been sent on from Madrid. So far Borrow had himself disposed of sixty-five copies, irrespective of those sold at Lugo and other places by means of the advertisement. These books were all sold at prices ranging from 10 to 12 *reals* each. Borrow made a special point of this, "to give a direct lie to the assertion" that the Bible Society, having no vent for the Bibles and New Testaments it printed, was forced either to give them away or sell them by auction, when they were purchased as waste paper.

The condition of the roads at that period was so bad, on account of robbers and Carlists, that it was forbidden to anyone to travel along the thoroughfare leading to Santiago unless in company with the mail courier and his escort of soldiers. Unfortunately for Borrow his black Andalusian was not of a companionable disposition, and to bring him near other horses was to invite a fierce contest. On the rare occasions that he did travel with the Grand Post, Borrow was frequently involved in difficulties on account of the *entero's* unsociable nature; but as he was deeply attached to the noble beast, he retained him and suffered dangers rather than give up the companion of many an adventure.

Some idea may be obtained of the state of rural Spain in 1837, when the highways teemed with "patriots" bent upon robbing friend and foe alike and afterwards assassinating or mutilating their victims, from a story that Borrow tells of how a viper-catcher, who was engaged in pursuing his calling in the

neighbourhood of Orense, fell into the hands of these miscreants, who robbed and stripped him. They then pinioned his hands behind him and drew over his head the mouth of the bag containing the *living* vipers, which they fastened round his neck and listened with satisfaction to the poor wretch's cries. The reptiles stung their victim to madness, and after having run raving through several villages he eventually fell dead. [203a]

Making Coruña his headquarters, Borrow proceeded to Santiago, "travelling with the courier or weekly post," and from thence to Padrón, Pontevedra, and Vigo. At Vigo he was apprehended as a spy, but immediately released. It was whilst at Santiago that he repeated an experiment he had previously made at Valladolid.

> "I . . . sallied forth," he writes, [203b] "alone and on horseback, and bent my course to a distant village; on my arrival, which took place just after the *siesta* or afternoon's nap had concluded, I proceeded . . . to the market place, where I spread a horse-cloth on the ground, upon which I deposited my books. I then commenced crying with a loud voice: 'Peasants, peasants, I bring you the Word of God at a cheap price. I know you have but little money, but I bring it you at whatever you can command, at four or three *reals*, according to your means.' I thus went on till a crowd gathered round me, who examined the books with attention, many of

> them reading aloud, but I had not long to wait; . . . my cargo was disposed of almost instantaneously, and I mounted my horse without a question being asked me, and returned to my temporary abode lighter than I came."

Borrow did not repeat the experiment for fear of giving offence to the clergy. The new means of distribution was to be used only as a last resource.

Arriving at Padrón on the return journey, Borrow found that he had only one book left. He determined to send Antonio forward with the horses to await him at Coruña, whilst he made an excursion to Cape Finisterre.

> "It would be," he says, "difficult to assign any plausible reason for the ardent desire which I entertained to visit this place; but I remembered that last year I had escaped almost by a miracle from shipwreck and death on the rocky sides of this extreme point of the Old World, and I thought that to convey the Gospel to a place so wild and remote might perhaps be considered an acceptable pilgrimage in the eyes of my Maker." [204a]

Hiring a guide and a pony, he reached the Cape, after surmounting tremendous difficulties, and on arrival he and his guide were arrested as Carlist spies. [204b] In all probability he would have been shot, such was the certainty of the *Alcalde* that he

was a spy, had not the professional hero of the place come forward and, after having cross-examined him as to his knowledge of “knife” and “fork,” the only two English words the Spaniard knew, pronounced him English, and eventually conveyed him to the *Alcalde* of Convucion, who released him. On the man who had saved him Borrow privately bestowed a gratuity, and publicly the copy of the New Testament that had led to the expedition. He then returned to Coruña, by his journey having accomplished “what has long been one of the ardent wishes of my heart. I have carried the Gospel to the extreme point of the Old World.” [205a]

The black Andalusian was totally unfitted for the long mountainous journey into the Asturias that Borrow now planned to undertake, and he decided to dispose of him. He was greatly attached to the creature, notwithstanding his vicious habits and the difficulties that arose out of them. Now the *entero* would be engaged in a deadly struggle with some gloomy mule; again, by rushing among a crowd outside a *posada*, he would do infinite damage and earn for his master and himself an evil name. Borrow thus announces to the Bible Society the sale of its property: “This animal cost the Society about 2000 *reals* at Madrid; I, however, sold him for 3000 at Coruña, notwithstanding that he has suffered much from the hard labour which he had been subjected to in our wanderings in Galicia, and likewise from bad provender.” [205b]

Borrow next set out upon an expedition to Orviedo in the Asturias, [205c] then in daily expectation of being attacked by the Carlists. It was at Orviedo that he received a striking tribute from a number of Spanish gentlemen.

"A strange adventure has just occurred to me," he wrote. [205d] "I am in the ancient town of Orviedo, in a very large, scantily furnished and remote room of an ancient *posada*, formerly a palace of the Counts of Santa Cruz, it is past ten at night and the rain is descending in torrents. I ceased writing on hearing numerous footsteps ascending the creeking stairs which lead to my apartment—the door was flung open, and in walked nine men of tall stature, marshalled by a little hunchbacked personage. They were all muffled in the long cloaks of Spain, but I instantly knew by their demeanour that they were *caballeros*, or gentlemen. They placed themselves in a rank before the table where I was sitting; suddenly and simultaneously they all flung back their cloaks, and I perceived that every one bore a book in his hand, a book which I knew full well. After a pause, which I was unable to break, for I sat lost in astonishment and almost conceived myself to be visited by apparitions, the hunchback advancing somewhat before the rest, said, in soft silvery tones, '*Señor* Cavalier, was it you who brought this book to the Asturias?' I now supposed that they were the civil authorities of the place come to take me into custody,

and, rising from my seat, I exclaimed: 'It certainly was I, and it is my glory to have done so; the book is the New Testament of God; I wish it was in my power to bring a million.' 'I heartily wish so too,' said the little personage with a sigh; 'be under no apprehension, Sir Cavalier, these gentlemen are my friends. We have just purchased these books in the shop where you have placed them for sale, and have taken the liberty of calling upon you in order to return you our thanks for the treasure you have brought us. I hope you can furnish us with the Old Testament also!' I replied that I was sorry to inform him that at present it was entirely out of my power to comply with his wish, as I had no Old Testaments in my possession, but I did not despair of procuring some speedily from England. [206] He then asked me a great many questions concerning my Biblical travels in Spain and my success, and the views entertained by the Society in respect to Spain, adding that he hoped we should pay particular attention to the Asturias, which he assured me was the best ground in the Peninsula for our labour. After about half an hour's conversation, he suddenly said in the English language, 'Good night, Sir,' wrapped his cloak around him and walked

> out as he had come. His companions, who had hitherto not uttered a word, all repeated, 'Good night, Sir,' and adjusting their cloaks followed him."

This anecdote greatly impressed the General Committee. Mr Brandram wrote (15th November 1837): "We were all deeply interested with your ten gentlemen of Orviedo. I have introduced them at several meetings."

Whilst at Orviedo, Borrow began to be very uneasy about the state of affairs at the capital. "Madrid," he wrote, [207] "is the depôt of our books, and I am apprehensive that in the revolutions and disturbances which at present seem to threaten it, our whole stock may perish. True it is that in order to reach Madrid I should have to pass through the midst of the Carlist hordes, who would perhaps slay or make me prisoner; but I am at present so much accustomed to perilous adventure, and have hitherto experienced so many fortunate escapes, that the dangers which infest the route would not deter me a moment from venturing. But there is no certain intelligence, and Madrid may be in safety or on the brink of falling."

Another factor that made him desirous of returning to the capital was that, ever since leaving Coruña, he had been afflicted with a dysentery and, later, with ophthalmia, which resulted from it, and he was anxious to obtain proper medical advice. He determined, however, first to carry out his project of visiting Santandér, which he reached by way of Villa Viciosa, Colunga, Riba de Sella, Llánes, Colombres, San Vicente, Santillana. It was at Santandér that he

encountered the unfortunate Flinter, [208] as brave with his sword as with his tongue.

Instructions had been given in a letter to Borrégo to forward to Santandér two hundred copies of the New Testament; but, much to Borrow's disappointment, he found that they had not arrived. He thought that either they had fallen into the hands of the Carlists, or his letter of instruction had miscarried: as a matter of fact they did not leave Madrid until 30th October, the day before Borrow arrived at the capital. Thus his journey was largely wasted. It would be folly to remain at Santandér, where, in spite of the strictest economy, his expenses amounted to two pounds a day, whilst a further supply of books was obtained. Accordingly he determined to make for Madrid without further delay.

Purchasing a small horse, and notwithstanding that he was so ill as scarcely to be able to support himself; indifferent to the fact that the country between Santandér and Madrid was overrun with Carlists, whose affairs in Castile had not prospered; too dispirited to collect his thoughts sufficiently to write to Mr Brandram, he set out, accompanied by Antonio, "determined to trust, as usual, in the Almighty and to venture." Physical ailments, however, did not in any way cause him to forget why he had come to Santandér, and before leaving he made tentative arrangements with the booksellers of the town as to what they should do in the event of his being able to send them a supply of Testaments.

That journey of a hundred leagues was a nightmare. "Robberies, murders, and all kinds of atrocity were perpetrated before, behind, and on both sides" of them; but they passed through it all as if travelling

along an English highway. Even when met at the entrance of the Black Pass by a man, his face covered with blood, who besought him not to enter the pass, where he had just been robbed of all he possessed, Borrow, without making reply, proceeded on his way. He was too ill to weigh the risks, and Antonio followed cheerfully wherever his master went. Madrid was reached on 31st October. [209a] The next day Borrow wrote to Mr Brandram: "People say we have been very lucky; Antonio says, 'It was so written'; but I say, Glory be to the Lord for His mercies vouchsafed."

The expedition to the Northern Provinces had occupied five and a half months. Every kind of fatigue had been experienced, dangers had been faced, even courted, and every incident of the road turned to further the end in view—the distribution of the Scriptures in Spain. The countryside had proved itself ignorant and superstitious, and the towns eager, not for the Word of God but "for stimulant narratives, and amongst too many a lust for the deistical writings of the French, especially for those of Talleyrand, which have been translated into Spanish and published by the press of Barcelona, and for which I was frequently pestered." [209b] Antonio had proved himself a unique body-servant and companion, and if with a previous employer he had valued his personal comfort so highly as to give notice because his mistress's pet quail disturbed his slumbers, he was nevertheless utterly indifferent to the hardships and discomforts that he endured when with Borrow, and always proved cheerful and willing.

Borrow had "by private sale disposed of one hundred and sixteen Testaments to individuals entirely of the

lower classes, namely, muleteers, carmen, *contrabandistas*, etc." [209c] He had dared to undertake what perhaps only he was capable of carrying to a successful issue; for, left alone to make his own plans and conduct the campaign along his own lines, Borrow has probably never been equalled as a missionary, strange though the term may seem when applied to him. His fear of God did not hinder him from making other men fear God's instrument, himself. His fine capacity for affairs, together with what must have appeared to the clergy of the districts through which he passed his outrageous daring, conspired to his achieving what few other men would have thought, and probably none were capable of undertaking. A missionary who rode a noble, black Andalusian stallion, who could use a fleam as well as a blacksmith's hammer, who could ride barebacked, and, above all, made men fear him as a physical rather than a spiritual force, was new in Spain, as indeed elsewhere. The very novelty of Borrow's methods, coupled with the daring and unconventional independence of the man himself, ensured the success of his mission. There was something of the Camel-Driver of Mecca about his missionary work. He saw nothing anomalous in being possessed of a strong arm as well as a Christian spirit. He would endeavour to win over the ungodly; but woe betide them if they should attempt to pit their strength against his. Borrow's own comment upon his journey in the Northern Provinces was, "Insignificant are the results of man's labours compared with the swelling ideas of his presumption; something, however, had been effected by the journey which I had just concluded." [210]

CHAPTER XIV
NOVEMBER 1837–APRIL 1838

GREAT changes had taken place in Madrid during Borrow's absence. The Carlists had actually appeared before its gates, although they had subsequently retired. Liberalism had been routed and a *Moderado* Cabinet, under the leadership of Count Ofalia, ruled the city and such part of the country as was sufficiently complaisant as to permit itself to be ruled. As the *Moderados* represented the Court faction, Borrow saw that he had little to expect from them. He was unacquainted with any of the members of the Cabinet, and, what was far more serious for him, the relations between the new Government and Sir George Villiers [211] were none too cordial, as the British Minister had been by no means favourable to the new ministry.

Having written to Mr Brandram telling of his arrival in Madrid, "begging pardon for all errors of commission and omission," and confessing himself "a frail and foolish vessel," that had "accomplished but a slight portion of what I proposed in my vanity," Borrow proceeded to disprove his own assertion. He found the affairs of the Bible Society in a far from flourishing condition. The Testaments had not sold to any considerable extent, for which "only circumstances and the public poverty" were the cause, as Dr Usoz explained.

To awaken interest in his campaign, Borrow planned to print a thousand advertisements, which were to be posted in various parts of the city, and to employ colporteurs to vend the books in the streets. He despatched consignments of books to towns he had visited that required them, and in the enthusiasm of his eager and active mind foresaw that, "as the circle widens in the lake into which a stripling has cast a pebble, so will the circle of our usefulness continue widening, until it has embraced the whole vast region of Spain." [212a]

It soon became evident that there was to be a very strong opposition. A furious attack upon the Bible Society was made in a letter addressed to the editors of *El Español* on 5th November, prefixed to a circular of the Spiritual Governor of Valencia, forbidding the purchase or reading of the London edition of Father Scio's Bible. The letter described the Bible Society as "an infernal society," and referred in passing to "its accursed fecundity." It also strongly resented the omission of the Apocrypha from the Scio Bible. Borrow promptly replied to this attack in a letter of great length, and entirely silenced his antagonist, whom he described to Mr Brandram (20th Nov.) as "an unprincipled benefice-hunting curate." "You will doubtless deem it too warm and fiery," he writes, referring to his reply, "but tameness and gentleness are of little avail when surrounded by the vassal slaves of bloody Rome." [212b] Borrow's response to the "benefice-hunting curate" not only silenced him, but was listened to by the General Committee of the Society "with much pleasure."

The cause of the trouble in Valencia lay with the other agent of the Bible Society in Spain, Lieutenant James Newenham Graydon, R.N., who first took up

the work of distributing the Scriptures at Gibraltar in 1835. Here he became associated with the Rev. W. H. Rule, of the Wesleyan Methodist Society. "The Lieutenant, who seems to have combined the personal charm of the Irish gentleman with some of the perfervid incautiousness of the Keltic temperament, finding himself unemployed at Gibraltar, resolved to do what lay in his power for the spiritual enlightenment of Spain. Without receiving a regular commission from any society, he took up single-handed the task which he had imposed upon himself." [213a]

Borrow had first met Lieutenant Graydon at Madrid, in the summer of 1836, where he saw him two or three times. When Graydon left, on account of the heat, Borrow had removed to Graydon's lodgings as being more comfortable than his own. The prohibition in Valencia was directly due to the indiscretion and incaution of Graydon. The Vicar-General of the province gave as a reason for his action, an advertisement that had appeared in the *Diario Comercial* of Valencia, undertaking to supply Bibles gratis to those who could not afford to buy them. For this advertisement Graydon was admonished by the General Committee, which refused to entertain his plea that, being unpaid, he was not, strictly speaking, an agent of the Bible Society. He was given to understand that as the Society was responsible for his acts he must be guided by its views and wishes.

The next occasion on which Borrow came into conflict with this impulsive missionary free-lance was in March 1838, when he heard from the Rev. W. H. Rule that Graydon was on his way to Andalusia. Borrow immediately wrote to Mr Brandram that he,

acting on the advice of Sir George Villiers, had already planned an expedition into that province, and furthermore that he had despatched there a number of Testaments. He explained to Mr Brandram that he was apprehensive "of the re-acting at Seville of the Valencian Drama, which I have such unfortunate cause to rue, as I am the victim on whom an aggravated party have wreaked their vengeance, and for the very cogent reason that I was within their reach." [213b] On this occasion Graydon was instructed not to start upon his projected journey, although Mr Brandram gave the order much against his own inclination. [214a]

One great difficulty that Borrow had to contend with was the apathy of the Madrid booksellers, who "gave themselves no manner of trouble to secure the sale, and even withheld [the] advertisements from the public." [214b] This determined him to open a shop himself, and, accordingly, towards the end of November, he secured premises in the Calle del Principe, one of the main thoroughfares, for which he agreed to pay a rent of eight *reals* a day. He furnished the premises handsomely, with glass cases and chandeliers, and caused to be painted in large yellow characters the sign "Despacho de la Sociedad Bíblica y Estrangera" (Depôt of the Biblical and Foreign Society). He engaged a Gallegan (José Calzado, whom he called Pepe) as salesman, and on 27th November formally opened his new premises. Customers soon presented themselves; but many were disappointed on finding that they could not obtain the Bible. "I could have sold ten times the amount of what I did," Borrow writes. "I *must* therefore be furnished with Bibles instanter; send me therefore the London edition, bad as it is, say 500 copies." [214c]

To facilitate the passing of these books through the customs, Borrow suggested that they should be consigned to the British Consul at Cadiz, who was friendly to the Society and "would have sufficient influence to secure their admission into Spain. But the most advisable way," he goes on to explain with great guile, "would be to pack them in two chests, placing at the top Bibles in English and other languages, for there is a demand, viz., 100 English, 100 French, 50 German, 50 Hebrew, 50 Greek, 10 Modern Greek, 10 Persian, 20 Arabic. *Pray do not fail.*" [215a]

When Sir George Villiers first obtained from Isturitz permission for Borrow to print and sell the New Testament in Spanish without notes, he had cautioned him "to use the utmost circumspection, and in order to pursue his vocation with success, to avoid offending popular prejudices, which would not fail to be excited against a Protestant and a Foreigner engaged in the propagation of the Gospel." [215b] This warning the British Minister had repeated frequently since. It was without consulting Sir George that Borrow opened his depôt, and "imprudently painted upon the window that it was the Depôt of the London (sic) Bible Society for the sale of Bibles. I told him," Sir George writes "that such a measure would render the interference of the Authorities inevitable, and so it turned out." [215c]

Borrow now lost the services of the faithful Antonio, who, on the last day of the year, informed him that he had become unsettled and dissatisfied with everything at his master's lodgings, including the house, the furniture, and the landlady herself. Therefore he had hired himself out to a count for four dollars a month less than he was receiving from

Borrow, because he was "fond of change, though it be for the worse. *Adieu, mon maitre,*" he said in parting; "may you be as well served as you deserve. Should you chance, however, to have any pressing need *de mes soins*, send for me without hesitation, and I will at once give my new master warning." A few days later Borrow engaged a Basque, named Francisco, who "to the strength of a giant joined the disposition of a lamb," [216a] and who had been strongly recommended to him.

On his return from a hurried visit to Toledo, Borrow found his *Despacho* succeeding as well as could be expected. To call attention to his premises he now took an extremely daring step. He caused to be printed three thousand copies of an advertisement on paper yellow, blue, and crimson, "with which I almost covered the sides of the streets" he wrote, "and besides this inserted notices in all the journals and periodicals, employing also a man, after the London fashion, to parade the streets with a placard, to the astonishment of the populace." [216b] The result of this move, Borrow declared, was that every man, woman and child in Madrid became aware of the existence of his *Despacho*, as well they might. In spite of this commercial enterprise, the first month's trading showed a sale of only between seventy and eighty New Testaments, and ten Bibles, [216c] these having been secured from a Spanish bookseller who had brought them secretly from Gibraltar, but who was afraid to sell them himself. Mr Brandram's comment upon the letter from Borrow telling of the posters was that its contents had "afforded us no little merriment. The idea of your placards and placard-bearers in Madrid is indeed a novel one. It cannot but be effectual in giving publicity. I sincerely hope it may not be prejudicial." [216d]

When in England, at the end of 1836, Borrow had been authorised by the Bible Society to find "a person competent to translate the Scriptures in Basque." On 27*th* February 1837, he wrote telling Mr Brandram that he had become "acquainted with a gentleman well versed in that dialect, of which I myself have some knowledge." Dr Oteiza, the domestic physician of the Marqués de Salvatierra, was accordingly commissioned to proceed with the work, for which, when completed, he was paid the sum of "£8 and a few odd shillings." Borrow reported to Mr Brandram (7th June 1837):

> "I have examined it with much attention, and find it a very faithful version. The only objection which can be brought against it is that Spanish words are frequently used to express ideas for which there are equivalents in Basque; but this language, as spoken at present in Spain, is very corrupt, and a work written entirely in the Basque of Larramendi's Dictionary would be intelligible to very few. I have read passages from it to men of Guipuscoa, who assured me that they had no difficulty in understanding it, and that it was written in the colloquial style of the province."

Borrow had "obtained a slight acquaintance" with Basque when a youth, which he lost no opportunity of extending by mingling with Biscayans during his stay in the Peninsula. He also considerably improved himself in the language by conversing with his

Basque servant Francisco. Borrow now decided to print the Gitano and Basque versions of St Luke, which he accordingly put in hand; but as the compositors were entirely ignorant of both languages, he had to exercise the greatest care in reading the proofs.

During his stay in Spain he had found time to translate into the dialect of the Spanish gypsies the greater part of the New Testament. [217a] His method had been somewhat original. Believing that there is "no individual, however wicked and hardened, who is utterly *godless*," [217b] he determined to apply his belief to the gypsies. To enlist their interest in the work, he determined to allow them to do the translating themselves. At one period of his residence in Madrid he was regularly visited by two gypsy women, and these he decided to make his translators; for he found the women far more amenable than the men. In spite of the fact that he had already translated into Gitano the New Testament, or the greater part of it, he would read out to the women from the Spanish version and let them translate it into Romany themselves, thus obtaining the correct gypsy idiom. The women looked forward to these gatherings and also to "the one small glass of Malaga" with which their host regaled them. They had got as far as the eighth chapter before the meetings ended. What was the moral effect of St Luke upon the minds of two gypsies? Borrow confessed himself sceptical; first, because he was acquainted with the gypsy character; second, because it came to his knowledge that one of the women "committed a rather daring theft shortly afterwards, which compelled her to conceal herself for a fortnight." [218a] Borrow comforted himself with the reflection that "it is quite possible, however,

that she may remember the contents of those chapters on her death-bed." [218b] The translation of the remaining chapters was supplied from Borrow's own version begun at Badajos in 1836.

It is not strange that Borrow should be regarded with suspicion by the Spaniards on account of his association with the Gitanos. Sometimes there would be as many as seventeen gypsies gathered together at his lodgings in the Calle de Santiago.

> "The people in the street in which I lived," he writes, [218c] "seeing such numbers of these strange females continually passing in and out, were struck with astonishment, and demanded the reason. The answers which they obtained by no means satisfied them. 'Zeal for the conversion of souls—the souls too of Gitánas,—disparáte! the fellow is a scoundrel. Besides he is an Englishman, and is not baptised; what cares he for souls? They visit him for other purposes. He makes base ounces, which they carry away and circulate. Madrid is already stocked with false money.' Others were of the opinion that we met for the purposes of sorcery and abomination. The Spaniard has no conception that other springs of action exist than interest or villany."

Borrow was in reality endeavouring to convey to his "little congregation," as he called them, some idea of abstract morality. He was bold enough "to speak

against their inveterate practices, thieving and lying, telling fortunes," etc., and at first experienced much opposition. About the result, he seems to have cherished no illusions; still, he wrote a hymn in their dialect which he taught his guests to sing.

For some time past it had been obvious to Borrow that he was becoming more than ever unpopular with certain interested factions in Madrid, who looked upon his missionary labours with angry disapproval. The opening of his *Despacho* had caused a great sensation. "The Priests and Bigots are teeming with malice and fury," he had written to Mr Brandram, [219a] "which hitherto they have thought proper to exhibit only in words, as they know that all I do here is favoured by Mr Villiers [219b] (sic) . . . There is no attempt, however atrocious, which may not be expected from such people, and were it right and seemly for *me*, the most insignificant of worms, to make such a comparison, I would say that, like Paul at Ephesus, I am fighting with wild beasts." He was attacked in print and endeavours were made to incite the people against him as a sorcerer and companion of gypsies and witches. When he decided upon the campaign of the posters it would appear, at first glance, that in the claims of the merchant Borrow had entirely forgotten the obligations of the diplomatist. On the other hand, he may have foreseen that the priestly party would soon force the Government to action, and was desirous of selling all the books he could before this happened. His own words seem to indicate that this was the case.

> "People who know me not," he wrote to Mr Brandram, "nor are acquainted with my situation, may be disposed to call me rash; but I am

> far from being so, as I never adopt a venturous course when any other is open to me; but I am not a person to be terrified by any danger when I see that braving it is the only way to achieve an object." [220]

Whatever may have been Borrow's motives, the crisis arrived on 12th January, when he received a peremptory order from the Civil Governor of Madrid (who had previously sent for and received two copies, to submit for examination to the Ecclesiastical Authorities) to sell no more of the New Testament in Spanish without notes. At that period the average sale was about twenty copies a day. "The priests have at length 'swooped upon me,'" Borrow wrote to Mr Brandram, three days later. The order did not, however, take him unawares.

Borrow saw that little assistance was to be expected from Sir George Villiers, who, for obvious reasons, was not popular with the Ofalia ministry, and, accepting the British Minister's advice, he promptly complied with the edict. He recognised that for the time being his enemies were paramount. He accuses the priests of employing the ruffian who, one night in a dark street, warned him to discontinue selling his "Jewish books," or he would "have a knife '*nailed in his heart*'" to which he replied by telling the fellow to go home, say his prayers and inform his employers that he, Borrow, pitied them. It was a few days after this episode that Borrow received the formal notice of prohibition.

Consoling himself with the fact that he was not ordered to close his *Despacho*, and refusing the advice that was tendered to him to erase from its

windows the yellow-lettered sign, he determined to continue his campaign with the Bibles that were on their way to him, and the Gitano and Basque versions of St Luke as soon as they were ready. The prohibition referred only to the Spanish New Testament without notes, and in this Borrow took comfort. He had every reason to feel gratified; for, since opening the *Despacho*, he had sold nearly three hundred copies of the New Testament.

At Earl Street it was undoubtedly felt that Borrow had to some extent precipitated the present crisis. On 8th February Mr Brandram wrote that, whilst there was no wish on the part of the Committee to censure him, they were not altogether surprised at what had occurred; for, when they first heard about them, "some *did* think that your tri-coloured placards and placard-bearer were somewhat calculated to provoke what has occurred." In reply Borrow confessed that the view of the "some" gave him "a pang, more especially as I knew from undoubted sources that nothing which I had done, said, or written, was the original cause of the arbitrary step which had been adopted in respect to me." [221a]

The printing of the Gitano and Basque editions of St Luke (500 copies [221b] of each) was completed in March, and they were published respectively in March and April. The Gitano version attracted much attention. Some months later Borrow wrote:—

> "No work printed in Spain ever caused so great and so general a sensation, not so much amongst the Gypsies, that peculiar people for whom it was intended, as amongst the Spaniards themselves, who,

> though they look upon the Roma with some degree of contempt as a low and thievish race of outcasts, nevertheless take a strange interest in all that concerns them, it having been from time immemorial their practice, more especially of the dissolute young nobility, to cultivate the acquaintance of the Gitanos, as they are popularly called, probably attracted by the wild wit of the latter and the lascivious dances of the females. The apparation, therefore, of the Gospel of St Luke at Madrid in the peculiar jargon of these people, was hailed as a strange novelty and almost as a wonder, and I believe was particularly instrumental in bruiting the name of the Bible Society far and wide through Spain, and in creating a feeling far from inimical towards it and its proceedings." [222a]

The little volume appears to have sold freely among the gypsies. "Many of the men," Borrow says, [222b] "understood it, and prized it highly, induced of course more by the language than the doctrine; the women were particularly anxious to obtain copies, though unable to read; but each wished to have one in her pocket, especially when engaged in thieving expeditions, for they all looked upon it in the light of a charm."

All endeavours to get the prohibition against the sale of the New Testament removed proved unavailing. Borrow's great strength lay in the support he

received from the British Minister, and, in all probability, this prevented his expulsion from Spain, which alone would have satisfied his enemies. At the request of Sir George Villiers, he drew up an account of the Bible Society and an exposition of its views, telling Count Ofalia, among other things, that "the mightiest of earthly monarchs, the late Alexander of Russia, was so convinced of the single-mindedness and integrity of the British and Foreign Bible Society, that he promoted their efforts within his own dominions to the utmost of his ability." He pointed to the condition of Spain, which was "overspread with the thickest gloom of heathenish ignorance, beneath which the fiends and demons of the abyss seem to be holding their ghastly revels." He described it as "a country in which all sense of right and wrong is forgotten . . . where the name of Jesus is scarcely ever mentioned but in blasphemy, and His precepts [are] almost utterly unknown . . . [where] the few who are enlightened are too much occupied in the pursuit of lucre, ambition, or ungodly revenge to entertain a desire or thought of bettering the moral state of their countrymen." This report, in which Borrow confesses that he "made no attempts to flatter and cajole," must have caused the British Minister some diplomatic embarrassment when he read it; but it seems to have been presented, although, as is scarcely surprising, it appears to have been ineffectual in causing to be removed the ban against which it was written as a protest.

The Prime Minister was in a peculiarly unpleasant position. On the one hand there was the British Minister using all his influence to get the prohibition rescinded; on the other hand were six bishops, including the primate, then resident in Madrid, and the greater part of the clergy. Count Ofalia applied

for a copy of the Gipsy St Luke, and, seeing in this an opening for a personal appeal, Borrow determined to present the volume, specially and handsomely bound, in person, probably the last thing that Count Ofalia expected or desired. The interview produced nothing beyond the conviction in Borrow's mind that Spain was ruled by a man who possessed the soul of a mouse. Borrow had been received "with great affability," thanked for his present, urged to be patient and peaceable, assured of the enmity of the clergy, and promised that an endeavour should be made to devise some plan that would be satisfactory to him. The two then "parted in kindness," and as he walked away from the palace, Borrow wondered "by what strange chance this poor man had become Prime Minister of a country like Spain."

In reporting progress to the Bible Society on 17th March Borrow, after assuring Mr Brandram that he had "brought every engine into play which it was in my power to command," asked for instructions. "Shall I wait a little time longer in Madrid," he enquired; "or shall I proceed at once on a journey to Andalusia and other places? I am in strength, health and spirits, thanks be to the Lord! and am at all times ready to devote myself, body and mind, to His cause." [224a] The decision of the Committee was that he should remain at Madrid.

During the time that Borrow had been preparing his Depôt in Madrid, Lieutenant Graydon had been feverishly active in the South. On 19th April Borrow wrote to Mr Brandram:—

> "Sir George Villiers has vowed to protect me and has stated so publicly . . . He has gone so far as to state to

> Ofalia and [Don Ramon de] Gamboa [the Civil Governor], that provided I be allowed to pursue my plans without interruption, he will be my bail (*fiador*) and answerable for everything I do, as he does me the honor to say that he knows me, and can confide in *my* discretion."

In the same letter he begs the Society to be cautious and offer no encouragement to any disposed "'to run the muck' (*sic*) (it is Sir George's expression) against the religious and political *institutions* of Spain"; but "the delicacy of the situation does not appear to have been thoroughly understood at the time even by the Committee at home." [224b] They saw the astonishing success of Graydon in distributing the Scripture, and became infused with his enthusiasm, oblivious to the fact that the greater the enthusiasm the greater the possibilities of indiscretion. On the other hand Graydon himself saw only the glory of the Gospel. If he were indiscreet, it was because he was blinded by the success that attended his efforts, and he failed to see the clouds that were gathering. [225] Borrow saw the danger of Graydon's reckless evangelism, and although he himself had few good words for the pope and priestcraft, he recognised that a discreet veiling of his opinions was best calculated to further the ends he had in view.

About this period Borrow became greatly incensed at the action of the Rev. W. H. Rule of Gibraltar in consigning to his care an ex-priest, Don Pascual Mann, who, it was alleged, had been persuaded to secede from Rome "by certain promises and hopes held out" to him. He had accordingly left his benefice and gone to Gibraltar to receive instruction

at the hands of Mr Rule. On his return to Valencia his salary was naturally sequestrated, and he was reduced to want. When he arrived at Madrid it was with a letter (12th April) from Mr Rule to Borrow, in which it was stated that Mann was sent that he might "endeavour to circulate the Holy Scriptures, Religious Tracts and books, and if possible prepare the minds of some with a view to the future establishment of a Mission in Madrid."

Borrow had commiserated with the unfortunate Mann, even to the extent of sending him 500 *reals* out of his own pocket; but on hearing that he was on his way to Madrid to engage in missionary work, he immediately wrote a letter of protest to Mr Brandram. He was angry at Mr Rule's conduct in saddling him with Mann, and that without any preliminary correspondence. He had entertained Mr Rule when in Madrid, had conversed with him about the unfortunate ex-priest; but there had never been any mention of his being sent to Madrid. Mr Rule, on the other hand, thought it had been arranged that Mann should be sent to Borrow. The whole affair appears to have arisen out of a misunderstanding. There was considerable danger to Borrow in Mann's presence in the capital; but it was not the thought of the danger that incensed him so much as what he conceived to be Mr Rule's unwarrantable conduct, and his own deeply-rooted objection to working with anyone else. Mr Brandram repudiated the suggestion that assistance had been promised Mann from London (although he authorised Borrow to give him ten pounds in his, Brandram's, name), and gave as an excuse for what Borrow described as the desertion of the ex-priest by those who were responsible for his conversion, that "the man had returned of his own accord to Rome," Graydon vouching for the accuracy

of the statement.

On the other hand, Mann stated that he was persuaded to secede by promises made by Graydon and Rule, and induced to sign a document purporting to be a separation from the Roman Church. He further stated that he was abandoned because he refused to preach publicly against the Chapter of Valencia, which in all probability would have resulted in his imprisonment. Whatever the truth, there appears to have been some embarrassment among those responsible for bringing in the lost sheep as to what should be done with him. "I hope that Mann's history will be a warning to many of our friends," Borrow wrote to Mr Rule and quoted the passage in his letter to Mr Brandram, [226] "and tend to a certain extent to sober down the desire for doing what is called at home *smart things*, many of which terminate in a manner very different from the original expectations of the parties concerned." Mr Brandram thought that Borrow was a little hard upon Graydon, and that he had not received "with the due *grano salis* the statements of the unfortunate M." He intimated, nevertheless, that the Committee had no opening for Mann's services.

That Borrow was justified in his anger is shown by the fact that, as he had foreseen, he reaped all the odium of Mann's conversion. The Bishop of Cordoba in Council branded him as "a dangerous, pestilent person, who under the pretence of selling the Scriptures went about making converts, and moreover employed subordinates for the purpose of deluding weak and silly people into separation from the Mother Church." [227a]

Although Borrow was angry about the Mann episode,

he did not allow his personal feelings to prevent him from ministering to the needs of the poor ex-priest "as far as prudence will allow," when he fell ill. He even went the length of writing to Mr Rule, being wishful "not to offend him." None the less he felt that he had not been well treated. To Mr Brandram he wrote reminding him "that all the difficulty and danger connected with what has been accomplished in Spain have fallen to my share, I having been labouring on the flinty rock and sierra, and not in smiling meadows refreshed by sea breezes." [227b]

On 14th July 1838 Borrow made the last reference to the ex-priest in a letter to Mr Brandram: "The unfortunate M. is dying of a galloping consumption, brought on by distress of mind. All the medicine in the world would not accomplish his cure." [227c]

The watchful eye of the law was still on Borrow, and fearful lest his stock of Bibles, of which 500 had arrived from Barcelona, and the Gypsy and Basque editions of St Luke should be seized, he hired a room where he stored the bulk of the books. He now advertised the two editions of St Luke, with the result that on 16th April a party of *Alguazils* entered the shop and took possession of twenty-five copies of the Romany Gospel of St Luke.

On the publication of the Gypsy St Luke, a fresh campaign had been opened against Borrow, and accusations of sorcery were made and fears expressed as to the results of the publication of the book. Application was made by the priestly party to the Civil Governor, with the result that all the copies at the *Despacho* of the Basque and Gitano versions of St Luke had been seized. Borrow states that the *Alguazils* "divided the copies of the gypsy volume

among themselves, selling subsequently the greater number at a large price, the book being in the greatest demand." [228a] Thus the very officials responsible for the seizure and suppression of the Bible Society's books in Spain became "unintentionally agents of an heretical society." [228b]

Disappointed at the smallness of the spoil, the authorities strove by artifice to discover if Borrow still had copies of the books in his possession. To this end they sent to the *Despacho* spies, who offered high prices for copies of the Gitano St Luke, in which their interest seemed specially to centre, to the exclusion of the Basque version. To these enquiries the same answer was returned, that at present no further books would be sold at the *Despacho*.

As evidence of the high opinion formed of the Romany version of St Luke, the following story told by Borrow is amusing:—

> "Shortly before my departure a royal edict was published, authorising all public libraries to provide themselves with copies of the said works [the Basque and Gypsy St Lukes] on account of their philological merit; whereupon on application being made to the Office [of the Civil Governor, where the books were supposed to be stored], it was discovered that the copies of the Gospel in Basque were safe and forthcoming, whilst every one of the sequestered copies of the Gitano Gospel had been plundered by hands

> unknown [to the authorities]. The consequence was that I was myself applied to by the agents of the public libraries of Valencia and other places, who paid me the price of the copies which they received, assuring me at the same time that they were authorised to purchase them at whatever price which might be demanded." [229a]

Borrow's enemies acknowledged that the Gitano St Luke was a philological curiosity; but that it was impossible to allow it to pass into circulation without notes. How great a philological curiosity it actually was, is shown by the fact that the ecclesiastical authorities were unable to find anywhere a person, in whom they had confidence, capable of pronouncing upon it, consequently they could only condemn it on two counts of omission; firstly the notes, secondly the imprint of the printer from the title-page.

The Basque version was by no means so popular; for one thing, "It can scarcely be said to have been published," Borrow wrote, "it having been prohibited, and copies of it seized on the second day of its appearance." [229b] Several orders were received from San Sebastian and other towns where Basque predominates, which could not be supplied on account of the prohibition.

The official remonstrance from Sir George Villiers to Count Ofalia in respect of the seizure of the Gypsy and Basque Gospels is of great interest as showing, not only the British Minister's attitude towards Borrow, but how, and with what wrath, Borrow

"desisted from his meritorious task." The communication runs:—

MADRID, 24*th April* 1838.

SIR,

It is my duty to request the attention of Your Excellency to an act of injustice committed against a British subject by the Civil Authorities of Madrid.

It appears that on the 16th inst., two officers of Police were sent by the Civil Governor to a Shop, No. 25 Calle del Principe occupied by Mr Borrow, where they seized and carried away 25 Copies of the Gospel of St Luke in the Gitano language, being the entire number exposed there for sale.

Mr Borrow is an agent of the British Bible Society, who has for some time past been in Spain, and in the year 1836 obtained permission from the Government of Her Catholic Majesty to print, at the expense of the Society, Padre Scio's translation of the New Testament. He subsequently sold the work at a moderate price and had no reason to believe that in so doing he infringed any law of Spain or exposed himself to the animadversion of the Authorities, otherwise, from my knowledge of Mr Borrow's character,

I feel justified in assuring Your Excellency that he would at once, although with regret, have desisted from his meritorious task of propagating the Gospel. Some months ago, however, the late Civil Governor of Madrid, after having sent for and examined a copy of the work, thought proper to direct that its further sale should be suspended, which order was instantly complied with.

Mr Borrow is a man of great learning and research and master of many languages, and having translated the Gospel of St Luke into the Gitano, he presented a copy of it to Don Ramon Gamboa, the late Civil Governor, and announced his intention to advertise it for sale, to which no objection was made.

Since that time neither Mr Borrow nor the persons employed by him received any communication from the present Civil Governor forbidding the sale of this work until it was seized in the manner I have above described to Your Excellency.

I feel convinced that the mere statement of these facts without any commentary on my part will be sufficient to induce your Excellency to take steps for the indemnification of Mr Borrow, who is not only a very

respectable British subject but the Agent of one of the most truly benevolent and philanthropic Societies in the world.

I have, etc., etc., etc.

GEORGE VILLIERS.

His Excellency Count Ofalia.

CHAPTER XV
MAY 1–13, 1838

ON the morning of 30th April, whilst at breakfast, Borrow, according to his own account, received a visit from a man who announced that he was "A Police Agent." He came from the Civil Governor, who was perfectly aware that he, Borrow, was continuing in secret to dispose of the "evil books" that he had been forbidden to sell. The man began poking round among the books and papers that were lying about, with the result that Borrow led his visitor by the arm down the three flights of stairs into the street, "looking him steadfastly in the face the whole time," and subsequently sending down by his landlady the official's sombrero, which, in the unexpectedness of his departure, he had left behind him.

The official report of Pedro Martin de Eugenio, the police agent in question, runs as follows:—

MADRID, 30*th April* 1838.

OFFICIAL REPORT OF THE POLICE AGENT OF THE LANGUAGE HELD BY MR BORROW.

Public Security.—In virtue of an order from His Excellency the Civil Governor, [231] I went to seize the Copies Entitled the Gospel of St Luke, in the Shop Princes Street No. 25, belonging to Mr George Borrow, but not finding him there; I went to his lodgings, which are in St James Street, No. 16, on the third floor and presenting the said order to Him He read it, and with an angry look threw it on the ground saying, that He had nothing to do with the Civil Governor, that He was authorised by His Ambassador to sell the Work in question, and that an English Stable Boy, is more than any Spanish Civil Governor, and that I had forcibly entered his house, to which I replied that I only went there to communicate the order to Him, as proprietor as he was of the said Shop, and to seize the Copies in it in virtue of that Order, and He answered I might do as I liked, that He should go to the House of His Ambassador, and that I should be responsible for the consequences; to which I replied that He had personally insulted the Civil Governor and all Spain, to which He

answered in the same terms, holding the same language as above stated.

All of which I communicate to you for the objects required.

THE POLICE AGENT
PEDRO MARTIN DE EUGENIO. [232a]

Borrow felt that the fellow had been sent to entrap him into some utterance that should justify his arrest. In any case a warrant was issued that same morning. The news caused Borrow no alarm; for one thing he was indifferent to danger, for another he was desirous of studying the robber language of Spain, and had already, according to his own statement, [232b] made an unsuccessful effort to obtain admission to the city prison.

The official account of the interview between Borrow and the "Police Agent" is given in the following letter from the Civil Governor to Sir George Villiers: —

To the British Minister,—

MADRID, 30*th April* 1838.

SIR,

The Vicar of the Diocese having, on the 16th and 26th Instant, officially represented to me, that neither the publication nor the sale of the Gospel of St Luke translated into the romain, or Gitano Dialect ought to be permitted, until such time as the translation had been examined and approved by the competent

Ecclesiastical Authority, in conformity with the Canonical and Civil regulations existing on the matter, I gave an order to a dependent of this civil administration, to present himself in the house of Mr George Borrow, a British Subject, charged by the London Bible Society with the publication of this work, and to seize all the Copies of it. In execution of this order my Warrant was yesterday morning [233] presented to the said Mr George Borrow; who, so far from obeying it, broke out in insults most offensive to my authority, threw the order on the ground with angry gestures, and grossly abused the bearer of it, and said that he had nothing to do with the Civil Governor. The detailed report in writing which has been made to me of this disageeeable occurrence could not but deeply affect me, being a question of a British Subject, to whom the Government of Her Catholic Majesty has always afforded the same protection as to its own. As Executor of the Law it is my duty to cause its decrees to be inviolably observed; and you will well understand, that both the Canonical as the Civil Laws now existing, in this kingdom, relative to writings and works published upon Dogmas, Morals, and holy and religious

> matters, are the same without distinction for the Subjects of all Countries residing in Spain. No one can be permitted to violate them with impunity, without detriment to the Laws themselves, to the Royal Authority and to the Evangelical Moral which is highly interested in preventing the propagation of doctrines which may be erroneous, and that the purity of the sublime maxims of our divine Faith should remain intact.
>
> In conformity with these undeniable principles, which are in the Laws of all civilised nations, you must acknowledge that the offensive conduct of Mr George Borrow, and his disobedience to a legitimate Authority sufficiently authorised the proceeding to his arrest . . .
>
> I have, etc., etc.
>
> DEIGO DE ENTRENA.

The "Police Agent" seems to have boasted that within twenty-four hours Borrow would be in prison; Borrow, on the other hand, determined to prove the "Police Agent" wrong. He therefore spent the rest of the day and the following night at a café. [234a] In the evening he received a visit from Maria Diaz, [234b] his landlady and also his strong adherent and friend, whom he had informed of his whereabouts. From her he learned that his lodgings had been searched and that the *alguazils*, who bore a warrant for his arrest, were much disappointed at not finding

him.

The next morning, 1st May, at the request of Sir George Villiers, Borrow called at the Embassy and narrated every circumstance of the affair, with the result that he was offered the hospitality of the Embassy, which he declined. Whilst in conversation with Mr Sothern, Sir George Villiers' private secretary, Borrow's Basque servant Francisco rushed in with the news that the *alguazils* were again at his rooms searching among his papers, whereat Borrow at once left the Embassy, determined to return to his lodgings. Immediately afterwards he was arrested, [234c] within sight of the doors of the Embassy, and conducted to the office of the Civil Governor. Francisco in the meantime, acting on his master's instructions, conveyed to him in Basque that the *alguazils* might not understand, proceeded immediately to the British Embassy and informed Sir George Villiers of what had just taken place, with such eloquence and feeling that Mr Sothern afterwards remarked to Borrow, "That Basque of yours is a noble fellow," and asked to be given the refusal of his services should Borrow ever decide to part with him. With his dependents Borrow was always extremely popular, even in Spain, where, according to Mr Sothern, a man's servant seemed to be his worst enemy.

Borrow submitted quietly to his arrest and was first taken to the office of the Civil Governor (*Gefatura Politica*), and subsequently to the Carcel de la Corte, by two Salvaguardias, "like a common malefactor." Here he was assigned a chamber that was "large and lofty, but totally destitute of every species of furniture with the exception of a huge wooden pitcher, intended to hold my daily allowance of

water." [235] For this special accommodation Borrow was to pay, otherwise he would have been herded with the common criminals, who existed in a state of foulness and misery. Acting on the advice of the *Alcayde*, Borrow despatched a note to Maria Diaz, with the result that when Mr Sothern arrived, he found the prisoner not only surrounded by his friends and furniture, but enjoying a comfortable meal, whereat he laughed heartily.

Borrow learned that, immediately on hearing what had taken place, Sir George Villiers had despatched Mr Sothern to interview Señor Entrena, the Civil Governor, who rudely referred him to his secretary, and refused to hold any communication with the British Legation save in writing. Nothing further could be done that night, and on hearing that Borrow was determined to remain in durance, even if offered his liberty, now that he had been illegally placed there, Mr Sothern commended his resolution. The Government had put itself grievously in the wrong, and Sir George, who had already sent a note to Count Ofalia demanding redress, seemed desirous of making it as difficult for them as possible, now that they had perpetrated this wanton outrage on a British subject. He determined to make it a national affair.

It is by no means certain that Borrow was anxious to leave the *Carcel de la Corte*, even with the apologies of Spain in his pocket. The prison afforded him unique opportunities for the study of criminal vagabonds. An entirely new phase of life presented itself to him, and, but for this arrest and his subsequent decision to involve the authorities in difficulties, *The Bible in Spain* would have lacked some of its most picturesque pages. It would have

been strange if he had not encountered some old friend or acquaintance in the prison of the Spanish capital. At the *Carcel de la Corte* he found the notorious and immense Gitana, Aurora, who had fallen into the hands of the *Busné* for defrauding a rather foolish widow.

"A great many people came to see me," Borrow wrote to his mother, "amongst others, General Quiroga, the Military Governor, who assured me that all he possessed was at my service. The Gypsies likewise came, but were refused admittance." His dinner was taken to him from an inn, and Sir George Villiers sent his butler each day to make enquiries. There was, however, one very unpleasant feature of his prison life, the verminous condition of the whole building. In spite of having fresh linen taken to him each day, he suffered very much from what the polished Spaniard prefers to call *miseria*.

Sir George Villiers took active and immediate steps, not only to secure Borrow's release, but to obtain an unqualified apology. Referring to the letter he had received from the Civil Governor (30th April), he expressed himself as convinced that "a gentleman of Borrow's character and education was incapable of the conduct alleged," and had accordingly requested Mr Sothern to enquire into the matter and then to call upon the Civil Governor to explain in what manner he had been misinformed. As the Civil Governor refused to receive Mr Sothern, Sir George adds that he need trouble him no further, as the affair had been placed before Her Catholic Majesty's Government; but during his five years of office at the Court of Madrid, he proceeded, "no circumstance has occurred likely to be more prejudicial to the relations between the two Countries than the insult and

imprisonment to which a respectable Englishman has now been subjected upon the unsupported evidence of a Police Officer," acting under the orders of the Civil Governor.

On 3rd May Sir George Villiers wrote again to Count Ofalia, reminding him that he had not received the letter from him that he had expected. In the course of a lengthy recapitulation of the occurrences of the past ten days, Sir George reminded Count Ofalia that, as a result of their interview on 30th April about the ill-usage of Borrow, the Count had written on 1st May to him a private letter stating that measures had been taken to release Borrow on *parole*, he to appear when necessary, and that if Sir George would abstain from making a written remonstrance, Count Ofalia would see that both he and Borrow received the ample satisfaction to which they were entitled. Borrow had been taken by two Guards "like a Malefactor, to the Common Prison, where he would have been confined with Criminals of every description if he had not had money to pay for a Cell to Himself." The British Minister complained that every step that he had taken for Borrow's protection was followed by fresh insult, and he further intimated that Borrow refused to leave the prison until his character had been publicly cleared.

The Spanish Government now found itself in a quandary. The British Minister was pressing for satisfaction, and he was too powerful and too important to the needs of Spain to be offended. The prisoner himself refused to be liberated, because he had been illegally arrested, inasmuch as he, a foreigner, had been committed to prison without first being conducted before the Captain-General of Madrid, as the law provided. Furthermore, Borrow

advised the authorities that if they chose to eject him from the prison he would resist with all his bodily strength. In this determination he was confirmed by the British Minister.

A Cabinet Council was held, at which Señor Entrena was present. The Premier explained the serious situation in which the ministry found itself, owing to the attitude assumed by the British Minister, and he remarked that the Civil Governor must respect the privileges of foreigners. Señor Entrena suggested that he should be relieved of his duties; but the majority of the Cabinet seems to have been favourable to him. The *Affaire Borrow* is said to have come up for debate even during a secret session of the Chamber.

When Count Ofalia had called at the British Embassy (4th May) he was informed by Sir George Villiers that the affair had passed beyond the radius of a subordinate authority of the Government, and that he "considered that great want of respect had been shown to me, as Her Majesty's Minister, and that an unjustifiable outrage had been committed upon a British Subject," [238a] and that the least reparation that he was disposed to accept was a written declaration that an injustice had been done, and the dismissal of the Police Officer. [238b]

The value of a British subject's freedom was brought home to the Spanish Government with astonishing swiftness and decision. The Civil Governor wrote to Sir George Villiers (3rd May), apparently at the instance of the distraught premier, discoursing sagely upon the Civil and Canon Laws of Spain, and adding that the 25 copies of the Gitano St Luke were seized, "not as being confiscated, but as a deposit to be

restored in due time." He concluded by hoping that he had convinced the British Minister of his good faith.

In his reply, Sir George considered that the Civil Governor had been led to view the matter in a light that would not "bear the test of impartial examination." The result of this interchange of letters was twofold. Sir George dropped the correspondence with "that Functionary [who] displays so complete a disregard for fact," [239a] and as Count Ofalia evaded the real question at issue, holding out "slender hopes of the matter ending in the reparation which I considered to be peremptorily called for," [239b] he advised Borrow to claim protection from the Captain-General, the only authority competent to exercise any jurisdiction over him. The Captain-General Quiroga, jealous of his authority, entered warmly into the dispute and ordered the Civil Governor to hand over the case to him. There was now a danger of the *Affaire Borrow* being made a party question, in which case it would have been extremely difficult to settle.

The intervention of the Captain-General rendered all the more obvious the illegality of the Civil Governor's action, and increased the embarrassment of Count Ofalia, who called on Sir George to ask him to have Borrow's memorial to the Captain-General withdrawn. He refused, and said the only way now to finish the affair was that "His Excellency should in an official Note declare to me that Mr Borrow left the prison, where he had been improperly placed, with unstained honour,—that the Police Agent, upon whose testimony he had been arrested, should be dismissed,—that all expenses imposed upon Mr Borrow by his detention should be repaid him by the

Government,—that Mr Borrow's not having availed himself of the 'Fuero Militar' should not be converted into a precedent, or in any way be considered to prejudice that important right, and that Count Ofalia should add with reference to maintaining the friendly relations between Great Britain and Spain, that he hoped I would accept this satisfaction as sufficient." [240a]

Borrow states that Sir George Villiers went to the length of informing Count Ofalia that unless full satisfaction were accorded Borrow, he would demand his passports and instruct the commanders of the British war vessels to desist from furnishing further assistance to Spain. [240b] There is, however, no record of this in the official papers sent by Sir George to the Foreign Office. What actually occurred was that, on 8th May, the British Minister, determined to brook no further delay, wrote a grave official remonstrance, in which he stated that, "if the desire had existed to bring it to a close," the case of Borrow could have been settled. "Having up to the present moment," he proceeds, "trusted that in Your Excellency's hands, this affair would be treated with all that consideration required by its nature and the consequences that may follow upon it . . . I have forborne from denouncing the whole extent of the illegality which has marked the proceedings of the case" (viz., the Civil Governor's having usurped the right of the Captain-General of the Province in causing Borrow's arrest). In conclusion, Sir George states that he considers the

> "case of most pressing importance, for it may compromise the relations now existing between Great Britain and Spain. It is one that requires a

complete satisfaction, for the honor of England and the future position of Englishmen in the Country are concerned; and the satisfaction, in order to be complete, required to be promptly given."

"This disagreeable business," Sir George writes in another of his despatches, "is rendered yet more so by the impossibility of defending with success all Mr Borrow's proceedings . . . His imprudent zeal likewise in announcing publicly that the Bible Society had a depôt of Bibles in Madrid, and that he was the Agent for their sale, irritated the Ecclesiastical Authorities, whose attention has of late been called to the proceedings of a Mr Graydon,—another agent of the Bible Society, who has created great excitement at Malaga (and I believe in other places) by publishing in the Newspapers that the Catholic Religion was not the religion of God, and that he had been sent from England to convert Spaniards to Protestantism. I have upon more than one occasion cautioned Mr Graydon, but in vain, to be more prudent. The Methodist Society of England is likewise endeavouring to establish a School at Cadiz, and by that means to make conversions.

"Under all these circumstances it is

> not perhaps surprising that the Archbishop of Toledo and the Heads of the Church should be alarmed that an attempt at Protestant Propagandism is about to be made, or that the Government should wish to avert the evils of religious schism in addition to all those which already weigh upon the Country; and to these different causes it must, in some degree, be attributed that Mr Borrow has been an object of suspicion and treated with such extreme rigor. Still, however, they do not justify the course pursued by the Civil Governor towards him, or by the Government towards myself, and I trust Your Lordship will consider that in the steps I have taken upon the matter, I have done no more than what the National honor, and the security of Englishmen in this Country, rendered obligatory upon me." [241a]

Whilst Borrow was in the *Carcel de la Corte*, a grave complication had arisen in connection with the misguided Lieutenant Graydon. Borrow gives a strikingly dramatic account [241b] of Count Ofalia's call at the British Embassy. He is represented as arriving with a copy of one of Graydon's bills, which he threw down upon a table calling upon Sir George Villiers to read it and, as a gentleman and the representative of a great and enlightened nation, tell him if he could any longer defend Borrow and say that he had been ill or unfairly treated. According to

the Foreign Office documents, Count Ofalia *wrote* to Sir George Villiers on 5th May, *enclosing* a copy of an advertisement inserted by Lieutenant Graydon in the *Boletin Oficial de Malaga*, which, translated, runs as follows:—

> "The Individual in question most earnestly calls the greatest attention of each member of the great Spanish Family to this *divine* Book, in order that *through it* he may learn the chief cause, if not the *sole one*, of all his terrible afflictions and of his *only* remedy, as it is so clearly manifested in the Holy Scripture . . . A detestable system of superstition and fanaticism, *only greedy for money*, and not so either of the temporal or eternal felicity of man, has prevailed in Spain (as also in other Nations) during several Centuries, by the *absolute* exclusion of the true knowledge of the Great God and last Judge of Mankind: and thus it has been plunged into the most frightful calamities. There was a time in which precisely the same was read in the then *very little* Kingdom of England, but at length Her Sons recognising their imperative *Duty* towards God and their Neighbour, as also their unquestionable rights, and that since the world exists it has never been possible to gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles, they destroyed the system and at the

> price of their blood chose the Bible. Oh that the unprejudiced and enlightened inhabitants not only of Malaga and of so many other Cities, but of all Spain, would follow so good an example." [242a]

The result of Graydon's advertisement was that "the people flocked in crowds to purchase it [the Bible], so much so that 200 copies, all that were in Mr Graydon's possession at the time, were sold in the course of the day. The Bishop sent the Fiscal to stop the sale of the work, but before the necessary measures were taken they were all disposed of." [242b] In consequence Graydon "was detained and under my [the Consul's] responsibility allowed to remain at large." [243a] A jury of nine all pronounced the article to contain "matter subject to legal process" [243b] but a second jury of twelve at the subsequent public trial "unanimously absolved" Graydon.

Sir George Villiers acknowledged the letter from Count Ofalia (9th May) saying that he had written to Graydon warning him to be more cautious in future. He stated that from personal knowledge he could vouch for the purity of Lieutenant Graydon's intentions; but he regretted that he should have announced his object in so imprudent a manner as to give offence to the ministers of the Catholic religion of Spain. In a despatch to Lord Palmerston he states that he has not thought it in the interests of the Bible Society to defend this conduct of Graydon, "whose zeal appears so little tempered by discretion," [243c] as he had written to Count Ofalia. "Had I done so," he proceeds, "and thereby tended to confirm some of the idle reports that are current, that England had a

national object to serve in the propagation of Protestantism in Spain, it is not improbable that a legislative Enactment might have been introduced by some Member of the Cortes, which would be offensive to England, and render it yet more difficult than it is the task the Bible Society seems desirous to undertake in this Country." [243d] Sir George concludes by saying that he gave to "these Agents the best advice and assistance in my power, but if by their acts they infringe the laws of the Country," it will be impossible to defend them.

Sir George thought so seriously of the *Affaire Borrow*, as endangering the future liberty of Englishmen in Spain, that he went so far as to send a message to the Queen Regent, "by a means which I always have at my disposal," [244a] in which he told her that he thought the affair "might end in a manner most injurious to the continuance of friendly relations between the two Countries." [244b] He received a gracious assurance that he should have satisfaction. Later there reached him

> "a second message from the Queen Regent expressing Her Majesty's hope that Count Ofalia's Note [of 11th May] would be satisfactory to me, and stating that Her Ministers had so fully proved their incompetency by giving any just cause of complaint to the Minister of Her only real Friend and Ally, The Queen of England, that she should have dismissed them, were it not that the state of affairs in the Northern Provinces at this moment might be prejudiced by a change of

> Government, which Her Majesty said she knew no one more than myself would regret, but at the same time if I was not satisfied I had only to state what I required and it should be immediately complied with. My answer was confined to a grateful acknowledgement of Her Majesty's condescension and kindness. Count Ofalia has informed me that as President of the Council He had enjoined all his Colleagues never to take any step directly or indirectly concerning an Englishman without a previous communication with Him as to its propriety, and I therefore venture to hope that the case of Mr Borrow will not be unattended with ultimate advantage to British subjects in Spain." [244c]

The "Note" referred to by the Queen Regent in her message was Count Ofalia's acquiescence in Sir George Villiers' demands, with the exception of the dismissal of the Police Officer. His communication runs:—

> "11*th May* 1838.
>
> "SIR,—The affair of Mr Borrow is already decided by the Judge of First Instance and his decision has been approved by the Superior or Territorial Court of the Province. As I stated to you in my note of the fourth last, the foundation of the arrest of Mr Borrow, who was

detained (and not committed), was an official communication from the Agent of Police, Don Pedro Martin de Eugenio, in which he averred that on intimating to Mr Borrow the written order of the Civil Governor relative to the seizure of a book which he had published and exposed for sale without complying with the forms prescribed by the Civil and Ecclesiastical Laws of Spain, he (Mr Borrow) had thrown on the floor the order of the Superior Authority of the Province and used offensive expressions with regard to the said Authority.

"The judicial proceedings have had for their object the ascertainment of the fact. Mr Borrow has denied the truth of the statement and the Agent of Police, who it appears entered the lodgings of Mr Borrow without being accompanied by any one, has been unable to confirm by evidence what he alleged in his official report, or to produce the testimony of any one in support of it.

"This being the case the judge has declared and the Territorial Court approved the superceding of the cause, putting Mr Borrow immediately at complete liberty, with the express declaration that the arrest he has suffered in no wise affects his honor and good fame, and

that the '*celador* of Public Security,' Don Pedro Martin de Eugenio, be admonished for the future to proceed in the discharge of his duty with proper respect and circumspection according to the condition and character of the persons whom he has to address.

"In accordance with the judicial decision and anxious to give satisfaction to Mr Borrow, correcting at the same time the fault of the Agent of Police in having presented himself without being accompanied by any person in order to effect the seizure in the lodging of Mr Borrow, Her Majesty has thought proper to command that the aforesaid Don Pedro Martin de Eugenio be suspended from his office for the space of Four Months, an order which I shall communicate to the Minister of the Interior, and that Mr Borrow be indemnified for the expenses which may have been incurred by his lodging in the apartment of the Alcaide (chief gaoler or Governor) for the days of his detention, although even before the expiration of 24 hours after his arrest he was permitted to return to his house under his word of honor during the judicial proceedings, as I stated to you in my note already cited. I flatter myself that in this determination you as well as your

> Government will see a fresh proof of the desire which animates that of H.M. the Queen Regent to maintain and draw closer the relation of friendship and alliance existing between the two countries. And with respect to the claim advanced by Mr Borrow, and of which you also make mention in Your Note of the 8th inst., I ought to declare to you that when the Judge of First Instance received official information of the said claim the business was already concluded in his tribunal, and consequently there was nothing to be done. Without, for this reason, there being understood any innovation with respect to the matter of privilege (*fuero*) according as it is now established." [246a]

Borrow was liberated with unsullied honour on 12th May, after twelve days' imprisonment. He refused the compensation that Sir George Villiers had made a condition, and later wrote to the Bible Society asking that there might be deducted from the amount due to him the expenses of the twelve days. He states also that he refused to acquiesce in the dismissal of the Agent of Police, by which he doubtless means his suspension, giving as a reason that there might be a wife and family likely to suffer. In any case the man was only carrying out his instructions. Borrow's reason for refusing the payment of his expenses was that he was unwilling to afford them, the Spanish Government, an opportunity of saying that after they

had imprisoned an Englishman unjustly, and without cause, he condescended to receive money at their hands. [246b]

The greatest loss to Borrow, consequent upon his imprisonment, no government could make good. His faithful Basque, Francisco, had contracted typhus, or gaol fever, that was raging at the time, and died within a few days of his master's release. "A more affectionate creature never breathed," Borrow wrote to Mr Brandram. The poor fellow, who, "to the strength of a giant joined the disposition of a lamb . . . was beloved even in the *patio* of the prison, where he used to pitch the bar and wrestle with the murderers and felons, always coming off victor." [247a] The next day Antonio presented himself at Borrow's lodging, and without invitation or comment assumed the duties he had relinquished in order that he might enjoy the excitements of change. "Who should serve you now but myself?" he asked when questioned as to the meaning of his presence, "N'est pas que le sieur François est mort!" [247b]

John Hasfeldt's comment on his friend's imprisonment was characteristic. In September 1838 he wrote:—

> "The very last I heard of you is that you have had the great good fortune to be stopping in the *carcel de corte* at Madrid, which pleasing intelligence I found in the *Preussiche Staats-Zeitung* this last spring. If you were fatter no doubt the monks would have got up an *Auto de Fé* on your behalf, and you might easily have become a nineteenth-century

martyr. Then your strange life would have been hawked about the streets of London for one penny, though you never obtained a fat living to eat and drink and take your ease after all the hardships you have endured."

CHAPTER XVI
MAY–JULY 1838

BORROW was now to enter upon that lengthy dispute with the Bible Society that almost brought about an open breach, and eventually proved the indirect cause that led to the severance of their relations. Graydon's mistake lay in not contenting himself with printing and distributing the Scriptures, of which he succeeded in getting rid of an enormous quantity. He had advertised his association with the Bible Society and proclaimed Borrow as a colleague, and the authorities at Madrid were not greatly to blame for being unable to distinguish between the two men. Whereas Graydon and Rule, who was also extremely obnoxious to the Spanish Clergy, were safe at Gibraltar or generally within easy reach of it, Borrow was in the very midst of the enemy. He was not unnaturally furiously angry at the situation that he conceived to have been brought about by these evangelists in the south. He referred to Graydon as the Evil Genius of the Society's Cause in Spain.

It may be felt that Borrow was a prejudiced witness, he had every reason for being so; but a despatch from Sir George Villiers to the Consul at Malaga shows clearly how the British Minister viewed Lieutenant Graydon's indiscretion:

> "You will communicate Count Ofalia's note to Mr Graydon," he writes, "and tell him from me that, feeling as I do a lively interest in the success of his mission, I cannot but regret that he should have published his opinions upon the Catholic religion and clergy in a form which should render inevitable the interference of ecclesiastical authority. I have no doubt that Mr Graydon, in the pursuit of the meritorious task he has undertaken, is ready to endure persecution, but he should bear in mind that it will not lead him to success in this country, where prejudices are so inveterate, and at this moment, when party spirit disfigures even the best intentions. Unless Mr Graydon proceeds with the utmost circumspection it will be impossible for me, with the prospect of good result, to defend his conduct with the Government, for no foreigner has a right, however laudable may be his object, to seek the attainment of that object by infringing the laws of the country in which he resides." [249]

In writing to Mr Brandram, Borrow pointed out that

although he had travelled extensively in Spain and had established many depôts for the sale of the Scriptures, not one word of complaint had been transmitted to the Government. He had been imprisoned; but he had the authority of Count Ofalia for saying that it was not on account of his own, but rather of the action of others. Furthermore the Premier had advised him to endeavour to make friends among the clergy, and for the present at least make no further effort to promote the actual sale of the New Testament in Madrid.

On the day following his release from prison (13th May) Borrow, after being sent for by the British Minister, wrote to Mr Brandram as follows:—

> "Sir George has commanded me . . . to write to the following effect:—Mr Graydon must leave Spain, or the Bible Society must publicly disavow that his proceedings receive their encouragement, unless they wish to see the Sacred book, which it is their object to distribute, brought into universal odium and contempt. He has lately been to Malaga, and has there played precisely the same part which he acted last year at Valencia, with the addition that in printed writings he has insulted the Spanish Government in the most inexcusable manner. A formal complaint of his conduct has been sent up from Malaga, and a copy of one of his writings. Sir George blushed when he saw it, and informed Count Ofalia that any steps which might be taken

> towards punishing the author would receive no impediment from him. I shall not make any observation on this matter farther than stating that I have never had any other opinion of Mr Graydon than that he is insane—insane as the person who for the sake of warming his own hands would set a street on fire. Sir George said to-day that he (Graydon) was the cause of my *harmless* shop being closed at Madrid and also of my imprisonment. The Society will of course communicate with Sir George on the subject, I wash my hands of it."

On 23rd May Borrow wrote again to Mr Brandram:

> "In the name of the *Most Highest* take steps for preventing that miserable creature Graydon from ruining us all." Borrow's use of the term "insane" with regard to Graydon was fully justified. The Rev. W. H. Rule wrote to him on 14th May:
>
> "Our worthy brother Graydon is, I suppose, in Granada. I overtook him in Cartagena, endured the process of osculation, saw him without rhime or reason wrangle with and publicly insult our Consul there. Had his company in the steamer to Almeria, much to my discomfort. Never was a man fuller of love and impudence, compounded in the most provoking

> manner. In Malaga, just as we were to part, he broke out into a strain highly disagreeable, and I therefore thought it a convenient occasion to tell him that I should have no more to do with him. I left him dancing and raving like an energumen."

This letter Borrow indiscreetly sent to Mr Brandram, much to Mr Rule's regret, who wrote to Mr Brandram, saying that whilst he had nothing to retract, he would not have written for the eyes of the Bible Society's Committee what he had written to Borrow. To Mr Rule Lieut. Graydon was "a good man, or at least a well-meaning [one], who has not the balance of judgment and temper necessary for the situation he occupies." He was given to "the promulgation of Millenianism," and to calling the Bible "the true book of the Constitution."

Mann had confirmed all the rumours current about Graydon. In order to remove from his shoulders "the burden of obloquy," Borrow's first act on leaving prison was to publish in the *Correo Nacional* an advertisement disclaiming, in the name of the Bible Society, any writings which may have been circulated tending to lower the authorities, civil and ecclesiastical, in the eyes of the people. He denied that it was the Society's intention or wish to make proselytes from the Roman Catholic form of worship, and that it was at all times prepared to extend the hand of brotherhood to the Spanish clergy. This notice was signed "George Borrow, Sole authorised Agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Spain."

El Gazeta Oficial in commenting on the situation, saw

in the anti-Catholic tracts circulated by Graydon "part of the monstrous plan, whose existence can no longer be called in question, concocted by the enemies of all public order, for the purpose of inaugurating on our unhappy soil a *social* revolution, just as the political one is drawing to a close." The Government was urged to allow no longer these attacks upon the religion of the country. Rather illogically the article concludes by paying a tribute to the Bible Society, "considered not under the religious but the social aspect." After praising its prudence for "accommodating itself to the civil and ecclesiastical laws of each country, and by adopting the editions there current," it concludes with the sophisticated argument that, "if the great object be the propagation of evangelic maxims, the notes are no obstacle, and by preserving them we fulfil our religious principle of not permitting to private reason the interpretation of the Sacred Word."

The General Committee expressed themselves, somewhat enigmatically, it must be confessed, as in no way surprised at this article, being from past experience learned enough in the ways of Rome to anticipate her.

> "That advertisement," Borrow wrote six months later in his Report that was subsequently withdrawn, "gave infinite satisfaction to the liberal clergy. I was complimented for it by the Primate of Spain, who said I had redeemed my credit and that of the Society, and it is with some feeling of pride that I state that it choked and prevented the publication of a series of terrible essays against the

> Bible Society, which were intended for the Official Gazette, and which were written by the Licentiate Albert Lister, the editor of that journal, the friend of Blanco White, and the most talented man in Spain. These essays still exist in the editorial drawer, and were communicated to me by the head manager of the royal printing office, my respected friend and countryman Mr Charles Wood, whose evidence in this matter and in many others I can command at pleasure. In lieu of which essays came out a mild and conciliatory article by the same writer, which, taking into consideration the country in which it was written, and its peculiar circumstances, was an encouragement to the Bible Society to proceed, although with secrecy and caution; yet this article, sadly misunderstood in England, gave rise to communications from home highly mortifying to myself and ruinous to the Bible cause."

Borrow had written from prison to Mr Brandram [252] telling him that it had "pleased God to confer upon me the highest of mortal honors, the privilege of bearing chains for His sake." After describing how it had always been his practice, before taking any step, to consult with Sir George Villiers and receive his approval, and that the present situation had not been brought about by any rashness on his, Borrow's, part, he proceeds to convey the following curious

piece of information that must have caused some surprise at Earl Street:—

> "I will now state a fact, which speaks volumes as to the state of affairs at Madrid. My arch-enemy, the Archbishop of Toledo, the primate of Spain, wishes to give me the kiss of brotherly Peace. He has caused a message to be conveyed to me in my dungeon, assuring me that he has had no share in causing my imprisonment, which he says was the work of the Civil Governor, who was incited to the step by the Jesuits. He adds that he is determined to seek out my persecutors amongst the clergy, and to have them punished, and that when I leave prison he shall be happy to co-operate with me in the dissemination of the Gospel!! I cannot write much now, for I am not well, having been bled and blistered. I must, however, devote a few lines to another subject, but not one of rejoicing or Christian exultation. Mann arrived just after my arrest, and visited me in prison, and there favoured me with a scene of despair, abject despair, which nearly turned my brain. I despised the creature, God forgive me, but I pitied him; for he was without money and expected every moment to be seized like myself and

> incarcerated, and he is by no means anxious to be invested with the honors of martyrdom."

That the Primate of Spain should have sent to Borrow such a message is surprising; but what is still more so is that six days later Borrow wrote telling Mr Brandram that he had asked a bishop to arrange an interview between him and the Archbishop of Toledo, and Sir George Villiers, who was present, begged the same privilege. [253] On 23rd May Borrow wrote again to Mr Brandram: "I have just had an interview with the Archbishop. It was satisfactory to a degree I had not dared to hope for." In his next letter (25th May) he writes:

> "I have had, as you are aware, an interview with the Archbishop of Toledo. I have not time to state particulars, but he said amongst other things, 'Be prudent, the Government are disposed to arrange matters amicably, and I am disposed to co-operate with them.' At parting he shook me most kindly by the hand saying that he liked me. Sir George intends to visit him in a few days. He is an old, venerable-looking man, between seventy and eighty. When I saw him he was dressed with the utmost simplicity, with the exception of a most splendid amethyst ring, the lustre of which was truly dazzling."

There is only one conclusion to be drawn from this archiepiscopal condescension, if the interview were

not indeed sought by Borrow, that it was a political move to pacify the wounded feelings of an outraged Englishman at a time when the goodwill of England was as necessary to the kingdom of Spain as the sun itself.

The upshot of the Malaga Incident was that "the Spanish Government resolved to put an end to Bible transactions in Spain, and forthwith gave orders for the seizure of all the Bibles and Testaments in the country, wherever they might be deposited or exposed for sale. They notified Sir George Villiers of the decision, expressly stating that the resolution was taken in consequence of the '*Ocurrido en Malaga*.'" [254a] The letter in which Sir George Villiers was informed of the Government's decision runs as follows:—

MADRID, 19*th May* 1838.

SIR,

I have the honor to inform You that in consequence of what has taken place at Malaga and other places, respecting the publication and sale of the Bible translated by Padre Scio, which are not complete (since they do not contain all the Books which the Catholic Church recognises as Canonical) nor even being complete could they be printed unless furnished with the Notes of the said Padre Scio, according to the existing regulations; Her Majesty has thought proper to prevent this publication and sale, but without insulting or molesting those British Subjects who

> for some time past have been introducing them into the Kingdom and selling them at the lowest prices, thinking they were conferring a benefit when in reality they were doing an injury.
>
> I have also to state to You that in order to carry this Royal determination into effect, orders have been issued to prohibit its being printed in Spain, in the vulgar tongue, unless it should be the entire Bible as recognised by the Catholic Church with corresponding Notes, preventing its admittance at the Frontiers, as is the case with books printed in Spanish abroad; that the Bibles exposed for public sale be seized and given to their owners in a packet marked and sealed, upon the condition of its being sent out of the country through the Custom Houses on the Frontier or at the Ports.
>
> I avail myself, etc., etc.
>
> THE COUNT OF OFALIA. [255a]

Borrow and Graydon were advised of this inhibition, and both ordered their establishments for the sale of books to be closed, thus showing that they were "Gentlemen who are animated with due respect for the Laws of Spain." [255b] At Valladolid, Santiago, Orviedo, Pontevedra, Seville, Salamanca, and Malaga the decree was at once enforced. On learning that the books at his depôts had all been seized, Borrow became apprehensive for the safety of his Madrid

stock of New Testaments, some three thousand in number. He accordingly had them removed, under cover of darkness, to the houses of his friends.

Borrow was not the man to accept defeat, and he wrote to Mr Brandram with great cheerfulness:

> "This, however, gives me little uneasiness, for, with the blessing of God, I shall be able to repair all, always provided I am allowed to follow my own plans, and to avail myself of the advantages which have lately been opened—especially to cultivate the kind feeling lately manifested towards me by the principal Spanish clergy." [255c]

Later he wrote:

> "Another bitter cup has been filled for my swallowing. The Bible Society and myself have been accused of blasphemy, sedition, etc. A collection of tracts has been seized in Murcia, in which the Catholic religion and its dogmas are handled with the most abusive severity; [256a] these books have been sworn to as having been left *by the Committee of the Bible Society whilst in that town*, and Count Ofalia has been called upon to sign an order for my arrest and banishment from Spain. Sir George, however, advises me to remain quiet and not to be alarmed, as he will answer for my

innocence." [256b]

Borrow strove to galvanise the General Committee into action. The Spanish newspapers were inflamed against the Society as a sectarian, not a Christian institution. "Zeal is a precious thing," he told Mr Brandram, "when accompanied with one grain of common sense." The theme of his letters was the removal of Graydon. "Do not be cast down," he writes; "all will go well if the stumbling block [Graydon] be removed."

Borrow's state of mind may well be imagined, and if by his impulsive letters he unwittingly harmed his own cause at Earl Street, he did so as a man whose liberty, perhaps his life even, was being jeopardised, although not deliberately, by another whom the reforming spirit seemed likely to carry to any excess. It must be admitted that for the time being Borrow had forgotten the idiom of Earl Street.

The president (a bishop) of the body of ecclesiastics that was engaged in examining the Society's Spanish Bible, communicated with Borrow, through Mr Charles Wood, the suggestion that "the Committee of the Bible Society should in the present exigency draw up an exposition of their views respecting Spain, stating what they are prepared to do and what they are not prepared to do; above all, whether in seeking to circulate the Gospel in this Country they harbour any projects hostile to the Government or the established religion; moreover, whether the late distribution of tracts was done by their connivance or authority, and whether they are disposed to sanction in future the publication in Spain of such a class of writings." [257a]

Borrow was of the opinion that this should be done,

although he would not take upon himself to advise the Committee upon such a point, he merely remarked that "the Prelate in question is a most learned and respectable man, and one of the warmest of our friends." [257b] The Society very naturally declined to commit itself to any such undertaking. It would not have been quite logical or conceivable that a Protestant body should give a guarantee that it harboured no projects hostile to Rome.

Undeterred by the official edict against the circulation in Spain of the Scriptures, Borrow wrote to Mr Brandram (14th June):

> "I should wish to make another Biblical tour this summer, until the storm be blown over. Should I undertake such an expedition, I should avoid the towns and devote myself entirely to the peasantry. I have sometimes thought of visiting the villages of the Alpujarra Mountains in Andalusia, where the people live quite secluded from the world; what do you think of my project?"

All this time Borrow had heard nothing from Earl Street as to the effect being produced there by his letters. On 15th or 16th June he received a long letter from Mr Brandram enclosing the Resolutions of the General Committee with regard to the crisis. They proved conclusively that the officials failed entirely to appreciate the state of affairs in Spain, and the critical situation of their paid and accredited agent, George Borrow. Their pride had probably been wounded by Borrow's impetuous requests, that

might easily have appeared to them in the light of commands. It may have struck some that the Spanish affairs of the Society were being administered from Madrid, and that they themselves were being told, not what it was expedient to do, but what they *must* do. Another factor in the situation was the Committee's friendliness for their impulsive, unsalaried servant Lieut. Graydon, who was certainly a picturesque, almost melodramatic figure. In any case the letter from Mr Brandram that accompanied the Resolutions was couched in a strain of fair play to Graydon that became a thinly disguised partizanship. At the meeting of the Committee held on 28th May the following Resolutions had been adopted:—

> *First*.—"That Mr Borrow be requested to inform Sir George Villiers that this Committee have written to Mr Graydon through their Secretary, desiring him to leave Spain on account of his personal safety."
>
> *Second*.—"That Mr Borrow be informed that in the absence of specific documents, this Committee cannot offer any opinion on the proceedings of Mr Graydon, and that therefore he be desired to obtain, either in original or copy, the objectionable papers alleged to have been issued by Mr Graydon and to transmit them hither."
>
> *Third*.—"That Mr Borrow be requested not to repeat the

> Advertisement contained in the *Corréo Nacional* of the 17th inst., and that he be cautioned how he commits the Society by advertisements of a similar character. And further, that he be desired to state to Sir George Villiers that the advertisement in question was inserted by him on the spur of the moment, and without any opportunity of obtaining instructions from this Committee."

In justice to the Committee, it must be said that they did not appreciate the delicacy of the situation, being only Christians and not diplomatists. Perhaps they were unaware that the *whole of Spain was under martial law*, or if they were, the true significance of the fact failed to strike them. Mr Brandram's letter accompanying these Resolutions is little more than an amplification of the Committee's decision:

> "I have, I assure you," he writes, "endeavoured to place myself in your situation and enter into your feelings strongly excited by the irreparable mischief which you suppose Mr G. to have done to our cause so dear to you. Under the influence of these feelings you have written with, what appears to us, unmitigated severity of his conduct. But now, let me entreat you to enter into our feelings a little, and to consider what we owe to Mr Graydon. If we have at times thought him imprudent, we have

> seen enough in him to make us both admire and love him. He has ever approved himself as an upright, faithful, conscientious, indefatigable agent; one who has shrunk from no trials and no dangers; one who has gone through in our service many and extraordinary hardships. What have we against him at present? He has issued certain documents of a very offensive character, as is alleged. We have not seen them, neither does it appear that you have, but that you speak from the recollections of Mr Sothern." [259]

The letter goes on to say that if it can be shown that Lieut. Graydon is acting in the same manner as he did in Valencia, for which he was admonished,

> "he will assuredly be recalled on this ground. You wonder perhaps that we for a moment doubt the fact of his reiterated imprudence; but *audi alteram partem* must be our rule—and besides, on reviewing the Valencia proceedings, we draw a wide distinction. Had he been as free, as you suppose him to be, of the trammels of office in our service, many would say and think that he was prefectly at liberty to act and speak as he did of the Authorities, if he chose to take the consequences. Really in such a country it is no marvel if his Spirit has been stirred within him! Will you allow me to

> remind you of the strong things in your own letter to the Valencia ecclesiastic, the well pointed and oft repeated Væ!"

Mr Brandram points out that strong language is frequently the sword of the Reformer, and that there are times when it has the highest sanction; but

> "the judgment of all [the members of the Committee] will be that an Agent of the Bible Society is a Reformer, not by his preaching or denouncing, but by the distribution of the Bible. If Mr G's. conduct is no worse than it was in Valencia," the letter continues, rather inconsistently, in the light of the assurance in the early part that recall would be the punishment for another such lapse into indiscretion, "you must not expect anything beyond a qualified disavowal of it, and that simply as unbecoming an Agent of such a Society as ours.
>
> "After what I have written, you will hardly feel surprised that our Committee could not quite approve of your Advertisement. We have ever regarded Mr Graydon as much our Agent as yourself. In three of our printed reports in succession we make no difference in speaking of you both. We are anxious to do nothing to weaken your hands at so important a crisis, and we conceive

> that the terms we have employed in our Resolution are the mildest we could have used. Do not insert the Advertisement a second time. Let it pass; let it be forgotten. If necessary we shall give the public intimation that Mr G. was, but is not our agent any longer. Remember, we entreat you, the very delicate position that such a manifesto places us in, as well as the effect which it may have on Mr Graydon's personal safety. We give you full credit for believing it was your duty, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, to take so decided and bold a step, and that you thought yourself fully justified by the distinction of salaried and unsalaried Agent, in speaking of yourself as the alone accredited Agent of the Society. Possibly when you reflect a little upon the matter you may view it in another light. There are besides some sentiments in the Advertisement which we cannot perhaps fully accord with . . . If to our poor friend there has befallen the saddest of all calamities to which you allude, should we not speak of him with all tenderness. If he be insane I believe much of it is to be attributed to that entire devotion with which he has devoted himself to our work."

No complaint can be urged against the Committee

for refusing to condemn one of their agents unheard, and without documentary evidence; but it was strange that they should pass resolutions that contained no word of sympathy with Borrow for his sufferings in a typhus-infested prison. It is even more strange that the covering letter should refer to Graydon's sufferings and hardships and the danger to his person, without apparently realising that Borrow *had actually* suffered what the Committee feared that Graydon *might* suffer. There is no doubt that Borrow's impulsive letters had greatly offended everybody at Earl Street, where Lieut. Graydon appears to have been extremely popular; and the few words of sympathy with Borrow that might have saved much acrimonious correspondence were neither resolved nor written.

The other side of the picture is shown in a vigorous passage from Borrow's Report, which was afterwards withdrawn:

> "A helpless widow [the mother of Don Pascual Mann] was insulted, her liberty of conscience invaded, and her only son incited to rebellion against her. A lunatic [Lieut. Graydon] was employed as the *repartidor*, or distributor, of the Blessed Bible, who, having his head crammed with what he understood not, ran through the streets of Valencia crying aloud that Christ was nigh at hand and would appear in a short time, whilst advertisements to much the same effect were busily circulated, in which the name, the noble name, of

> the Bible Society was prostituted; whilst the Bible, exposed for sale in the apartment of a public house, served for little more than a decoy to the idle and curious, who were there treated with incoherent railings against the Church of Rome and Babylon in a dialect which it was well for the deliverer that only a few of the audience understood. But I fly from these details, and will now repeat the consequences of the above proceedings to myself; for I, I, and only I, as every respectable person in Madrid can vouch, have paid the penalty for them all, though as innocent as the babe who has not yet seen the light."

If the General Committee at a period of anxiety and annoyance failed to pay tribute to Borrow's many qualities, the official historian of the Society makes good the omission when he describes him as "A strange, impulsive, more or less inflammable creature as he must have occasionally seemed to the Secretaries and Editorial Superintendent, he had proved himself a man of exceptional ability, energy, tact, prudence—above all, a man whose heart was in his work." [262]

Borrow's acknowledgment of the Resolutions was dated 16th June. It ran:—

> "I have received your communication of the 30th ult. containing the resolutions of the Committee, to which I shall of

course attend.

“Of your letter in general, permit me to state that I reverence the spirit in which it is written, and am perfectly disposed to admit the correctness of the views which it exhibits; but it appears to me that in one or two instances I have been misunderstood in the letters which I have addressed [to you] on the subject of Graydon.

“I bear this unfortunate gentleman no ill will, God forbid, and it will give me pain if he were reprimanded publicly or privately; moreover, I can see no utility likely to accrue from such a proceeding. All that I have stated hitherto is the damage which he has done in Spain to the cause and myself, by the—what shall I call it?—imprudence of his conduct; and the idea which I have endeavoured to inculcate is the absolute necessity of his leaving Spain instantly.

“Take now in good part what I am about to say, and O! do not misunderstand me! I owe a great deal to the Bible Society, and the Bible Society owes nothing to me. I am well aware and am always disposed to admit that it can find thousands more zealous, more active, and in every respect more adapted to transact its affairs and

watch over its interests; yet, with this consciousness of my own inutility, I must be permitted to state that, linked to a man like Graydon, I can no longer consent to be, and that if the Society expect such a thing, I must take the liberty of retiring, perhaps to the wilds of Tartary or the Zingani camps of Siberia.

"My name at present is become public property, no very enviable distinction in these unhappy times, and neither wished nor sought by myself. I have of late been subjected to circumstances which have rendered me obnoxious to the hatred of those who never forgive, the Bloody Church of Rome, which I have [no] doubt will sooner or later find means to accomplish my ruin; for no one is better aware than myself of its fearful resources, whether in England or Spain, in Italy or in any other part. I should not be now in this situation had I been permitted to act alone. How much more would have been accomplished, it does not become me to guess.

"I had as many or more difficulties to surmount in Russia than I originally had here, yet all that the Society expected or desired was effected, without stir or noise, and that in the teeth of an imperial

Ukase which forbade the work which I was employed to superintend.

"Concerning my late affair, I must here state that I was sent to prison on a charge which was subsequently acknowledged not only to be false but ridiculous; I was accused of uttering words disrespectful towards the *Gefé Politico* of Madrid; my accuser was an officer of the police, who entered my apartment one morning before I was dressed, and commenced searching my papers and flinging my books into disorder. Happily, however, the people of the house, who were listening at the door, heard all that passed, and declared on oath that so far from mentioning the *Gefé Politico*, I merely told the officer that he, the officer, was an insolent fellow, and that I would cause him to be punished. He subsequently confessed that he was an instrument of the Vicar General, and that he merely came to my apartment in order to obtain a pretence for making a complaint. He has been dismissed from his situation and the Queen [Regent] has expressed her sorrow at my imprisonment. If there be any doubt entertained on the matter, pray let Sir George Villiers be written to!

"I should be happy to hear what

> success attends our efforts in China. I hope a prudent conduct has been adopted; for think not that a strange and loud language will find favour in the eyes of the Chinese; and above all, I hope that we have not got into war with the Augustines and their followers, who, if properly managed, may be of incalculable service in propagating the Scriptures . . . *P.S.*—The Documents, or some of them, shall be sent as soon as possible."

Nine days later (25th June) Borrow wrote:

> "I now await your orders. I wish to know whether I am at liberty to pursue the course which may seem to me best under existing circumstances, and which at present appears to be to mount my horses, which are neighing in the stable, and once more betake myself to the plains and mountains of dusty Spain, and to dispose of my Testaments to the muleteers and peasants. By doing so I shall employ myself usefully, and at the same time avoid giving offence. Better days will soon arrive, which will enable me to return to Madrid and reopen my shop, till then, however, I should wish to pursue my labours in comparative obscurity."

Replying to Borrow's letter of 16th June, Mr Brandram wrote (29th June): "I trust we shall not

easily forget your services in St Petersburg, but suffer me to remind you that when you came to the point of distribution your success ended." [265a] This altogether unworthy remark was neither creditable to the writer nor to the distinguished Society on whose behalf he wrote. Borrow had done all that a man was capable of to distribute the books. His reply was dignified and effective.

> "It was unkind and unjust to taunt me with having been unsuccessful in distributing the Scriptures. Allow me to state that no other person under the same circumstances would have distributed the tenth part; yet had I been utterly unsuccessful, it would have been wrong to check me with being so, after all I have undergone, and with how little of that are you acquainted." [265b]

In response, Mr Brandram wrote (28th July):

> "You have considered that I have taunted you with want of success in St Petersburg. I thought that the way in which I introduced that subject would have prevented any such unpleasant and fanciful impression."

That was all! It became evident to all at Earl Street that a conference between Borrow, the Officials and the General Committee was imperative if the air were to be cleared of the rancour that seemed to increase with each interchange of letters. [265c] Unless something were done, a breach seemed

inevitable, a thing the Society did not appear to desire. When Borrow first became aware that he was wanted at Earl Street for the purpose of a personal conference, he in all probability conceived it to be tantamount to a recall, and he was averse from leaving the field to the enemy.

> "In the name of the Highest," he wrote, [266] "I entreat you all to banish such a preposterous idea; a journey home (provided you intend that I should return to Spain) could lead to no result but expense and the loss of precious time. I have nothing to explain to you which you are not already perfectly well acquainted with by my late letters. I was fully aware at the time I was writing them that I should afford you little satisfaction, for the plain unvarnished truth is seldom agreeable; but I now repeat, and these are perhaps among the last words which I shall ever be permitted to pen, that I cannot approve, and I am sure no Christian can, of the system which has lately been pursued in the large sea-port cities of Spain, and which the Bible Society has been supposed to sanction, notwithstanding the most unreflecting person could easily foresee that such a line of conduct could produce nothing in the end but obloquy and misfortune."

Borrow saw that his departure from Spain would be

construed by his enemies as flight, and that their joy would be great in consequence.

The Spanish authorities were determined if possible to rid the country of missionaries. The *Gazeta Oficial* of Madrid drew attention to the fact that in Valencia there had been distributed thousands of pamphlets "against the religion we profess." Sir George Villiers enquired into the matter and found that there was no evidence that the pamphlets had been written, printed, or published in England; and when writing to Count Ofalia on the subject he informed him that the Bible Society distributed, not tracts or controversial writings, but the Scriptures.

The next move on the part of the authorities was to produce sworn testimony from three people (all living in the same house, by the way) that they had purchased copies of "the New Testament and other Biblical translations at the *Despacho* on 5th May." Borrow was in prison at the time, and his assistant denied the sale. Documents were also produced proving that the imprint on the title-page of the Scio New Testament was false, as at the time it was printed no such printer as Andréas Borrégo (who by the way was the Government printer and at one time a candidate for cabinet rank) lived in Madrid. In drawing the British Minister's attention to these matters, Count Ofalia wrote (31st May):

> "It would be opportune if you would be pleased to advise Mr Borrow that, convinced of the inutility of his efforts for propagating here the translation in the vulgar tongue of Sacred Writings without the forms required by law, he would do much

> better in making use of his talents in some other class of scientifical or literary Works during his residence in Spain, giving up Biblical Enterprises, which may be useful in other countries, but which in this Kingdom are prejudicial for very obvious reasons."

CHAPTER XVII
JULY–NOVEMBER 1838

BORROW'S spirit chafed under this spell of enforced idleness. His horses were neighing in the stable and "Señor Antonio was neighing in the house," as Maria Diaz expressed it; and for himself, Borrow required something more actively stimulating than pen and ink encounters with Mr Brandram. He therefore determined to defy the prohibition and make an excursion into the rural districts of New Castile, offering his Testaments for sale as he went, and sending on supplies ahead. His first objective was Villa Seca, a village situated on the banks of the Tagus about nine leagues from Madrid.

He was aware of the danger he ran in thus disregarding the official decree.

> "I will not conceal from you," he writes to Mr Brandram on 14th July, "that I am playing a daring game, and it is very possible that when I

> least expect it I may be seized, tied to the tail of a mule, and dragged either to the prison of Toledo or Madrid. Yet such a prospect does not discourage me in the least, but rather urges me on to persevere; for I assure you, and in this assertion there lurks not the slightest desire to magnify myself and produce an effect, that I am eager to lay down my life in this cause, and whether a Carlist's bullet or a gaol-fever bring my career to an end, I am perfectly indifferent."

He was not averse from martyrdom; but he objected to being precipitated into it by another man's folly. In his interview with Count Ofalia, he had been solemnly warned that if a second time he came within the clutches of the authorities he might not escape so easily, and had replied that it was "a pleasant thing to be persecuted for the Gospel's sake."

In his decision to make Villa Seca his temporary headquarters, Borrow had been influenced by the fact that it was the home of Maria Diaz, his friend and landlady. Her husband was there working on the land, Maria herself living in Madrid that her children might be properly educated. Borrow left Madrid on 10th July, and on his arrival at Villa Seca he was cordially welcomed by Juan Lopez, the husband of Maria Diaz, who continued to use her maiden name, in accordance with Spanish custom. Lopez subsequently proved of the greatest possible assistance in the work of distribution, shaming both Borrow and Antonio by his energy and powers of

endurance.

The inhabitants of Villa Seca and the surrounding villages of Bargas, Coveja, Villa Luenga, Mocejon, Yunclér eagerly bought up “the book of life,” and each day the three men rode forth in heat so great that “the very *arrieros* frequently fall dead from their mules, smitten by a sun-stroke.” [269a]

It was in Villa Seca that Borrow found “all that gravity of deportment and chivalry of disposition which Cervantes is said to have sneered away” [269b] and there were to be heard “those grandiose expressions which, when met with in the romances of chivalry, are scoffed at as ridiculous exaggerations.” [269c] Borrow so charmed the people of the district with the elaborate formality of his manner, that he became convinced that any attempt to arrest or do him harm would have met with a violent resistance, even to the length of the drawing of knives in his defence.

In less than a week some two hundred Testaments had been disposed of, and a fresh supply had to be obtained from Madrid. Borrow’s methods had now changed. He had, of necessity, to make as little stir as possible in order to avoid an unenviable notoriety. He carefully eschewed advertisements and handbills, and limited himself almost entirely to the simple statement that he brought to the people “the words and life of the Saviour and His Saints at a price adapted to their humble means.” [270a]

It is interesting to note in connection with this period of Borrow’s activities in Spain, that in 1908 one of the sons of Maria Diaz and Juan Lopez was sought out at Villa Seca by a representative of the Bible Society, and interrogated as to whether he

remembered Borrow. Eduardo Lopez (then seventy-four years of age) stated that he was a child of eight [270b] when Borrow lived at the house of his mother; yet he remembers that "*El inglés*" was tall and robust, with fair hair turning grey. Eduardo and his young brother regarded Borrow with both fear and respect; for, their father being absent, he used to punish them for misdemeanours by setting them on the table and making them remain perfectly quiet for a considerable time. The old man remembered that Borrow had two horses whom he called "la Jaca" and "el Mondrágon," and that he used to take to the house of Maria Diaz "his trunk full of books which were beautifully bound." He remembered Borrow's Greek servant, "Antonio Guchino" (the Antonio Buchini of *The Bible in Spain*), who spoke very bad Spanish.

The most interesting of Eduardo Lopez' recollections of Borrow was that he "often recited a chant which nobody understood," and of which the old man could remember only the following fragment:—

> "Sed un la in la en la la
> Sino Mokhamente de resu la."

It has been suggested, [271a] and with every show of probability, that "this is the Moslem *kalimah* or creed which he had heard sung from the minarets":

> "La illaha illa allah
> Wa Muhammad rasoul allah."

Borrow recognised that he must not stay very long in any one place, and accordingly it was his intention, as soon as he had supplied the immediate wants of the Sagra (the plain) of Toledo, "to cross the country

to Aranjuez, and endeavour to supply with the Word the villages on the frontier of La Mancha." [271b] As he was on the point of setting out, however, he received two letters from Mr Brandram, which decided him to return immediately to Madrid instead of pursuing his intended route.

Borrow was informed that if, after consulting with Sir George Villiers, it was thought desirable that he should leave Madrid, he was given a free hand to do so. Furthermore, the President of the Bible Society (Lord Bexley), with whom Mr Brandram had consulted, was of the opinion that Borrow should return home to confer with the Committee. It was clear from the correspondence that nothing short of an interview could remove the very obvious feeling of irritation that existed between Borrow and the Society. In his reply (23rd July), Borrow showed a dignity and calmness of demeanour that had been lacking from his previous letters; and it most likely produced a far more favourable effect at Earl Street than the impassioned protests of the past two months:—

> "My answer will be very brief;" he wrote, "as I am afraid of giving way to my feelings; I hope, however, that it will be to the purpose.
>
> "It is broadly hinted in yours of the 7th that I have made false statements in asserting that the Government, in consequence of what has lately taken place, had come to the resolution of seizing the Bible depôts in various parts of this country. [Borrow had written to Mr

Brandram on 25th June, “The Society are already aware of the results of the visit of our friend to Malaga; all their Bibles and Testaments having been seized throughout Spain, with the exception of my stock in Madrid.”]

“In reply I beg leave to inform you that by the first courier you will receive from the British Legation at Madrid the official notice from Count Ofalia to Sir George Villiers of the seizures already made, and the motives which induced the Government to have recourse to such a measure.

“The following seizures have already been made, though some have not as yet been officially announced:—The Society’s books at Orviedo, Pontevedra, Salamanca, Santiago, Seville, and Valladolid.

“It appears from your letters that the depôts in the South of Spain have escaped. I am glad of it, although it be at my own expense. I see the hand of the Lord throughout the late transactions. He is chastening me; it is His pleasure that the guilty escape and the innocent be punished. The Government gave orders to seize the Bible depôts throughout the country on account of the late scenes at Malaga and Valencia—I have never

been there, yet only *my* depôts are meddled with, as it appears! The Lord's will be done, blessed be the name of the Lord!

"I will write again to-morrow, I shall have then arranged my thoughts, and determined on the conduct which it becomes a Christian to pursue under these circumstances. Permit me, in conclusion, to ask you:

"Have you not to a certain extent been partial in this matter? Have you not, in the apprehension of being compelled to blame the conduct of one who has caused me unutterable anxiety, misery and persecution, and who has been the bane of the Bible cause in Spain, refused to receive the information which it was in *your* power to command? I called on the Committee and yourself from the first to apply to Sir George Villiers; no one is so well versed as to what has lately been going as himself; but no. It was God's will that I, who have risked all and lost *almost* all in the cause, be taunted, suspected, and the sweat of agony and tears which I have poured out be estimated at the value of the water of the ditch or the moisture which exudes from rotten dung; but I murmur not, and hope I shall at all times be willing to bow to the dispensations of the Almighty.

> "Sir George Villiers has returned to England for a short period; you have therefore the opportunity of consulting him. I *will not* leave Spain until the whole affair has been thoroughly sifted. I shall then perhaps appear and bid you an eternal farewell. [273a] Four hundred Testaments have been disposed of in the Sagra of Toledo.
>
> "*P.S.*—I am just returned from the Embassy, where I have had a long interview with that admirable person Lord Wm. Hervey [Chargé d'Affaires during Sir George Villiers' absence]. He has requested me to write him a letter on the point in question, which with the official documents he intends to send to the Secretary of State in order to be laid before the Bible Society. He has put into my hands the last communication from Ofalia [273b] it relates to the seizure of *my* depots at Malaga, Pontevedra, etc. I have not opened it, but send it for your approval."

It is pleasant to record that the Sub-Committee expressed itself as unable to see in Mr Brandram's letter what Borrow saw. There was no intention to convey the impression that he had made false statements, and regret was expressed that he had thought it necessary to apply to the Embassy for confirmation of what he had written. All this Mr Brandram conveyed in a letter dated 6th August. He

continues: “I am now in full possession of all that Mr Graydon has done, and find it utterly impossible to account for that very strong feeling that you have imbibed against him.”

On 20th July Mr Brandram had written that, after consulting with two or three members of the Committee, they all confirmed a wish already expressed that their Agent should not continue to expose himself to such dangers. If, however, he still saw the way open before him,

> “as so pleasantly represented in your letter . . . you need not think of returning . . . Do allow me to suggest to you,” he continues, “to drop allusion to Mr Graydon in your letters. His conduct is not regarded here as you regard it. I could fancy, but perhaps it is all fancy, that you have him in your eye when you tell us that you have eschewed handbills and advertisements. Time has been when you have used them plentifully . . . Sir George Villiers is in England —but I do not know that we shall seek an interview with him—We are afraid of being hampered with the trammels of office.”

The Committee, however, did not endorse Mr Brandram’s view as to Borrow continuing in Spain, and further, they did “not see it right,” the secretary wrote (6th August), “after the confidential communication in which you have been in with the Government, that you should be acting now in such open defiance of it, and putting yourself in such

extreme jeopardy." Later Borrow made reference to the remark about the handbills.

> "It would have been as well," he wrote, "if my respected and revered friend, the writer, had made himself acquainted with the character of my advertisements before he made that observation. There is no harm in an advertisement, if truth, decency and the fear of God are observed, and I believe my own will be scarcely found deficient in any of these three requisites. It is not the use of a serviceable instrument, but its abuse that merits reproof, and I cannot conceive that advertising was abused by me when I informed the people of Madrid that the New Testament was to be purchased at a cheap price in the *Calle del Principe*." [275]

Elsewhere he referred to these same advertisements as "mild yet expressive."

In spite of the strained state of his relations with the Bible Society, Borrow had no intention of remaining in Madrid brooding over his wrongs. Encouraged by the success that had attended his efforts in the Sagra of Toledo, and indifferent to the fact that his renewed activity was known at Toledo, where it was causing some alarm, he determined to proceed to Aranjuez, and, on his arrival there, to be guided by events as to his future movements. Accordingly about 28th July he set out attended by Antonio and Lopez, who had accompanied him from Villa Seca to Madrid, proceeding in the direction of La Mancha,

and selling at every village through which they passed from twenty to forty Testaments. At Aranjuez they remained three days, visiting every house in the town and disposing of about eighty books. It was no unusual thing to see groups of the poorer people gathered round one of their number who was reading aloud from a recently purchased Testament.

Feeling that his enemies were preparing to strike, Borrow determined to push on to the frontier town of Ocaña, beyond which the clergy had only a nominal jurisdiction on account of its being in the hands of the Carlists. Lopez was sent on with between two and three hundred Testaments, and Borrow, accompanied by Antonio, followed later by a shorter route through the hills. As they approached the town, a man, a Jew, stepped out from the porch of an empty house and barred their way, telling them that Lopez had been arrested at Ocaña that morning as he was selling Testaments in the streets, and that the authorities were now waiting for Borrow himself.

Seeing that no good could be done by plunging into the midst of his enemies, who had their instructions from the *corregidor* of Toledo, Borrow decided to return to Aranjuez. This he did, on the way narrowly escaping assassination at the hands of three robbers. The next morning he was rejoined by Lopez, who had been released. He had sold 27 Testaments, and 200 had been confiscated and forwarded to Toledo. The whole party then returned to Madrid.

The unfortunate affair at Ocaña by no means discouraged Borrow. It was his intention “with God’s leave” to “fight it out to the last.” He saw that his

only chance of distributing his store of Testaments lay in visiting the smaller villages before the order to confiscate his books arrived from Toledo. His enemies were numerous and watchful; but Borrow was as cunning as a gypsy and as far-seeing as a Jew. Thinking that his notoriety had not yet crossed the Guadarrama mountains and penetrated into Old Castile, he decided to anticipate it. Lopez was sent ahead with a donkey bearing a cargo of Testaments, his instructions being to meet Borrow and Antonio at La Granja. Failing to find Lopez at the appointed place, Borrow pushed on to Segovia, where he received news that some men were selling books at Abades, to which place he proceeded with three more donkeys laden with books that had been consigned to a friend at Segovia. At Abades Lopez was discovered busily occupied in selling Testaments.

Hearing that an order was about to be sent from Segovia to Abades for the confiscation of his Testaments, Borrow immediately left the town, donkeys, Testaments and all, and for safety's sake passed the night in the fields. The next day they proceeded to the village of Labajos. A few days after their arrival the Carlist leader Balmaceda, at the head of his robber cavalry, streamed down from the pine woods of Soria into the southern part of Old Castile, Borrow "was present at all the horrors which ensued—the sack of Arrevalo, and the forcible entry into Marrin Muñoz and San Cyprian. Amidst these terrible scenes we continued our labours undaunted." [277a] He witnessed what "was not the war of men or even cannibals . . . it seemed a contest of fiends from the infernal pit." Antonio became seized with uncontrollable fear and ran away to Madrid. Lopez soon afterwards disappeared, and, left alone, Borrow

suffered great anxiety as to the fate of the brave fellow. Hearing that he was in prison at Vilallos, about three leagues distant, and in spite of the fact that Balmaceda's cavalry division was in the neighbourhood, Borrow mounted his horse and set off next day (22nd Aug.) alone. He found on his arrival at Vilallos, that Lopez had been removed from the prison to a private house. Disregarding an order from the *corregidor* of Avila that only the books should be confiscated and that the vendor should be set at liberty, the *Alcalde*, at the instigation of the priest, refused to liberate Lopez. It had been hinted to the unfortunate man that on the arrival of the Carlists he was to be denounced as a liberal, which would mean death. "Taking these circumstances into consideration," Borrow wrote, [277b] "I deemed it my duty as a Christian and a gentleman to rescue my unfortunate servant from such lawless hands, and in consequence, defying opposition, I bore him off, though perfectly unarmed, through a crowd of at least one hundred peasants. On leaving the place I shouted 'Viva Isabella Segunda.'"

In this affair Borrow had, not only the approval of Lord William Hervey, but of Count Ofalia also. In all probability the Bible Society has never had, and never will have again, an agent such as Borrow, who on occasion could throw aside the cloak of humility and grasp a two-edged sword with which to discomfit his enemies, and who solemnly chanted the creed of Islam whilst engaged as a Christian missionary. There was something magnificent in his Christianity; it savoured of the Crusades in its pre-Reformation virility. Martyrdom he would accept if absolutely necessary; but he preferred that if martyrs there must be they should be selected from the ranks of the enemy, whilst he, George Borrow, represented

the strong arm of the Lord.

After the Vilallos affair, Borrow returned to Madrid, crossing the Guadarramas alone and with two horses. "I nearly perished there," he wrote to Mr Brandram (1st Sept.), "having lost my way in the darkness and tumbled down a precipice." The perilous journey north had resulted in the sale of 900 Testaments, all within the space of three weeks and amidst scenes of battle and bloodshed.

On his return to Madrid, Borrow found awaiting him the Resolution of the General Committee (6th Aug.), recalling him "without further delay."

> "I will set out for England as soon as possible," he wrote in reply; [278] "but I must be allowed time. I am almost dead with fatigue, suffering and anxiety; and it is necessary that I should place the Society's property in safe and sure custody."

On 1st September he wrote to Mr Brandram that he should "probably be in England within three weeks." Shortly after this he was attacked with fever, and confined to his bed for ten days, during which he was frequently delirious. When the fever departed, he was left very weak and subject to a profound melancholy.

> "I bore up against my illness as long as I could," he wrote, [279a] "but it became too powerful for me. By good fortune I obtained a decent physician, a Dr Hacayo, who had studied medicine in England, and

> aided by him and the strength of my constitution I got the better of my attack, which, however, was a dreadfully severe one. I hope my next letter will be from Bordeaux. I cannot write more at present, for I am very feeble."

The actual date that Borrow left Madrid is not known. He himself gave it as 31st August, [279b] which is obviously inaccurate, as on 19th September he wrote to Mr Brandram: "I am now better, and hope in a few days to be able to proceed to Saragossa, which is the only road open." He travelled leisurely by way of the Pyrenees, through France to Paris, where he spent a fortnight. Of Paris he was very fond; "for, leaving all prejudices aside, it is a magnificent city, well supplied with sumptuous buildings and public squares, unequalled by any town in Europe." [279c] Having bought a few rare books he proceeded to Boulogne, "and thence by steamboat to London," [279d] where in all probability he arrived towards the end of October.

He had "long talks on Spanish affairs" [279e] with his friends at Earl Street, where personal interviews seem to have brought about a much better feeling. The General Committee requested Borrow to put into writing his views as to the best means to be adopted for the future distribution of the Scriptures in Spain. He accordingly wrote a statement, [280] a fine, vigorous piece of narrative, putting his case so clearly and convincingly as to leave little to be said for the unfortunate Graydon. He expressed himself as "eager to be carefully and categorically questioned." This Report appears subsequently to have been withdrawn, probably on the advice of

Borrow's friends, who saw that its uncompromising bluntness of expression would make it unacceptable to the General Committee. It was certainly presented to and considered by the Sub-Committee. Another document was drawn up entitled, "Report of Mr Geo. Borrow on Past and Future Operations in Spain." This reached Earl Street on 28th November. In it Borrow states that as the inhabitants of the cities had not shown themselves well-disposed towards the Scriptures, it would be better to labour in future among the peasantry. It was his firm conviction, he wrote,

> "that every village in Spain will purchase New Testaments, from twenty to sixty, according to its circumstances. During the last two months of his sojourn in Spain he visited about forty villages, and in only two instances was his sale less than thirty copies in each . . . If it be objected to the plan which he has presumed to suggest that it is impossible to convey to the rural districts of Spain the book of life without much difficulty and danger, he begs leave to observe that it does not become a real Christian to be daunted by either when it pleases his Maker to select him as an instrument; and that, moreover, if it be not written that a man is to perish by wild beasts or reptiles he is safe in the den even of the Cockatrice as in the most retired chamber of the King's Palace; and

> that if, on the contrary, he be doomed to perish by them, his destiny will overtake him notwithstanding all the precautions which he, like a blind worm, may essay for his security."

In conclusion Borrow calls attention, without suggesting intimate alliance and co-operation, to the society of the liberal-minded Spanish ecclesiastics, which has been formed for the purpose of printing and circulating the Scriptures in Spanish *without commentary or notes*. This had reference to a movement that was on foot in Madrid, supported by the Primate and the Bishops of Vigo and Joen, to challenge the Government in regard to its attempt to prevent the free circulation of the Scriptures. It was held that nowhere among the laws of Spain is it forbidden to circulate the Scriptures either with or without annotations. The only prohibition being in the various Papal Bulls. Charles Wood was chosen as "the ostensible manager of the concern"; but had it not been for the trouble in the South, Borrow would have been the person selected.

It would have been in every way deplorable had Borrow severed his connection with the Bible Society as a result of the Graydon episode. Borrow had been impulsive and indignant in his letters to Earl Street, Mr Brandram, on the other hand, had been "a little partial," and on one or two occasions must have written hastily in response to Borrow's letters. There is no object in administering blame or directing reproaches when the principals in a quarrel have made up their differences; but there can be no question that the failure of the Officials and Committee of the Bible Society to appreciate the

situation in Spain retarded their work in that country very considerably. This fact is now generally recognised. Mr Canton has admirably summed up the situation when he says:

> "Borrow had his faults, but insincerity and lack of zeal in the cause he had espoused were not among them. Both Sir George Villiers and his successor [during Sir George's visit to England], Lord William Hervey, were satisfied with the propriety of his conduct. Count Ofalia himself recognised his good faith—'*cuia buena fé me es conocida*.' To see his plans thwarted, his work arrested, the objects of the Society jeopardised, and his own person endangered by the indiscretion of others, formed, if not a justification, at least a sufficient excuse for the expression of strong feeling. On the other hand, it was difficult for those at home to ascertain the actual facts of the case, to understand the nicety of the situation, and to arrive at an impartial judgment. Mr Brandram, who in any case would have been displeased with Borrow's unrestrained speech, appears to have suspected that his statements were not free from exaggeration, and that his discretion was not wholly beyond reproach. Happily the tension caused by this painful episode was relieved by Lieut.

Graydon's withdrawal to France in June." [282]

CHAPTER XVIII
DECEMBER 1838–MAY 1839

On 14th December 1838 it was resolved by the General Committee of the Bible Society that Borrow should proceed once more to Spain to dispose of such copies of the Scriptures as remained on hand at Madrid and other depôts established by him in various parts of the country. He left London on the 21st, and sailed from Falmouth two days later, reaching Cadiz on the 31st, after a stormy passage, and on 2nd January he arrived at Seville, "rather indisposed with an old complaint," probably "the Horrors."

In such stirring times to be absent from the country, even for so short a period as two months, meant that on his return the traveller found a new Spain. Borrow learned that the Duke of Frias had succeeded Count Ofalia in September. The Duke had advised the British Ambassador in November that the Spanish authorities were possessed of a quantity of Borrow's Bibles (?New Testaments) that had been seized and taken to Toledo, and that if arrangements were not made for them to be taken out of Spain they would be destroyed. Sir George Villiers had replied that Mr Borrow, who was then out of the country, had been advised of the Duke's notification,

and as soon as word was received from him, the Duke should be communicated with. Then the Duke of Frias in turn passed out of office and was succeeded by another, and so, politically, change followed change.

The Government, however, had no intention of putting itself in the wrong a second time. Great Britain's friendship was of far too great importance to the country to be jeopardised for the mere gratification of imprisoning George Borrow. An order had been sent out to all the authorities that an embargo was to be placed upon the books themselves; but those distributing them were not to be arrested or in any way harmed.

At Seville he found evidences of the activity of the Government in the news that of the hundred New Testaments that he had left with his correspondent there, seventy-six had been seized during the previous summer. Hearing that the books were in the hands of the Ecclesiastical Governor, Borrow astonished that "fierce, persecuting Papist by calling to make enquiries concerning them." The old man treated his visitor to a stream of impassioned invective against the Bible Society and its agent, expressing his surprise that he had ever been permitted to leave the prison in Madrid. Seeing that nothing was to be gained, although he had an absolute right to the books, provided he sent them out of the country, Borrow decided not to press the matter.

On the night of 12th Jan. 1839, he left Seville with the Mail Courier and his escort bound for Madrid, where he arrived on the 16th without accident or incident, although the next Courier traversing the

route was stopped by banditti. It was during this journey, whilst resting for four hours at Manzanares, a large village in La Mancha, that he encountered the blind girl who had been taught Latin by a Jesuit priest, and whom he named "the Manchegan Prophetess." [284] In telling Mr Brandram of the incident, Borrow tactlessly remarked, "what wonderful people are the Jesuits; when shall we hear of an English rector instructing a beggar girl in the language of Cicero?" Mr Brandram clearly showed that he liked neither the remark, which he took as personal, nor the use of the term "prophetess."

On reaching Madrid a singular incident befell Borrow. On entering the arch of the *posada* called La Reyna, he found himself encircled by a pair of arms, and, on turning round, found that they belonged to the delinquent Antonio, who stood before his late master "haggard and ill-dressed, and his eyes seemed starting from their sockets." The poor fellow, who was entirely destitute, had, on the previous night, dreamed that he saw Borrow arrive on a black horse, and, in consequence, had spent the whole day in loitering about outside the *posada*. Borrow was very glad to engage him again, in spite of his recent cowardice and desertion. Borrow once more took up his abode with the estimable Maria Diaz, and one of his first cares was to call on Lord Clarendon (Sir George Villiers had succeeded his uncle as fourth earl), by whom he was kindly received.

A week later, there arrived from Lopez at Villa Seca his "largest and most useful horse," the famous Sidi Habismilk (My Lord the Sustainer of the Kingdom), "an Arabian of high caste . . . the best, I believe, that ever issued from the desert," [285a] Lopez wrote, regretting that he was unable to accompany "The

Sustainer of the Kingdom" in person, being occupied with agricultural pursuits, but he sent a relative named Victoriano to assist in the work of distributing the Gospel.

Borrow's plan was to make Madrid his headquarters, with Antonio in charge of the supplies, and visit all the villages and hamlets in the vicinity that had not yet been supplied with Testaments. He then proposed to turn eastward to a distance of about thirty leagues.

> "I have been very passionate in prayer," he writes, [285b] "during the last two or three days; and I entertain some hope that the Lord has condescended to answer me, as I appear to see my way with considerable clearness. It may, of course, prove a delusion, and the prospects which seem to present themselves may be mere palaces of clouds, which a breath of wind is sufficient to tumble into ruin; therefore bearing this possibility in mind it behoves me to beg that I may be always enabled to bow meekly to the dispensations of the Almighty, whether they be of favour or severity."

Mr Brandram's comment on this portion of Borrow's letter is rather suggestive of deliberate fault-finding.

> "May your 'passionate' prayers be answered," he writes. [286] "You see I remark your unusual word—very

> significant it is, but one rather fitted for the select circle where 'passion' is understood in its own full sense—and not in the restricted meaning attached to it ordinarily. Perhaps you will not often meet with a better set of men than those who assembled in Earl Street, but they may not always be open to the force of language, and so unwonted a phrase may raise odd feelings in their minds. Do not be in a passion, will you, for the freedom of my remarks. You will perhaps suppose remarks were made in Committee. This does not happen to be the case, though I fully anticipated it. Mr Browne, Mr Jowett and myself had first privately devoured your letter, and we made our remarks. We could relish such a phrase."

Sometimes there was a suggestion of spite in Mr Brandram's letters. He was obviously unfriendly towards Borrow during the latter portion of his agency. It was clear that the period of Borrow's further association with the Bible Society was to be limited. If he replied at all to this rather unfair criticism, he must have done so privately to Mr Brandram, as there is no record of his having referred to it in any subsequent letters among the Society's archives.

All unconscious that he had so early offended, Borrow set out upon his first journey to distribute Testaments among the villages around Madrid. Dressed in the manner of the peasants, on his head a

montera, a species of leathern helmet, with jacket and trousers of the same material, and mounted on Sidi Habismilk, he looked so unlike the conventional missionary that the housewife may be excused who mistook him for a pedlar selling soap.

In some villages where the people were without money, they received Testaments in return for refreshing the missionaries. "Is this right?" Borrow enquires of Mr Brandram. The village priests frequently proved of considerable assistance; for when they pronounced the books good, as they sometimes did, the sale became extremely brisk. After an absence of eight days, Borrow returned to Madrid. Shortly afterwards, when on the eve of starting out upon another expedition to Guadalajara and the villages of Alcarria, he received a letter from Victoriano saying that he was in prison at Fuente la Higuera, a village about eight leagues distant. Acting with his customary energy and decision, Borrow obtained from an influential friend letters to the Civil Governor and principal authorities of Guadalajara. He then despatched Antonio to the rescue, with the result that Victoriano was released, with the assurance that those responsible for his detention should be severely punished.

Whilst Victoriano was in prison, Borrow and Antonio had been very successful in selling Testaments and Bibles in Madrid, disposing of upwards of a hundred copies, but entirely to the poor, who "receive the Scriptures with gladness," although the hearts of the rich were hard. The work in and about Madrid continued until the middle of March, when Borrow decided to make an excursion as far as Talavera. The first halt was made at the village of Naval Carnero. Soon after his arrival orders came from Madrid

warning the *alcaldes* of every village in New Castile to be on the look out for the tall, white-haired heretic, of whom an exact description was given, who to-day was in one place and to-morrow twenty leagues distant. No violence was to be offered either to him or to his assistants; but he and they were to be baulked in their purpose by every legitimate means.

Foiled in the rural districts, Borrow instantly determined to change his plan of campaign. He saw that he was less likely to attract notice in the densely-populated capital than in the provinces. He therefore galloped back to Madrid, leaving Victoriano to follow more leisurely. He rejoiced at the alarm of the clergy. "Glory to God!" he exclaims, "they are becoming thoroughly alarmed, and with much reason." [288a] The "reason" lay in the great demand for Testaments and Bibles. A new binding-order had to be given for the balance of the 500 Bibles that had arrived in sheets, or such as had been left of them by the rats, who had done considerable damage in the Madrid storehouse.

It was at this juncture that Borrow's extensive acquaintance with the lower orders proved useful. Selecting eight of the most intelligent from among them, including five women, he supplied them with Testaments and instructions to vend the books in all the parishes of Madrid, with the result that in the course of about a fortnight 600 copies were disposed of in the streets and alleys. A house to house canvass was instituted with remarkable results, for manservant and maidservant bought eagerly of the books. Antonio excelled himself and made some amends for his flight from Labajos, when, like a torrent, the Carlist cavalry descended upon it. Dark

Madrid was becoming illuminated with a flood of Scriptural light. In two of its churches the New Testament was expounded every Sunday evening. Bibles were particularly in demand, a hundred being sold in about three weeks. The demand exceeded the supply. "The Marques de Santa Coloma," Borrow wrote, "has a large family, but every individual of it, old or young, is now in possession of a Bible and likewise of a Testament." [288b]

Borrow appears to have enlisted the aid of other distributors than the eight colporteurs. One of his most zealous agents was an ecclesiastic, who always carried with him beneath his gown a copy of the Bible, which he offered to the first person he encountered whom he thought likely to become a purchaser. Yet another assistant was found in a rich old gentleman of Navarre, who sent copies to his own province.

One night after having retired to bed, Borrow received a visit from a curious, hobgoblin-like person, who gave him grave, official warning that unless he present himself before the *corregidor* on the morrow at eleven A.M., he must be prepared to take the consequences. The hour chosen for this intimation was midnight. On the next day at the appointed time Borrow presented himself before the *corregidor*, who announced that he wished to ask a question. The question related to a box of Testaments that Borrow had sent to Naval Carnero, which had been seized and subsequently claimed on Borrow's behalf by Antonio. In Spain they have the dramatic instinct. If it strike the majestic mind of a *corregidor* at midnight that he would like to see a citizen or a stranger on the morrow about some trifling affair, time or place are not permitted to

interfere with the conveyance of the intimation to the citizen or stranger to present himself before the gravely austere official, who will carry out the interrogation with a solemnity becoming a capital charge.

By the middle of April barely a thousand Testaments remained; these Borrow determined to distribute in Seville. Sending Antonio, the Testaments and two horses with the convoy, Borrow decided to risk travelling with the Mail Courier. For one thing, he disliked the slowness of a convoy, and for another the insults and irritations that travellers had to put up with from the escort, both officers and men. His original plan had been to proceed by Estremadura; but a band of Carlist robbers had recently made its appearance, murdering or holding at ransom every person who fell into its clutches. Borrow wrote:—

> "I therefore deem it wise to avoid, if possible, the alternative of being shot or having to pay one thousand pounds for being set at liberty . . . It is moreover wicked to tempt Providence systematically. I have already thrust myself into more danger than was, perhaps, strictly necessary, and as I have been permitted hitherto to escape, it is better to be content with what it has pleased the Lord to do for me up to the present moment, than to run the risk of offending Him by a blind confidence in His forbearance, which may be over-taxed. As it is, however, at all times best to be frank, I am willing to confess that I

> am what the world calls exceedingly superstitious; perhaps the real cause of my change of resolution was a dream, in which I imagined myself on a desolate road in the hands of several robbers, who were hacking me with their long, ugly knives." [290]

In the same letter, which was so to incur Mr Brandram's disapproval, Borrow tells of the excellent results of his latest plan for disposing of Bibles and Testaments, three hundred and fifty of the former having been sold since he reached Spain. He goes on to explain and expound the difficulties that have been met and overcome, and hopes that his friends at Earl Street will be patient, as it may not be in his power to send "for a long time any flattering accounts of operations commenced there." In conclusion, he assures Mr Brandram that from the Church of Rome he has learned one thing, "*Ever to expect evil, and ever to hope for good.*"

Nothing could have been more unfortunate than the effect produced upon Mr Brandram's mind by this letter.

> "I scarcely know what to say," he writes. "You are in a very peculiar country; you are doubtless a man of very peculiar temperament, and we must not apply common rules in judging either of yourself or your affairs. What, *e.g.*, shall we say to your confession of a certain superstitiousness? It is very frank of you to tell us what you need not

have told; but it sounded very odd when read aloud in a large Committee. Strangers that know you not would carry away strange ideas . . . In bespeaking our patience, there is an implied contrast between your own mode of proceeding and that adopted by others—a contrast this a little to the disadvantage of others, and savouring a little of the praise of a personage called number one . . . Perhaps my vanity is offended, and I feel as if I were not esteemed a person of sufficient discernment to know enough of the real state of Spain . . .

"Bear with me now in my criticisms on your second letter [that of 2nd May]. You narrate your perilous journey to Seville, and say at the beginning of the description: 'My usual wonderful good fortune accompanying us.' This is a mode of speaking to which we are not well accustomed; it savours, some of our friends would say, a little of the profane. Those who know you will not impute this to you. But you must remember that our Committee Room is public to a great extent, and I cannot omit expressions as I go reading on. Pious sentiments may be thrust into letters *ad nauseam*, and it is not for that I plead; but is there not a *via media*? "We are odd people, it may be, in England; we

> are not fond of prophets or 'prophetesses' [a reference to her of La Mancha about whom Borrow had previously been rebuked]. I have not turned back to your former description of the lady whom you have a second time introduced to our notice. Perhaps my wounded pride had not been made whole after the infliction you before gave it by contrasting the teacher of the prophetess with English rectors."

Borrow replied to this letter from Seville on 28th June, and there are indications that before doing so he took time to deliberate upon it.

> "Think not, I pray you," he wrote, "that any observation of yours respecting style, or any peculiarities of expression which I am in the habit of exhibiting in my correspondence, can possibly awaken in me any feeling but that of gratitude, knowing so well as I do the person who offers them, and the motives by which he is influenced. I have reflected on those passages which you were pleased to point out as objectionable, and have nothing to reply further than that I have erred, that I am sorry, and will endeavour to mend, and that, moreover, I have already prayed for assistance to do so. Allow me, however, to offer a word, not in excuse but in explanation of the

> expression ‘wonderful good fortune’ which appeared in a former letter of mine. It is clearly objectionable, and, as you very properly observe, savours of pagan times. But I am sorry to say that I am much in the habit of repeating other people’s sayings without weighing their propriety. The saying was not mine; but I heard it in conversation and thoughtlessly repeated it. A few miles from Seville I was telling the Courier of the many perilous journeys which I had accomplished in Spain in safety, and for which I thank the Lord. His reply was, ‘La mucha suerte de Usted tambien nos ha acompañado en este viage.’”

Thus ended another unfortunate misunderstanding between secretary and agent.

Borrow had taken considerable risk in making the journey to Seville with the Courier. The whole of La Mancha was overrun with the Carlist-banditti, who, “whenever it pleases them, stop the Courier, burn the vehicle and letters, murder the paltry escort which attends, and carry away any chance passenger to the mountains, where an enormous ransom is demanded, which if not paid brings on the dilemma of four shots through the head, as the Spaniards say.” The Courier’s previous journey over the same route had ended in the murder of the escort and the burning of the coach, the Courier himself escaping through the good offices of one of the bandits, who had formerly been his postilion. Borrow was shown the blood-soaked turf and the skull of one of the soldiers. At

Manzanares, Borrow invited to breakfast with him the Prophetess who was so unpopular at Earl Street. Continuing the journey, he reached Seville without mishap, and a few days later Antonio arrived with the horses. It was found that the two cases of Testaments that had been forwarded from Madrid had been stopped at the Seville Customs House, and Borrow had recourse to subterfuge in order to get them and save his journey from being in vain.

> "For a few dollars," he tells Mr Brandram (2nd May), "I procured a *fiador* or person who engaged *that the chests* should be carried down the river and embarked at San Lucar for a foreign land. Yesterday I hired a boat and sent them down, but on the way I landed in a secure place all the Testaments which I intend for this part of the country."

The *fiador* had kept to the letter of his undertaking, and the chests were duly delivered at San Lucar; but a considerable portion of their contents, some two hundred Testaments, had been abstracted, and these had to be smuggled into Seville under the cloaks of master and servant. The officials appear to have treated Borrow with the greatest possible courtesy and consideration, and they told him that his "intentions were known and honored."

Borrow had great hopes of achieving something for the Gospel's sake in Seville; but the operation would be a delicate one. To Mr Brandram he wrote:—

> "Consider my situation here. I am in a city by nature very Levitical, as it

> contains within it the most magnificent and splendidly endowed cathedral of any in Spain. I am surrounded by priests and friars, who know and hate me, and who, if I commit the slightest act of indiscretion, will halloo their myrmidons against me. The press is closed to me, the libraries are barred against me, I have no one to assist me but my hired servant, no pious English families to comfort or encourage me, the British subjects here being ranker papists and a hundred times more bigoted than the Spanish themselves, the Consul, a *renegade Quaker*. Yet notwithstanding, with God's assistance, I will do much, though silently, burrowing like the mole in darkness beneath the ground. Those who have triumphed in Madrid, and in the two Castiles, where the difficulties were seven times greater, are not to be dismayed by priestly frowns at Seville." [293]

On arriving at Seville Borrow had put up at the *Posada de la Reyna*, in the Calle Gimios, and here on 4th May (he had arrived about 24th April) he encountered Lieut.-Colonel Elers Napier. Borrow liked nothing so well as appearing in the *rôle* of a mysterious stranger. He loved mystery as much as a dramatic moment. His admiration of Baron Taylor was largely based upon the innumerable conjectures as to who it was that surrounded his puzzling

personality with such an air of mystery. That May morning Colonel Napier, who was also staying at the *Posada de la Reyna*, was wandering about the galleries overlooking the *patio*. He writes:—

> "whilst occupied in moralising over the dripping water spouts, I observed a tall, gentlemanly-looking man dressed in a *semarra* [*zamarra*, a sheepskin jacket with the wool outside] leaning over the balustrades and apparently engaged in a similar manner with myself . . . From the stranger's complexion, which was fair, but with brilliant black eyes, I concluded he was not a Spaniard; in short, there was something so remarkable in his appearance that it was difficult to say to what nation he might belong. He was tall, with a commanding appearance; yet, though apparently in the flower of manhood, his hair was so deeply tinged with the winter of either age or sorrow as to be nearly snow white." [294a]

Colonel Napier was thoroughly mystified. The stranger answered his French in "the purest Parisian Accent"; yet he proved capable of speaking fluent English, of giving orders to his Greek servant in Romaïc, of conversing "in good Castillian with 'mine host'," and of exchanging salutations in German with another resident at the *fonda*. Later the Colonel had the gratification of startling the Unknown by replying to some remark of his in Hindi; but only momentarily, for he showed himself "delighted on

finding I was an Indian, and entered freely, and with depth and acuteness, on the affairs of the East, most of which part of the world he had visited." [294b]

No one could give any information about "the mysterious Unknown," who or what he was, or why he was travelling. It was known that the police entertained suspicions that he was a Russian spy, and kept him under strict observation. Whatever else he was, Colonel Napier found him "a very agreeable companion." [295]

On the following morning (a Sunday) Colonel Napier and his Unknown set out on horseback on an excursion to the ruins of Italica. As they sat on a ruined wall of the Convent of San Isidoro, contemplating the scene of ruin and desolation around, "the 'Unknown' began to feel the vein of poetry creeping through his inward soul, and gave vent to it by reciting with great emphasis and effect" some lines that the scene called up to his mind.

> "I had been too much taken up with the scene," Colonel Napier continues, "the verses, and the strange being who was repeating them with so much feeling, to notice the approach of a slight female figure, beautiful in the extreme, but whose tattered garments, raven hair, swarthy complexion and flashing eyes proclaimed to be of the wandering tribe of *Gitanos*. From an intuitive sense of politeness, she stood with crossed arms and a slight smile on her dark and handsome countenance until my companion

had ceased, and then addressed us in the usual whining tone of supplication—'*Caballeritos*, *una limosnita*! *Dios se la pagará á ustedes*!'—'Gentlemen, a little charity; God will repay it to you!' The gypsy girl was so pretty and her voice so sweet, that I involuntarily put my hand in my pocket.

"'Stop!' said the Unknown. 'Do you remember what I told you about the Eastern origin of these people? You shall see I am correct.'—'Come here, my pretty child,' said he in Moultanee, 'and tell me where are the rest of your tribe.'

"The girl looked astounded, replied in the same tongue, but in broken language; when, taking him by the arm, she said in Spanish, 'Come, cabellero—come to one who will be able to answer you'; and she led the way down amongst the ruins, towards one of the dens formerly occupied by the wild beasts, and disclosed to us a set of beings scarcely less savage. The sombre walls of the gloomy abode were illumined by a fire the smoke from which escaped through a deep fissure in the mossy roof; whilst the flickering flames threw a blood-red glare on the bronzed features of a group of children, of two men, and a decrepit old hag, who appeared

busily engaged in some culinary preparations.

"On our entrance, the scowling glance of the males of the party, and a quick motion of the hand towards the folds of the 'faja' [a sash in which the Spaniard carries a formidable clasp-knife] caused in me, at least, anything but a comfortable sensation; but their hostile intentions, if ever entertained, were immediately removed by a wave of the hand from our conductress, who, leading my companion towards the sibyl, whispered something in her ear. The old crone appeared incredulous. The 'Unknown' uttered one word; but that word had the effect of magic; she prostrated herself at his feet, and in an instant, from an object of suspicion he became one of worship to the whole family, to whom, on taking leave, he made a handsome present, and departed with their united blessings, to the astonishment of myself and what looked very like terror in our Spanish guide.

"I was, as the phrase goes, dying with curiosity, and as soon as we mounted our horses, exclaimed —'Where, in the name of goodness, did you pick up your acquaintance with the language of those

extraordinary people?'

"'Some years ago, in Moultan,' he replied.

"'And by what means do you possess such apparent influence over them?' But the 'Unknown' had already said more than he perhaps wished on the subject. He drily replied that he had more than once owed his life to gypsies, and had reason to know them well; but this was said in a tone which precluded all further queries on my part. The subject was never again broached, and we returned in silence to the fonda . . . This is a most extraordinary character, and the more I see of him the more am I puzzled. He appears acquainted with everybody and everything, but apparently unknown to every one himself. Though his figure bespeaks youth—and by his own account his age does not exceed thirty [he would be thirty-six in the following July]—yet the snows of eighty winters could not have whitened his locks more completely than they are. But in his dark and searching eye there is an almost supernatural penetration and lustre, which, were I inclined to superstition, might induce me to set down its possessor as a second Melmoth." [297]

CHAPTER XIX
MAY–DECEMBER 1839

BORROW confesses that he was at a loss to know how to commence operations in Seville. He was entirely friendless, even the British Consul being unapproachable on account of his religious beliefs. However, he soon gathered round him some of those curious characters who seemed always to gravitate towards him, no matter where he might be, or with what occupied. Surely the Scriptures never had such a curious assortment of missionaries as Borrow employed? At Seville there was the gigantic Greek, Dionysius of Cephalonia; the "aged professor of music, who, with much stiffness and ceremoniousness, united much that was excellent and admirable"; [298] the Greek bricklayer, Johannes Chysostom, a native of Morea, who might at any time become "the Masaniello of Seville." With these assistants Borrow set to work to throw the light of the Gospel into the dark corners of the city.

Soon after arriving at Seville, he decided to adopt a new plan of living.

> "On account of the extreme dearness of every article at the *posada*," he wrote to Mr Brandram on 12th June, "where, moreover, I had a suspicion that I was being watched [this may have reference to the police suspicion that he was a Russian spy], I removed with my servant and horses to an empty house in a

> solitary part of the town . . . Here I live in the greatest privacy, admitting no person but two or three in whom I had the greatest confidence, who entertain the same views as myself, and who assist me in the circulation of the Gospel."

The house stood in a solitary situation, occupying one side of the Plazuela de la Pila Seca (the Little Square of the Empty Trough). It was a two-storied building and much too large for Borrow's requirements. Having bought the necessary articles of furniture, he retired behind the shutters of his Andalusian mansion with Antonio and the two horses. He lived in the utmost seclusion, spending a large portion of his time in study or in dreamy meditation. "The people here complain sadly of the heat," he writes to Mr Brandram (28th June 1839), "but as for myself, I luxuriate in it, like the butterflies which hover about the *macetas*, or flowerpots, in the court." In the cool of the evening he would mount Sidi Habismilk and ride along the *Dehesa* until the topmost towers of the city were out of sight, then, turning the noble Arab, he would let him return at his best speed, which was that of the whirlwind.

Throughout his work in Spain Borrow had been seriously handicapped by being unable to satisfy the demand for Bibles that met him everywhere he went. In a letter (June) from Maria Diaz, who was acting as his agent in Madrid, [299] the same story is told.

> "The binder has brought me eight Bibles," she writes, "which he has

> contrived to make up out of *the sheets gnawn by the rats*, and which would have been necessary even had they amounted to eight thousand (y era necesario se puvièran vuelto 8000), because the people are innumerable who come to seek more. Don Santiago has been here with some friends, who insisted upon having a part of them. The Aragonese Gentleman has likewise been, he who came before your departure, and bespoke twenty-four; he now wants twenty-five. I begged them to take Testaments, but they would not." [300]

The Greek bricklayer proved a most useful agent. His great influence with his poor acquaintances resulted in the sale of many Testaments. More could have been done had it not been necessary to proceed with extreme caution, lest the authorities should take action and seize the small stock of books that remained.

When he took and furnished the large house in the little square, there had been in Borrow's mind another reason than a desire for solitude and freedom from prying eyes. Throughout his labours in Spain he had kept up a correspondence with Mrs Clarke of Oulton, who, on 15th March, had written informing him of her intention to take up her abode for a short time at Seville.

For some time previously Mrs Clarke had been having trouble about her estate. Her mother (September 1835) and father (February 1836) were

both dead, and her brother Breame had inherited the estate and she the mortgage together with the Cottage on Oulton Broad. Breame Skepper died (May 1837), leaving a wife and six children. In his will he had appointed Trustees, who demanded the sale of the Estate and division of the money, which was opposed by Mrs Clarke as executrix and mortgagee. Later it was agreed between the parties that the Estate should be sold for £11,000 to a Mr Joseph Cator Webb, and an agreement to that effect was signed. Anticipating that the Estate would increase in value, and apparently regretting their bargain, the Trustees delayed carrying out their undertaking, and Mr Webb filed a bill in Chancery to force them to do so. Mrs Clarke's legal advisers thought it better that she should disappear for a time. Hence her letter to Borrow, in replying to which (29th March), he expresses pleasure at the news of his friend's determination "to settle in Seville for a short time—which, I assure you, I consider to be the most agreeable retreat you can select . . . for *there* the growls of your enemies will scarcely reach you." He goes on to tell her that he laughed outright at the advice of her counsellor not to take a house and furnish it.

> "Houses in Spain are let by the day: and in a palace here you will find less furniture than in your cottage at Oulton. Were you to furnish a Spanish house in the style of cold, wintry England, you would be unable to breathe. A few chairs, tables, and mattresses are all that is required, with of course a good stock of bed-linen . . .

> "Bring with you, therefore, your clothes, plenty of bed-linen, etc., half-a-dozen blankets, two dozen knives and forks, a mirror or two, twelve silver table spoons, and a large one for soup, tea things and urn (for the Spaniards never drink tea), a few books, but not many,—and you will have occasion for nothing more, or, if you have, you can purchase it here as cheap as in England."

Borrow's ideas of domestic comfort were those of the old campaigner. For all that, he showed himself very thorough in the directions he gave as to how and where Mrs Clarke should book her passage and obtain "a passport for yourself and Hen." (Henrietta her daughter, now nearly twenty years of age), and the warning he gave that no attempt should be made to go ashore at Lisbon, "a very dangerous place."

On 7th June Mrs Clarke and her daughter Henrietta sailed from London on board the steam-packet *Royal Tar* bound for Cadiz, where they arrived on the 16th, and, on the day following, entered into possession of their temporary home where Borrow was already installed, safe for the time from Mr Webb's Chancery bill. It was no doubt to Mrs and Miss Clarke that Borrow referred when he wrote to Mr Brandram [301] saying that "two or three ladies of my acquaintance occasionally dispose of some [Testaments] amongst their friends, but they say that they experience some difficulty, the cry for Bibles being great."

Borrow continued to reside at 7 Plazuela de la Pila Seca, and Mrs Clarke and Henrietta soon learned

something of the vicissitudes and excitements of a missionary's life. On Sunday, 8th July, as Borrow "happened to be reading the Liturgy," he received a visit from "various *alguacils*, headed by the *Alcade del Barrio*, or headborough, who made a small seizure of Testaments and Gypsy Gospels which happened to be lying about." [302] This circumstance convinced Borrow of the good effect of his labours in and around Seville.

The time had now arrived, however, when the whole of the smuggled Testaments had been disposed of, and there was no object in remaining longer in Seville, or in Spain for that matter. There were books at San Lucar that might without official opposition be shipped out of the country, and Borrow therefore determined to see what could be done towards distributing them among the Spanish residents on the Coast of Barbary. This done, he hoped to return to Spain and dispose of the 900 odd Testaments lying at Madrid. On 18th July he wrote to Mr Brandram:—

> "I should wish to be permitted on my return from my present expedition to circulate some in La Mancha. The state of that province is truly horrible; it appears peopled partly with spectres and partly with demons. There is famine, and such famine; there is assassination and such unnatural assassination [another of Borrow's phrases that must have struck the Committee as odd]. There you see soldiers and robbers, ghastly lepers and horrible and uncouth maimed and blind,

> exhibiting their terrible nakedness in the sun. I was prevented last year in carrying the Gospel amongst them. May I be more successful this."

Antonio had been dismissed, his master being "compelled to send [him] back to Madrid . . . on account of his many irregularities," and in consequence it was alone, on the night of 31st July, that Borrow set out upon his expedition. From Seville he took the steamer to Bonanza, from whence he drove to San Lucar, where he picked up a chest of New Testaments and a small box of St Luke's Gospel in Gitano, with a pass for them to Cadiz. It proved expensive, this claiming of his own property, for at every step there was some fee to be paid or gratuity to be given. The last payment was made to the Spanish Consul at Gibraltar, who claimed and received a dollar for certifying the arrival of books he had not seen.

Borrow was instinctively a missionary, even a great missionary. At the Customs House of San Lucar some questions were asked about the books contained in the cases, and he seized the occasion to hold an informal missionary meeting, with the officials clustered round him listening to his discourse. One of the cases had to be opened for inspection, and the upshot of it was that, to the very officials whose duty it was to see that the books were not distributed in Spain, Borrow sold a number of copies, not only of the Spanish Testament, but of the Gypsy St Luke. Such was the power of his personality and the force of his eloquence.

From San Lucar Borrow returned to Bonanza and again took the boat, which landed him at Cadiz,

where he was hospitably entertained by Mr Brackenbury, the British Consul, who gave him a letter of introduction to Mr Drummond Hay, the Consul-General at Tangier. On 4th August he proceeded to Gibraltar. It was not until the 8th, however, that he was able to cross to Tangier, where he was kindly received by Mr Hay, who found for him a very comfortable lodging.

Taking the Consul's advice, Borrow proceeded with extreme caution. For the first fortnight of his stay he made no effort to distribute his Testaments, contenting himself with studying the town and its inhabitants, occasionally speaking to the Christians in the place (principally Spanish and Genoese sailors and their families) about religious matters, but always with the greatest caution lest the two or three friars, who resided at what was known as the Spanish Convent, should become alarmed. Again Borrow obtained the services of a curious assistant, a Jewish lad named Hayim Ben Attar, who carried the Testaments to the people's houses and offered them for sale, and this with considerable success. On 4th September Borrow wrote to Mr Brandram:—

> "The blessed book is now in the hands of most of the Christians of Tangier, from the lowest to the highest, from the fisherman to the consul. One dozen and a half were carried to Tetuan on speculation, a town about six leagues from hence; they will be offered to the Christians who reside there. Other two dozen are on their way to distant Mogadore. One individual, a tavern keeper, has purchased Testaments to

> the number of thirty, which he says he has no doubt he can dispose of to the foreign sailors who stop occasionally at his house. You will be surprised to hear that several amongst the Jews have purchased copies of the New Testament with the intention, as they state, of improving themselves in Spanish, but I believe from curiosity."

During his stay in Tangier, Borrow had some trouble with the British Vice-Consul, who seems to have made himself extremely offensive with his persistent offers of service. His face was "purple and blue" and in whose blood-shot eyes there was an expression "much like that of a departed tunny fish or salmon," and he became so great an annoyance that Borrow made a complaint to Mr Drummond Hay. This is one of the few instances of Borrow's experiencing difficulty with any British official, for, as a rule, he was extremely popular. In this particular instance, however, the Vice-Consul was so obviously seeking to make profit out of his official position, that there was no other means open to Borrow than to make a formal complaint.

In the case of Mr Drummond Hay, he obtained the friendship of a "true British gentleman." At first the Consul had been reserved and distant, and apparently by no means inclined to render Borrow any service in the furtherance of his mission; but a few days sufficed to bring him under the influence of Borrow's personal magnetism, and he ended by assuring him that he would be happy to receive the Society's commands, and would render all possible assistance, officially or otherwise, to the distribution

of the Scriptures "in Fez or Morocco."

Borrow was thoroughly satisfied with the result of his five weeks' stay in Tangier. He reached Cadiz on his way to Seville on 21st Sept., after undergoing a four days' quarantine at Tarifa, when he wrote to Mr Brandram (29th Sept.):

> "I am very glad that I went to Tangier, for many reasons. In the first place, I was permitted to circulate many copies of God's Word both among the Jews and the Christians, by the latter of whom it was particularly wanted, their ignorance of the most vital points of religion being truly horrible. In the second place, I acquired a vast stock of information concerning Africa and the state of its interior. One of my principal Associates was a black slave whose country was only three days' journey from Timbuctoo, which place he had frequently visited. The Soos men also told me many of the secrets of the land of wonders from which they come, and the Rabbis from Fez and Morocco were no less communicative."

Borrow had started upon his expedition to the Barbary Coast without any definite instructions from Earl Street. On 29th July the Sub-Committee had resolved that as his mission to Spain was "nearly attained by the disposal of the larger part of the Spanish Scriptures which he went out to distribute," the General Committee be recommended to request

him to take measures for selling or placing in safe custody all copies remaining on hand and returning to England "without loss of time." This was adopted on 5th Aug.; but before it received the formal sanction of the General Committee Mr Browne had written (29th July) to Borrow acquainting him with the feeling of the Sub-Committee, thinking that he ought to have early intimation of what was taking place. This letter Borrow found awaiting him at Cadiz on his return from Tangier. He replied immediately (21st Sept.):

> "Had I been aware of that resolution before my departure for Tangier I certainly should not have gone; my expedition, however, was the result of much reflection. I wished to carry the Gospel to the Christians of the Barbary shore, who were much in want of it; and I had one hundred and thirty Testaments at San Lucar, which I could only make available by exportation. The success which it has pleased the Lord to yield me in my humble efforts at distribution in Barbary will, I believe, prove the best criterion as to the fitness of the enterprise.
>
> "I stated in my last communication to Mr Brandram the plan which I conceived to be the best for circulating that portion of the edition of the New Testament which remains unsold at Madrid, and I scarcely needed a stimulant in the execution of my duty. At present,

> however, I know not what to do; I am sorrowful, disappointed and unstrung.
>
> "I wish to return to England as soon as possible; but I have books and papers at Madrid which are of much importance to me and which I cannot abandon, this perhaps alone prevents me embarking in the next packet. I have, moreover, brought with me from Tangier the Jewish youth [Hayim Ben Attar], who so powerfully assisted me in that place in the work of distribution. I had hoped to have made him of service in Spain, he is virtuous and clever . . .
>
> "I am almost tempted to ask whether some strange, some unaccountable delusion does not exist: what should induce me to stay in Spain, as you appear to suppose I intend? I may, however, have misunderstood you. I wish to receive a fresh communication as soon as possible, either from yourself or Mr Brandram; in the meantime I shall go to Seville, to which place and to the usual number pray direct."

It would appear that the Bible Society had become aware of Borrow's *ménage* at Seville, and concluded that he meant to take up his abode in Spain more or less permanently.

Borrow's next plan was to order a chest of

Testaments to be sent to La Mancha, where he had friends, then to mount his horse and proceed there in person. With the assistance of his Jewish body-servant he hoped to circulate many copies before the authorities became aware of his presence. Later he would proceed to Madrid, put his affairs in order, and make for France by way of Saragossa (where he hoped to accomplish some good), and then—home.

In September a circular signed by Lord Palmerston was received by all the British Consuls in Spain, strictly forbidding them "to afford the slightest countenance to religious agents. [307a] What was the cause of this last blow?" [307b] Borrow rather unfortunately enquired of Mr Brandram. The Consul at Cadiz, Mr Brackenbury, explained it, according to Borrow, as due to "an ill-advised application made to his Lordship to interfere with the Spanish Government on behalf of a certain individual [307c] [Lieut. Graydon] whose line of conduct needs no comment." [307d] After pointing out that once the same consuls had received from a British Ambassador instructions to further, in their official capacity, the work of the Bible Society, he concludes with the following remark, as ill-advised as it is droll: "When dead flies fall into the ointment of the apothecary they cause it to send forth an unpleasant savour." [308a]

It must have been obvious to both Borrow and Mr Brandram that matters were rapidly approaching a crisis. Mr Brandram seems to have been almost openly hostile, and draws Borrow's attention to the fact that after all his distributions have been small. Borrow replies by saying that the fault did not rest with him. Had he been able to offer Bibles instead of Testaments for sale, the circulation would have been

ten times greater. He expresses it as his belief that had he received 20,000 Bibles he could have sold them all in Madrid during the Spring of 1839.

> "When the Bible Society has no further occasion for my poor labours," he wrote [308b] somewhat pathetically, "I hope it will do me justice to the world. I have been its faithful and zealous servant. I shall on a future occasion take the liberty of addressing you as a friend respecting my prospects. I have the materials of a curious book of travels in Spain; I have enough metrical translations from all languages, especially the Celtic and Sclavonic, to fill a dozen volumes; and I have formed a vocabulary of the Spanish Gypsy tongue, and also a collection of the songs and poetry of the Gitanos, with introductory essays. Perhaps some of these literary labours might be turned to account. I wish to obtain honourably and respectably the means of visiting China or particular parts of Africa."

It is clear from this that Borrow saw how unlikely it was that his association with the Bible Society would be prolonged beyond the present commission. For one thing Spain was, to all intents and purposes, closed to the unannotated Scriptures. Something might be done in the matter of surreptitious distribution; but that had its clearly defined limitations, as the authorities were very much alive to the danger of the light that Borrow sought to cast

over the gloom of ignorance and superstition.

At Earl Street it was clearly recognised that Borrow's work in Spain was concluded. On 1st November the Sub-Committee resolved that it could "not recommend to the General Committee to engage the further services of Mr Borrow until he shall have returned to this country from his Mission in Spain." Again, on 10th January following, it recommends the General Committee to recall him "without further delay."

Although he had been officially recalled, nothing was further from Borrow's intentions than to retire meekly from the field. He intended to retreat with drums sounding and colours flying, fighting something more than a rearguard action. This man's energy and resource were terrible—to the authorities! Seville he felt was still a fruitful ground, and sending to Madrid for further supplies of Testaments, he commenced operations. "Everything was accomplished with the utmost secrecy, and the blessed books obtained considerable circulation." [309] Agents were sent into the country and he went also himself, "in my accustomed manner," until all the copies that had arrived from the capital were put into circulation. He then rested for a while, being in need of quiet, as he was indisposed.

By this action Borrow was incurring no little risk. The Canons of the Cathedral watched him closely. Their hatred amounted "almost to a frenzy," and Borrow states that scarcely a day passed without some accusation of other being made to the Civil Governor, all of which were false. People whom he had never seen were persuaded to perjure themselves by swearing that he had sold or given them books.

The same system was carried on whilst he was in Africa, because the authorities refused to believe that he was out of Spain.

There now occurred another regrettable incident, and Borrow once more suffered for the indiscretion of those whom he neither knew nor controlled. To Mr Brandram he wrote:

> "Some English people now came to Seville and distributed tracts in a very unguarded manner, knowing nothing of the country or the inhabitants. They were even so unwise as *to give tracts instead of money on visiting public buildings, etc.* [!]. These persons came to me and requested my coöperation and advice, and likewise introductions to people spiritually disposed amongst the Spaniards, to all which requests I returned a decided negative. But I foresaw all. In a day or two I was summoned before the Civil Governor, or, as he was once called, the *Corregidor*, of Seville, who, I must say, treated me with the utmost politeness and indeed respect; but at the same time he informed me that he had (to use his own expression) terrible orders from Madrid concerning me if I should be discovered in the act of distributing the Scriptures or any writings of a religious tendency; he then taxed me with having circulated both lately, especially tracts; whereupon I told

> him that I had never distributed a tract since I had been in Spain nor had any intention of doing so. We had much conversation and parted in kindness." [310]

For a few days nothing happened; then, determined to set out on an expedition to La Mancha (the delay had been due to the insecure state of the roads), Borrow sent his passport (24th Nov.) for signature to the *Alcalde del Barrio*.

> "This fellow," Borrow informs Mr Brandram, "is the greatest ruffian in Seville, and I have on various occasions been insulted by him; he pretends to be a liberal, but he is of no principle at all, and as I reside within his district he has been employed by the Canons of the Cathedral to vex and harrass me on every possible occasion."

In the following letter, addressed to the British *Chargé d'Affaires* (the Hon. G. S. S. Jerningham), Borrow gives a full account of what transpired between him and the *Alcalde* of Seville:—

> SIR,
>
> I beg leave to lay before you the following statement of certain facts which lately occurred at Seville, from which you will perceive that the person of a British Subject has been atrociously outraged, the rights and privileges of a foreigner in Spain

violated, and the sanctuary of a private house invaded without the slightest reason or shadow of authority by a person in the employ of the Spanish Government.

For some months past I have been a resident at Seville in a house situated in a square called the "Plazuela de la Pila Seca." In this house I possess apartments, the remainder being occupied by an English Lady and her daughter, the former of whom is the widow of an officer of the highest respectability who died in the naval service of Great Britain. On the twenty-fourth of last November, I sent a servant, a Native of Spain, to the Office of the "*Ayuntamiento*" of Seville for the purpose of demanding my passport, it being my intention to set out the next day for Cordoba. The "*Ayuntamiento*" returned for answer that it was necessary that the ticket of residence (*Billete de residencia*) which I had received on sending in the Passport should be signed by the *Alcalde* of the district in which I resided, to which intimation I instantly attended. I will here take the liberty of observing that on several occasions during my residence at Seville, I have experienced gross insults from this *Alcalde*, and that more than once when I have had occasion to leave

the Town, he has refused to sign the necessary document for the recovery of the passport; he now again refused to do so, and used coarse language to the Messenger; whereupon I sent the latter back with money to pay any fees, lawful or unlawful, which might be demanded, as I wished to avoid noise and the necessity of applying to the Consul, Mr Williams; but the fellow became only more outrageous. I then went myself to demand an explanation, and was saluted with no inconsiderable quantity of abuse. I told him that if he proceeded in this manner I would make a complaint to the Authorities through the British Consul. He then said if I did not instantly depart he would drag me off to prison and cause me to be knocked down if I made the slightest resistance. I dared him repeatedly to do both, and said that he was a disgrace to the Government which employed him, and to human nature. He called me a vile foreigner. We were now in the street and a mob had collected, whereupon I cried: "Viva Inglaterra y viva la Constitucion." The populace remained quiet, notwithstanding the exhortations of the *Alcalde* that they would knock down "the foreigner," for he himself quailed before me as I looked him in

the face, defying him. At length he exclaimed, with the usual obscene Spanish oath, “I will make you lower your head” (Yo te haré abajar la cabeza), and ran to a neighbouring guard-house and requested the assistance of the Nationals in conducting me to prison. I followed him and delivered myself up at the first summons, and walked to the prison without uttering a word; not so the *Alcalde*, who continued his abuse until we arrived at the gate, repeatedly threatening to have me knocked down if I moved to the right or left.

I was asked my name by the Authorities of the prison, which I refused to give unless in the presence of the Consul of my Nation, and indeed to answer any questions. I was then ordered to the *Patio*, or Courtyard, where are kept the lowest thieves and assassins of Seville, who, having no money, cannot pay for better accommodation, and by whom I should have been stripped naked in a moment as a matter of course, as they are all in a state of raging hunger and utter destitution. I asked for a private cell, which I was told I might have if I could pay for it. I stated my willingness to pay anything which might be demanded, and was conducted to an upper ward consisting of several cells and a

corridor; here I found six or seven Prisoners, who received me very civilly, and instantly procured me paper and ink for the purpose of writing to the Consul. In less than an hour Mr Williams arrived and I told him my story, whereupon he instantly departed in order to demand redress of the Authorities. The next morning the *Alcalde*, without any authority from the Political [Civil] Governor of Seville, and unaccompanied by the English Consul, as the law requires in such cases, and solely attended by a common *Escribano*, went to the house in which I was accustomed to reside and demanded admission. The door was opened by my Moorish Servant, Hayim Ben-Attar, whom he commanded instantly to show the way to my apartments. On the Servant's demanding by what authority he came, he said, "Cease chattering" (Deje cuentos), "I shall give no account to you; show me the way; if not, I will take you to prison as I did your master: I come to search for prohibited books." The Moor, who being in a strange land was somewhat intimidated, complied and led him to the rooms occupied by me, when the *Alcalde* flung about my books and papers, finding nothing which could in the slightest degree justify his search,

the few books being all either in Hebrew or Arabic character (they consisted of the Mitchna and some commentaries on the Coran); he at last took up a large knife which lay on a chair and which I myself purchased some months previous at Santa Cruz in La Mancha as a curiosity—the place being famous for those knives—and expressed his determination to take it away as a prohibited article. The *Escribano*, however, cautioned him against doing so, and he flung it down. He now became very vociferous and attempted to force his way into some apartments occupied by the Ladies, my friends; but soon desisted and at last went away, after using some threatening words to my Moorish Servant. Late at night of the second day of my imprisonment, I was set at liberty by virtue of an order of the Captain General, given on application of the British Consul, after having been for thirty hours imprisoned amongst the worst felons of Andalusia, though to do them justice I must say that I experienced from them nothing but kindness and hospitality.

The above, Sir, is the correct statement of the affair which has now brought me to Madrid. What could have induced the *Alcalde* in question to practise such atrocious

behaviour towards me I am at a loss to conjecture, unless he were instigated by certain enemies which I possess in Seville. However this may be, I now call upon you, as the Representative of the Government of which I am a Subject, to demand of the Minister of the Spanish Crown full and ample satisfaction for the various outrages detailed above. In conclusion, I must be permitted to add that I will submit to no compromise, but will never cease to claim justice until the culprit has received condign punishment.

I am, etc., etc., etc.

GEORGE BORROW.

MADRID (no date).

Recorded 6th December [1839]."
[313]

Thus it happened that on 19th December Mr Brandram received the following letter:—

PRISON OF SEVILLE, 25*th Nov.* 1839.

I write these lines, as you see, from the common prison of Seville, to which I was led yesterday, or rather dragged, neither for murder nor robbery nor debt, but simply for having endeavoured to obtain a passport for Cordoba, to which place I was going with my Jewish servant Hayim Ben-Attar.

When questioned by the Vice-Consul as to his authority for searching Borrow's house, the *Alcalde* produced a paper purporting to be the deposition of an old woman to whom Borrow was alleged to have sold a Testament some ten days previously. The document Borrow pronounced a forgery and the statement untrue.

Borrow's fellow-prisoners treated him with unbounded kindness and hospitality, and he was forced to confess that he had "never found himself amongst more quiet and well-behaved men." Nothing shows more clearly the power of Borrow's personality over rogues and vagabonds than the two periods spent in Spanish prisons—at Madrid and at Seville. Mr Brandram must have shuddered when he read Borrow's letter telling him by what manner of men he was surrounded.

> "What is their history?" he writes apropos of his fellow-prisoners. "The handsome black-haired man, who is now looking over my shoulder, is the celebrated thief, Pelacio, the most expert housebreaker and dexterous swindler in Spain—in a word, the modern Guzman D'alfarache. The brawny man who sits by the *brasero* of charcoal is Salvador, the highwayman of Ronda, who has committed a hundred murders. A fashionably dressed man, short and slight in person, is walking about the room: he wears immense whiskers and mustachios; he is one of that most singular race the Jews of Spain;

> he is imprisoned for counterfeiting money. He is an atheist; but, like a true Jew, the name which he most hates is that of Christ. Yet he is so quiet and civil, and they are all so quiet and civil, and it is that which most horrifies me, for quietness and civility in them seems so unnatural." [315]

Such were the men who fraternised with an agent of a religious society and showed him not only civility but hospitality and kindness. It is open to question if they would have shown the same to any other unfortunate missionary. In all probability they recognised a fellow-vagabond, who was at much at issue with the social conventions of communities as they were with the laws of property.

On this occasion the period of Borrow's imprisonment was brief. He was released late at night on 25th Nov., within thirty hours of his arrest, and he immediately set to work to think out a plan by which he could once more discomfit the Spanish authorities for this indignity to a British subject. He would proceed to Madrid without delay and put his case before the British Minister, at the same time he would "make preparations for leaving Spain as soon as possible."

CHAPTER XX
DECEMBER 1839–MAY 1840

It was probably about this time (1839) that

> "The Marqués de Santa Coloma met Borrow again at Seville. He had great difficulty in finding him out; though he was aware of the street in which he resided, no one knew him by name. At last, by dint of inquiry and description, some one exclaimed, 'Oh! you mean el Brujo' (the wizard), and he was directed to the house. He was admitted with great caution, and conducted through a lot of passages and stairs, till at last he was ushered into a handsomely furnished apartment in the '*mirador*,' where Borrow was living *with his wife and daughter*. . . It is evident . . . that, to his Spanish friends at least, he thus called Mrs Clarke and her daughter Henrietta his wife and daughter: and the Marqués de Santa Coloma evidently believed that the young lady was Borrow's *own* daughter, and not his step-daughter merely (!). At the

> time the roads from Seville to Madrid were very unsafe. Santa Coloma wished Borrow to join his party, who were going well armed. Borrow said he would be safe with his Gypsies. Both arrived without accident in Madrid; the Marqués's party first. Borrow, on his arrival, told Santa Coloma that his Gypsy chief had led him by by-paths and mountains; that they had not slept in a village, nor seen a town the whole way." [316]

It must be confessed that Mr Webster was none too reliable a witness, and it seems highly improbable that Borrow would wish to pass Mrs Clarke off as his wife before their marriage. The fact of their occupying the same house may have seemed to their Spanish friends compromising, as it unquestionably was; but had he spoken of Mrs Clarke as his wife, it would have left her not a vestige of reputation.

On arriving at Madrid Borrow found that Lord Clarendon's successor, Mr Arthur Aston, had not yet arrived, he therefore presented his complaint to the *Chargé d'Affaires*, the Hon. G. S. S. Jerningham, who had succeeded Mr Sothern as private secretary. Mr Sothern had not yet left Madrid to take up his new post as First Secretary at Lisbon, and therefore presented Borrow to Mr Jerningham, by whom he was received with great kindness. He assured Mr Jerningham that for some time past he had given up distributing the Scriptures in Spain, and he merely claimed the privileges of a British subject and the protection of his Government. The First Secretary took up the case immediately, forwarding Borrow's

letter to Don Perez de Castro with a request for "proper steps to be taken, should Mr Borrow's complaint . . . be considered by His Excellency as properly founded." Borrow himself was doubtful as to whether he would obtain justice, "for I have against me," he wrote to Mr Brandram (24th December), "the Canons of Seville; and all the arts of villany which they are so accustomed to practise will of course be used against me for the purpose of screening the ruffian who is their instrument. . . . I have been, my dear Sir, fighting with wild beasts."

The rather quaint reply to Borrow's charges was not forthcoming until he had left Spain and was living at Oulton. It runs: [317]

MADRID, 11*th May* 1840.

SIR,

Under date of 20th December last, Mr Perez de Castro informed Mr Jerningham that in order to answer satisfactorily his note of 8th December *re* complaint made by Borrow, he required a faithful report to be made. These have been stated by the Municipality of Seville to the Civil Governor of that City, and are as follows:—

"When Borrow meant to undertake his journey to Cadiz towards the end of last year, he applied to the section of public security for his Passport, for which purpose he ought to deliver his paper of residence which was given to him when he arrived at

Seville. That paper he had not presented in its proper time to the *Alcalde* of his district, on which account this person had not been acquainted as he ought with his residence in the district, and as his Passport could not be issued in consequence of this document not being in order, Borrow addressed, through the medium of a Servant, to the house of the said district *Alcalde* that the defect might be remedied. That functionary refused to do so, founded on the reasons already stated; and for the purpose of overcoming his resistance he was offered a gratification, the Servant with that intent presenting half a dollar. The *Alcalde*, justly indignant, left his house to make the necessary complaint respecting their indecorous action when he met Borrow, who, surprised at the refusal of the *Alcalde*, expressed to him his astonishment, addressing insulting expressions not only against his person but against the authorities of Spain, who, he said, he was sure were to be bought at a very small price—crying on after this, Long live the Constitution, Death to the Religion, and Long live England. These and other insults gave rise to the *Alcalde* proceeding to his arrest and the assistance of the armed force of Veterans, and not of the National

Militia, as Borrow supposed, making a detailed report to the Constitutional *Alcalde*, who forwarded it original to the Captain General of the Province as Judge Protector of Foreigners, leaving him under detention at his disposition. He did the same with another report transmitted by the said functionary, in which reference to a Lady who lived at the Gate of Xerez; he denounced Borrow as a seducer of youth in matters of Religion by facilitating to them the perusal of prohibited books, of which a copy, that was in the hands of the Ecclesiastical Governor, was likewise transmitted to the Captain General. These antecedents were sufficient to have authorised a summary to have been formed against Borrow, but the repeated supplications of the British Vice-Consul, Mr Williams, who among other things stated that Borrow laboured under fits of madness, had the effect of causing the above Constitutional *Alcalde* to forgive him the fault committed and recommend to the Captain General that the matter should be dropped, which was acceded to, and he was put at liberty. The above facts, official proofs of which exist in the Captain General's Office, clearly disprove the statement of Borrow, who ungrateful for the generous

hospitality which he has received, and for the consideration displayed towards him on account of his infirmity, and out of deference to the request of the British Vice-Consul, makes an unfounded complaint against the very authorities who have used attentions towards him which he is certainly not deserving; it being worthy of remark, in order to prove the bad faith of his procedure, that in his own *exposé*, although he disfigures facts at pleasure, using a language little decorous, he confesses part of his faults, such as the offering of money *to pay*, as he says, '*the legal or extra-legal dues that might be exacted*, and his having twice challenged the *Alcalde*.'

"I should consider myself wanting towards your enlightened sense of justice if, after the reasons given, I stopped to prove the just and prudent conduct of Seville authorities.

"Hope he will therefore be completely satisfied, especially after the want of exactitude on Borrow's part.

From

EVARISTO PEREZ DE CASTRO."

To Mr Aston. [319]

And so the matter ended. The Spanish authorities knew that they no longer had a Sir George Villiers to deal with, and had recourse to that trump card of weak and vacillating diplomatists—delay. Whatever Borrow's offence, the method of his arrest and imprisonment was in itself unlawful.

It was Borrow's intention on his return to England to endeavour to obtain an interview with some members of the House of Lords, in order to acquaint them with the manner in which Protestants were persecuted in Spain. They were debarred from the exercise of their religion from being married by Protestant rites, and the common privileges of burial were denied them. He was anxious for Protestant England, lest it should fall a victim to Popery. This fear of Rome was a very real one to Borrow. He marvelled at people's blindness to the danger that was threatening them, and he even went so far as to entreat his friends at Earl Street "to drop all petty dissensions and to comport themselves like brothers" against their common enemy the Pope.

Unfortunately Borrow had shown to a number of friends one of his letters to Mr Brandram dealing with the Seville imprisonment, and had even allowed several copies of it to be taken "in order that an incorrect account of the affair might not get abroad." The result was an article in a London newspaper containing remarks to the disparagement of other workers for the Gospel in Spain. Borrow disavowed all knowledge of these observations.

> "I am not ashamed of the Methodists of Cadiz," he assures Mr Brandram, "their conduct in many respects does them honor, nor do I accuse any one

> of fanaticism amongst our dear and worthy friends; but I cannot answer for the tittle-tattle of Madrid. Far be it from me to reflect upon any one, I am but too well aware of my own multitudinous imperfections and follies." [320]

There is nothing more mysterious in Borrow's life than his years of friendship with Mrs Clarke. He was never a woman's man, but Mary Clarke seems to have awakened in him a very sincere regard. The ménage at Seville was a curious one, and both Borrow and Mrs Clarke should have seen that it was calculated to make people talk. There may have been a tacit understanding between them. Everything connected with their relations and courtship is very mysterious. Dr Knapp is scarcely just to Borrow or gracious to the woman he married, when he implies that it was merely a business arrangement on both sides. Mrs Clarke's affairs required a man's hand to administer them, and Borrow was prepared to give the man's hand in exchange for an income. The engagement could scarcely have taken place in the middle of November 1839, as Dr Knapp states, for on the day of his arrest at Seville (24th Nov.) Borrow wrote:—

> My dear Mrs Clarke,—Do not be alarmed, but I am at present in the prison, to which place the *Alcalde* del Barrio conducted me when I asked him to sign the Passport. If Phelipe is not already gone to the Consul, let Henrietta go now and show him this letter. When I asked the fellow his motives for not

> signing the Passport, he said if I did not go away he would carry me to prison. I dared him to do so, as I had done nothing; whereupon he led me here.—Yours truly,
>
> GEORGE BORROW.

This is obviously not the letter of a man recently engaged to the woman who is to become his wife. On the other hand, Borrow may have been writing merely for the Consul's eye.

On hearing the news of the engagement old Mrs Borrow wrote:—

> "I am not surprised, my dear Mrs Clarke, at what you tell me, though I knew nothing of it. It put me in mind of the Revd. Flethers; you know they took time to consider. So far all is well. I shall now resign him to your care, and may you love and cherish him as much as I have done. I hope and trust that each will try to make the other happy. You will always have my prayers and best wishes. Give my kind love to dear George and tell him he is never out of my thoughts. I have much to say, but I cannot write. I shall be glad to see you all safe and well. Give my love to Henrietta; tell her *I* can sing 'Gaily the Troubadour'; I only want the 'guitar.' [321] God bless you all."

There is no doubt that a very strong friendship had existed between Mrs Clarke and Borrow during the whole time that he had been associated with the Bible Society. She it was who had been indirectly responsible for his introduction to Earl Street. It is idle to speculate what it was that led Mrs Clarke to select Seville as the place to which to fly from her enemies. There is, however, a marked significance in old Mrs Borrow's words, "I am not surprised, my dear Mrs Clarke, at what you tell me." Whatever his mother may have seen, there appears to have been no thought of marriage in Borrow's mind when, on 29th September 1839, he wrote to Mr Brandram telling him of his wish to visit "China or particular parts of Africa."

Borrow paid many tributes to his wife, not only in his letters, but in print, every one of which she seems thoroughly to have merited. "Of my wife," he writes, [322] "I will merely say that she is a perfect paragon of wives—can make puddings and sweets and treacle posset, and is the best woman of business in East Anglia." On another occasion he praises her for more general qualities, when he compares her to the good wife of the Triad, the perfect woman endowed with all the feminine virtues. His wife and "old Hen." (Henrietta) were his "two loved ones," and he subsequently shows in a score of ways how much they had become part of his life.

After his return to Seville, early in January, Borrow proceeded to get his "papers into some order." There seems no doubt that this meant preparing *The Zincali* for publication. In the excitement and enthusiasm of authorship, and the pleasant company of Mrs and Miss Clarke, he seems to have been divinely unconscious that he was under orders to proceed

home. Week after week passed without news of their Agent in Spain reaching Earl Street, and the Officials and Committee of the Bible Society became troubled to account for his non-appearance. The last letter from him had been received on 13th January. Early in March Mr Jackson wrote to Mr Brackenbury asking for news of him. A letter to Mr Williams at Seville was enclosed, which Mr Brackenbury had discretionary powers to withhold if he were able to supply the information himself. Two letters that Borrow had addressed to the Society it appears had gone astray, and as "one steamer . . . arrived after another and yet no news from Mr Borrow," some apprehension began to manifest itself lest misfortune had befallen him. On the other hand, Borrow had heard nothing from the Society for five months, the long silence making him "very, very unhappy."

In reply to Mr Brandram's letter Borrow wrote:—

> "I did not return to England immediately after my departure from Madrid for several reasons. First, there was my affair with the *Alcalde* still pending; second, I wished to get my papers into some order; third, I wished to effect a little more in the cause, though not in the way of distribution, as I have no books: moreover the house in which I resided was paid for and I was unwilling altogether to lose the money; I likewise dreaded an English winter, for I have lately been subjected to attacks, whether of gout or rheumatism I know not, which I believe were brought on by sitting,

> standing and sleeping in damp places during my wanderings in Spain. The *Alcalde* has lately been turned out of his situation, but I believe more on account of his being a Carlist than for his behaviour to me; that, however, is of little consequence, as I have long forgotten the affair." [323a]

There was no longer any reason for delay; the English winter was over, he had one book nearly ready for publication and two others in a state of forwardness.

> "I embark on the third of next month [April]," he continued, "and you will probably see me by the 16th. I wish very much to spend the remaining years of my life in the northern parts of China, as I think I have a call for those regions, and shall endeavour by every honourable means to effect my purpose." [323b]

These words would seem to imply that his marriage with Mrs Clarke was by no means decided upon at the date he wrote, although during the previous month he had been in correspondence with Mr Brackenbury regarding Protestants in Spain being debarred from marrying. It is inconceivable that Mrs Clarke and her daughter contemplated living in the North of China; and equally unlikely that Mrs Clarke would marry a potential "absentee landlord," or one who frankly confessed "I hope yet to die in the cause of my Redeemer."

Sidi Habismilk had at first presented a grave problem; but Mr Brackenbury, who secured the passages on the steamer, arranged also for the Arab to be slung aboard the Steam-Packet. On 3rd April the whole party, including Hayim Ben Attar and Sidi Habismilk, boarded the *Royal Adelaide* bound for London.

Borrow never forgave Spain for its treatment of him, although some of the happiest years of his life had been spent there. "The Spaniards are a stupid, ungrateful set of ruffians," he afterwards wrote, "and are utterly incapable of appreciating generosity or forbearance." He piled up invective upon the unfortunate country. It was "the chosen land of the two fiends—assassination and murder," where avarice and envy were the prevailing passions. It was the "country of error"; yet at the same time "the land of extraordinary characters." As he saw its shores sinking beneath the horizon, he was mercifully denied the knowledge that never again was he to be so happily occupied as during the five years he had spent upon its soil distributing the Scriptures, and using a British Minister as a two-edged sword.

The party arrived in London on 16th April and put up at the Spread Eagle in Gracechurch Street. On 23rd April, at St Peter's Church in Cornhill, the wedding took place. There were present as witnesses only Henrietta Clarke and John Pilgrim, the Norwich solicitor. In the Register the names appear as:—

> "George Henry Borrow—of full age
> —bachelor—gentleman—of the City
> of Norwich—son of Thomas Borrow
> —Captain in the Army.

> "Mary Clarke—of full age—widow—
> of Spread Eagle Inn, Gracechurch
> Street—daughter of Edmund
> Skepper—Esquire."

On 2nd May an announcement of the marriage appeared in *The Norfolk Chronicle*. A few days later the party left for Oulton Cottage, and Borrow became a landed proprietor on a small scale in his much-loved East Anglia.

On 21st April Mr Brandram had written to Borrow the following letter:—

> MY DEAR FRIEND,—Your later communications have been referred to our Sub-Committee for General Purposes. After what you said yesterday in the Committee, I am hardly aware that anything can arise out of them. The door seems shut. The Sub-Committee meet on Friday. Will you wish to make any communications to them as to any ulterior views that may have occurred to yourself? I do not myself at present see any sphere open to which your services in connection with our Society can be transferred. . . . With best wishes—Believe me—Yours truly,
>
> A. BRANDRAM.

On 24th April, the day after Borrow's wedding, the Sub-Committee duly met and

> "Resolved that, upon mature

> consideration, it does not appear to this Sub-Committee that there is, at present, any opening for employing Mr Borrow beneficially as an Agent of the Society . . . and that it be recommended to the General Committee that the salary of Mr Borrow be paid up to the 10th June next."

The Bible Society's valediction, which appeared in the Thirty-Sixth Annual Report, read:—

> "G. Borrow, Esq., one of the gentlemen referred to in former Reports as having so zealously exerted themselves on behalf of Spain, has just returned home, hopeless of further attempts at present to distribute the Scriptures in that country. Mr B. has succeeded, by almost incredible pains, and at no small cost and hazard, in selling during his last visit a few hundred copies of the Bible, and most that remained of the edition of the New Testament printed in Madrid."

Thus ended George Borrow's activities on behalf of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and incidentally the seven happiest and most active years of his life. On the whole the association had been honourable to all concerned. There had been moments of irritation and mistakes on both sides. It would be foolish to accuse the Society of deliberately planting obstacles in the path of its own agent; but

the unfortunate championing of Lieutenant Graydon was the result of a very grave error of judgment. Borrow had no personal friends among the Committee, to whom the impetuous zeal of Graydon was more picturesque than the grave and deliberate caution of Borrow. The Officials and Committee alike saw in Graydon the ideal Reformer, rushing precipitately towards martyrdom, exposing Anti-Christ as he ran. Had Borrow been content to allow others to plead his cause, the history of his relations with the Bible Society would, in all probability, have been different. He felt himself a grievously injured man, who had suffered from what he considered to be the insane antics of another, and he was determined that Earl Street should know it. On the other hand, Mr Brandram does not appear to have understood Borrow. He made no attempt to humour him, to praise him for what he had done and the way in which he had done it. Praise was meat and drink to Borrow; it compensated him for what he had endured and encouraged him to further effort. He hungered for it, and when it did not come he grew discouraged and thought that those who employed him were not conscious of what he was suffering. Hence the long accounts of what he had undergone for the Gospel's sake.

During his six years in Spain he had distributed nearly 5000 copies of the New Testament and 500 Bibles, also some hundreds of the Basque and Gypsy Gospel of St Luke. These figures seem insignificant beside those of Lieut. Graydon, who, on one occasion, sold as many as 1082 volumes in fourteen days, and in two years printed 13,000 Testaments and 3000 Bibles, distributing the larger part of them. During the year 1837 he circulated altogether between five and six thousand books. But there was

no comparison between the work of the two men. Graydon had kept to the towns and cities on the south coast; Borrow's methods were different. He circulated his books largely among villages and hamlets, where the population was sparse and the opportunities of distribution small. He had gone out into the highways, risking his life at every turn, penetrating into bandit-infested provinces in the throes of civil war, suffering incredible hardships and fatigues and, never sparing himself. Both men were earnest and eager; but the Bible Society favoured the wrong man—at least for its purposes. But for Lieut. Graydon, Borrow would in all probability have gone to China, and what a book he would have written, at least what letters, about the sealed East!

Borrow, however, had nothing to complain of. He had found occupation when he badly needed it, which indirectly was to bring him fame. He had been well paid for his services (during the seven years of his employment he drew some £2300 in salary and expenses), his £200 a year and expenses (in Spain) comparing very favourably with Mr Brandram's £300 a year.

He was loyal to the Bible Society, both in word and thought. He honourably kept to himself the story of the Graydon dispute. He spoke of the Society with enthusiasm, exclaiming, "Oh! the blood glows in his veins! oh! the marrow awakes in his old bones when he thinks of what he accomplished in Spain in the cause of religion and civilisation with the colours of that society in his hat." [328a] In spite of the misunderstandings and the rebukes he could write fourteen years later that he "bade it adieu with feelings of love and admiration." [328b] He "had done with Spain for ever, after doing for her all that

lay in the power of a lone man, who had never in this world anything to depend upon, but God and his own slight strength." [328c] In the preface to *The Bible in Spain* he pays a handsome tribute to both Rule and Graydon, thus showing that although he was a good hater, he could be magnanimous.

It has been stated that, during a portion of his association with the Bible Society, Borrow acted as a foreign correspondent for *The Morning Herald*. Dr Knapp has very satisfactorily disproved the statement, which the Rev. Wentworth Webster received from the Marqués de Santa Coloma. Either the Marqués or Mr Webster is responsible for the statement that Borrow was wrecked, instead of nearly wrecked, off Cape Finisterre. As the Marqués was a passenger on the boat, the mistake must be ascribed to Mr Webster. The further statement that Borrow was imprisoned at Pamplona by Quesada is scarcely more credible than that about the wreck. His imprisonment could not very well have taken place, as stated, in 1837–9, because General Quesada was killed in 1836. Mention is made of this foreign correspondent rumour only because it has been printed and reprinted. It may be that Borrow was imprisoned at Pamplona during the "Veiled Period"; there is certainly one imprisonment (according to his own statement) unaccounted for. It is curious how the fact first became impressed upon the Marqués' mind, unless he had heard it from Borrow. It is quite likely that he confused the date.

It would be interesting to identify the two men whom Borrow describes in *Lavengro* as being at the offices of the Bible Society in Earl Street, when he sought to exchange for a Bible the old Apple-woman's copy of *Moll Flanders*. "One was dressed in

brown," he writes, "and the other was dressed in black; both were tall men—he who was dressed in brown was thin, and had a particularly ill-natured countenance; the man dressed in black was bulky, his features were noble, but they were those of a lion." [329a] Again, in *The Romany Rye*, he makes the man in black say with reference to the Bible Society: —"There is one fellow amongst them for whom we entertain a particular aversion: a big, burly parson, with the face of a lion, the voice of a buffalo, and a fist like a sledge-hammer." [329b] Who these two worthies were it is impossible to say with any degree of certainty. Caroline Fox describes Andrew Brandram no further than that he "appeared before us once more with his shaggy eyebrows." [329c] Mr Brandram was not thin and his countenance was not ill-natured.

CHAPTER XXI
MAY 1840–MARCH 1841

EARLY in May, Borrow, his wife and step-daughter left London to take up their residence at Oulton, in Suffolk. After years of wandering and vagabondage he was to settle down as a landed proprietor. His income, or rather his wife's, amounted to £450 per annum, and he must have saved a considerable sum out of the £2300 he had drawn from the Bible Society, as his mother appears to have regarded the amounts he had sent to her as held in trust. He was therefore able to instal himself, Sidi Habismilk and

the Jew of Fez upon his wife's small estate, with every prospect of enjoying a period of comfort and rest after his many years of wandering and adventure.



Oulton Cottage was ideally situated on the margin of the Broad. It was a one-storied building, with a dormer-attic above, hanging "over a lonely lake covered with wild fowl, and girt with dark firs, through which the wind sighs sadly. [330a] A regular Patmos, an *ultima Thule*; placed in an angle of the most unvisited, out-of-the-way portion of England." [330b] A few yards from the water's edge stood the famous octagonal Summer-house that Borrow made his study. Here he kept his books, a veritable "polyglot gentleman's" library, consisting of such literary "tools" as a Lav-engro might be expected to possess. There were also books of travel and adventure, some chairs, a lounge and a table; whilst behind the door hung the sword and regimental coat of the sleeping warrior to whom his younger son had been an affliction of the spirit, because his mind pursued paths that appeared so strangely perilous.

Here in this Summer-house Borrow wrote his books. Here when "sickness was in the land, and the face of nature was overcast—heavy rain-clouds swam in the heavens—the blast howled amid the pines which nearly surround the lonely dwelling, and the waters of the lake which lies before it, so quiet in general and tranquil, were fearfully agitated," Borrow shouted, "'Bring lights hither, O Hayim Ben Attar, son of the miracle!' And the Jew of Fez brought in the lights," [331a] and his master commenced writing a book that was to make him famous. When tired of writing, he would sometimes sing "strange words in a stentorian voice, while passers-by on the lake would stop to listen with astonishment and curiosity to the singular sounds." [331b]

Life at Oulton Cottage was delightfully simple. Borrow was a good host. "I am rather hospitable than otherwise," [331c] he wrote, and thoroughly disliked anything in the nature of meanness. There was always a bottle of wine of a rare vintage for the honoured guest. Sometimes the host himself would hasten away to the little Summer-house by the side of the Broad to muse, his eyes fixed upon the military coat and sword, or to scribble upon scraps of paper that, later, were to be transcribed by Mrs Borrow. Borrow would spend his evenings with his wife and Henrietta, generally in reading until bedtime.

In the Norwich days Borrow had formed an acquaintance with another articled-clerk named Harvey (probably one of his colleagues at Tuck's Court). They had kindred tastes, in particular a love of the open air and vigorous exercise. After settling at Oulton, the Borrows and the Harveys (then living at Bury St Edmunds) became very intimate, and

frequently visited each other. Elizabeth Harvey, the daughter of Borrow's contemporary, has given an extremely interesting account of the home life of the Borrows. She has described how sometimes Borrow would sing one of his Romany songs, "shake his fist at me and look quite wild. Then he would ask: 'Aren't you afraid of me?' 'No, not at all,' I would say. Then he would look just as gentle and kind, and say, 'God bless you, I would not hurt a hair of your head.'" [332a]

Miss Harvey has also given us many glimpses into Borrow's character. "He was very fond of ghost stories," she writes, "and believed in the supernatural." [332b] He enjoyed music of a lively description, one of his favourite compositions being the well-known "Redowa" polka, which he would frequently ask to have played to him again.

As an eater Borrow was very moderate, he "took very little breakfast but ate a very great quantity of dinner, and then had only a draught of cold water before going to bed . . . He was very temperate and would eat what was set before him, often not thinking of what he was doing, and he never refused what was offered him." [332c] On one occasion when he was dining with the Harveys, young Harvey, seeing Borrow engrossed in telling of his travels, handed him dish after dish in rapid succession, from all of which he helped himself, entirely unconscious of what he was doing. Finally his plate was full to overflowing, perceiving which he became very angry, and it was some time before he could be appeased. A practical joke made no appeal to him. [332d]

Elizabeth Harvey also tells how, when a cousin of hers was staying at Cromer, the landlady went to her

one day and said, “O, Miss, there’s such a curious gentleman been. I don’t know what to think of him, I asked him what he would like for dinner, and he said, ‘Give me a piece of flesh.’” “What sort of gentleman was it?” enquired the cousin, and on hearing the description recognised George Borrow, and explained that the strange visitor merely wanted a rump-steak, a favourite dish with him.

As he did not shoot or hunt, he obtained exercise either by riding or walking. At times “he suffered from sleeplessness, when he would get up and walk to Norwich (25 miles) and return the next night recovered” [333a] yet Borrow has said that “he always had the health of an elephant.”

He was proud of the Church and took great pleasure in showing to his friends the brasses it contained, including one bearing an effigy of Sir John Fastolf, whom he considered to be the original of Falstaff. He was also “very fond of his trees. He quite fretted if by some mischance he lost one.” [333b]

His methods with the country people round Oulton were calculated to earn for him a reputation for queerness. “Curiosity is the leading feature of my character” [333c] he confessed, and the East Anglian looks upon curiosity in others with marked suspicion. It was impossible for Borrow to walk far without getting into conversation with someone or other. He delighted in getting people to tell their histories and experiences; “when they used some word peculiar to Norfolk (or Suffolk) country men, he would say ‘Why, that’s a Danish word.’ By and bye the man would use another peculiar expression, ‘Why, that’s Saxon’; a little further on another, ‘Why, that’s French.’ And he would add, ‘Why, what a

wonderful man you are to speak so many languages.' One man got very angry, but Mr Borrow was quite unconscious that he had given any offence." [334a]

He took pleasure in puzzling people about languages. Elizabeth Harvey tells [334b] how he once put a book before her telling her to read it, and on her saying she could not, he replied, "You ought; it's your own language." The volume was written in Saxon. Yet for all this he hated to hear foreign words introduced into conversation. When he heard such adulterations of the English language he would exclaim jocosely, "What's that, trying to come over me with strange languages?" [334c]

Borrow's first thoughts on settling down were of literature. He had material for several books, as he had informed Mr Brandram. Putting aside, at least for the present, the translations of the ballads and songs, he devoted himself to preparing for the press a book upon the Spanish Gypsies. During the five years spent in Spain he had gathered together much material. He had made notes in queer places under strange and curious conditions, "in moments snatched from more important pursuits—chiefly in *ventas* and *posadás*" [334d]—whilst engaged in distributing the Gospel. It was a book of facts that he meant to write, not theories, and if he sometimes fostered error, it was because at the moment it was his conception of truth. Very little remained to do to the manuscript. Mrs. Borrow had performed her share of the work in making a fair copy for the printer. Borrow's subsequent remark that the manuscript "was written by a country amanuensis and probably contains many ridiculous errata," was scarcely gracious to the wife, who seems to have

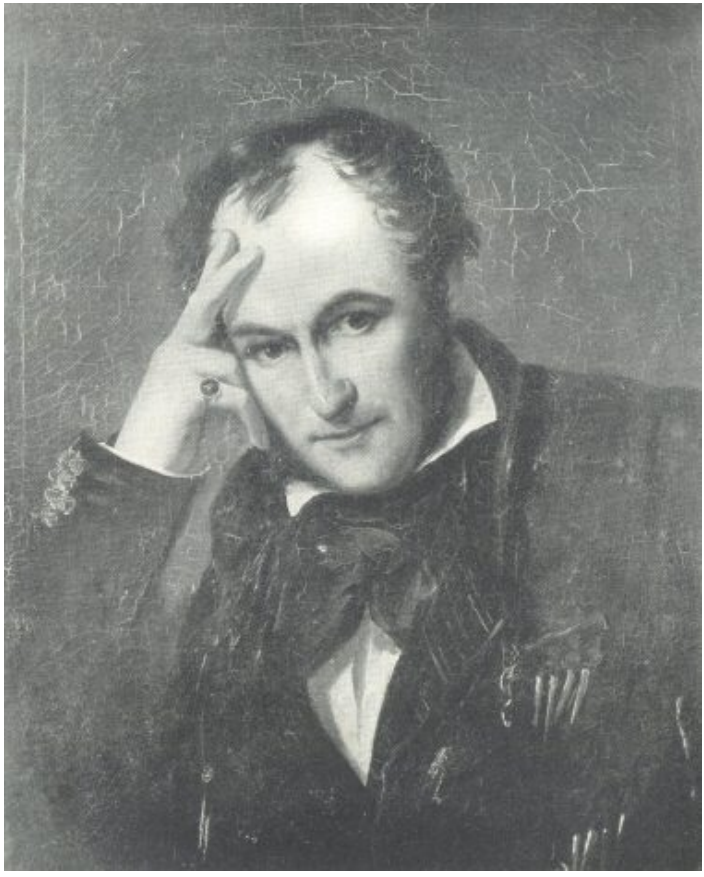
comprehended so well the first principle of wifely duty to an illustrious and, it must be admitted, autocratic genius—viz., self-extinction.

"No man could endure a clever wife," Borrow once confided to the unsympathetic ear of Frances Power Cobbe; but he had married one nevertheless. No woman whose cleverness had not reached the point of inspiration could have lived in intimate association with so capricious and masterful a man as George Borrow. John Hasfeldt, in sending his congratulations, had seemed to suggest that Borrow was one of those abstruse works of nature that require close and constant study. "When your wife thoroughly knows you," he wrote, "she will smooth the wrinkles on your brow and you will be so cheerful and happy that your grey hair will turn black again."

"In November 1840 a tall athletic gentleman in black called upon Mr Murray, offering a manuscript for perusal and publication." [335a] Fifteen years before, the same "tall athletic gentleman" had called a dozen times at 50a Albemarle Street with translations of Northern and Welsh ballads, but "never could see Glorious John." Borrow had determined to make another attempt to see John Murray, and this time he was successful. He submitted the manuscript of *The Zincali*, which Murray sent to Richard Ford [335b] that he might pronounce upon it and its possibilities. "I have made acquaintance," Ford wrote to H. U. Addington, 14th Jan. 1841, "with an extraordinary fellow, *George Borrow*, who went out to Spain to convert the *gypsies*. He is about to publish his failure, and a curious book it will be. It was submitted to my perusal by the hesitating Murray." [335c] On Ford's advice the book was accepted for

publication, it being arranged that author and publisher should share the profits equally between them.

On 17th April 1841 there appeared in two volumes *The Zincali*; [336a] *or, An Account of the Gypsies in Spain. With an original Collection of their Songs and Poetry, and a copious Dictionary of their Language.* By George Borrow, late Agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Spain. It was dedicated to the Earl of Clarendon, G.C.B. (Sir George Villiers), in "remembrance of the many obligations under which your Lordship has placed me, by your energetic and effectual interference in time of need." The first edition of 750 copies sufficed to meet the demand of two years. Ford, however, wrote to Murray: "The book has created a great sensation far and wide. I was sure it would, and I hope you think that when I read the MS. my opinion and advice were sound." [336b]



The Zincali had been begun at Badajos with the Romany songs or rhymes copied down as recited by his gypsy friends. To these he had subsequently added, being assisted by a French courier, Juan Antonio Bailly, who translated the songs into Spanish. These translations were originally intended to be published in a separate work, as was the Vocabulary, which forms part of *The Zincali*. Had Borrow sought to make two separate works of the "Songs" and "Vocabulary," there is very considerable doubt if they would have fared any better than the

everlasting Ab Gwilym; but either with inspiration, or acting on some one's wise counsel, he determined to subordinate them to an account of the Spanish Gypsies.

As a piece of bookmaking *The Zincali* is by no means notable. Borrow himself refers to it (page 354) as "this strange wandering book of mine." In construction it savours rather of the method by which it was originally inspired; but for all that it is fascinating reading, saturated with the atmosphere of vagabondage and the gypsy encampment. It was not necessarily a book for the scholar and the philologist, many of whom scorned it on account of its rather obvious carelessnesses and inaccuracies. Borrow was not a writer of academic books. He lacked the instinct for research which alone insures accuracy.

It was particularly appropriate that Borrow's first book should be about the Gypsies, who had always exercised so strange an attraction for him that he could not remember the time "when the very name of Gypsy did not awaken within me feelings hard to be described." [337a] His was not merely an interest in their strange language, their traditions, their folk-lore; it was something nearer and closer to the people themselves. They excited his curiosity, he envied their mode of life, admired their clannishness, delighted in their primitive customs. Their persistence in warring against the gentile appealed strongly to his instinctive hatred of "gentility nonsense"; and perhaps more than anything else, he envied them the stars and the sun and the wind on the heath.

"Romany matters have always had a peculiar interest for me," [337b] he affirms over and over again in

different words, and he never lost an opportunity of joining a party of gypsies round their camp-fire. His knowledge of the Romany people was not acquired from books. Apparently he had read very few of the many works dealing with the mysterious race he had singled out for his particular attention. With characteristic assurance he makes the sweeping assertion that "all the books which have been published concerning them [the Gypsies] have been written by those who have introduced themselves into their society for a few hours, and from what they have seen or heard consider themselves competent to give the world an idea of the manners and customs of the mysterious Romany." [338a]

His attitude towards the race is curious. He recognised the Gypsies as liars, rogues, cheats, vagabonds, in short as the incarnation of all the vices; yet their fascination for him in no way diminished. He could mix with them, as with other vagabonds, and not become harmed by their broad views upon personal property, or their hundred and one tricks and dishonesties. He was a changed man when in their company, losing all that constraint that marked his intercourse with people of his own class.

He had laboured hard to bring the light of the Gospel into their lives. He made them translate for him the Scriptures into their tongue; but it was the novelty of the situation, aided by the glass of Malaga wine he gave them, not the beauty of the Gospel of St Luke, that aroused their interest and enthusiasm. To this, Borrow's own eyes were open. "They listened with admiration," he says; "but, alas! not of the truths, the eternal truths, I was telling them, but to find that their broken jargon could be written and read." [338b]

On one occasion, having refused to one of his congregation the loan of two *barias* (ounces of gold), he proceeded to read to the whole assembly instead the Lord's Prayer and the Apostle's Creed in Romany. Happening to glance up, he found not a gypsy in the room, but squinted, "the Gypsy fellow, the contriver of the jest, squinted worst of all. Such are Gypsies." [338c]



It was indeed the novelty that appealed to them. They greeted with a shout of exultation the reading aloud a translation that they themselves had dictated; but they remained unmoved by the Christian teaching it contained. For all these discouragements Borrow persisted, and perhaps none of his efforts in Spain produced less result than this "attempt to enlighten the minds of the Gitanos on the subject of religion." [339]

If the Gypsies were all that is evil, judged by conventional standards, they at least loyally stood by each other in the face of a common foe. Borrow knew Ambrose Petulengro to be a liar, a thief, in fact most things that it is desirable a man should not be; yet he was equally sure that under no circumstances would he forsake a friend to whom he stood pledged. There seems to be little doubt that Borrow's fame with the Gypsies spread throughout England and the Continent. "Everybody as ever see'd the white-headed Romany Rye never forgot him."

Borrow was by no means the first Romany Rye. From Andrew Boorde (15th-16th Century) down the centuries they are to be found, even to our day, in the persons of Mr Theodore Watts-Dunton and Mr John Sampson; but Borrow was the first to bring the cult of Gypsyism into popularity. Before he wrote, the general view of Gypsies was that they were uncomfortable people who robbed the clothes-lines and hen-roosts, told fortunes and incidentally intimidated the housewife if unprotected by man or dog. Borrow changed all this. The suspicion remained, so strongly in fact that he himself was looked at askance for consorting with such vagabonds; but with the suspicion was more than a

spice of interest, and the Gypsies became epitomised and immortalised in the person of Jasper Petulengro. Borrow's Gypsyism was as unscientific as his "philology." Their language, their origin he commented on without first acquainting himself with the literature that had gathered round their name. Francis Hindes Groome, "that perfect scholar-gypsy and gypsy-scholar," wrote:—

> "The meagreness of his knowledge of the Anglo-Gypsy dialect came out in his *Word Book of the Romany* (1874); there must have been over a dozen Englishmen who have known it far better than he. For his Spanish-Gypsy vocabulary in *The Zincali* he certainly drew largely either on Richard Bright's *Travels through Lower Hungary* or on Bright's Spanish authority, whatever that may have been. His knowledge of the strange history of the Gypsies was very elementary, of their manners almost more so, and of their folk-lore practically *nil*. And yet I would put George Borrow above every other writer on the Gypsies. In *Lavengro* and, to a less degree, in its sequel, *The Romany Rye*, he communicates a subtle insight into Gypsydom that is totally wanting in the works—mainly philological—of Pott, Liebich, Paspati, Miklosich, and their confrères." [340a]

Groome was by no means partial to Borrow, as a matter of fact he openly taxed him [340b] with

drawing upon Bright's *Travels in Hungary* (Edinburgh 1819) for the Spanish-Romany Vocabulary, and was strong in his denunciation of him as a *poseur*.

Borrow scorned book-learning. Writing to John Murray, Junr. (21st Jan. 1843), about *The Bible in Spain*, he says, "I was conscious that there was vitality in the book and knew that it must sell. I read nothing and drew entirely from my own well. I have long been tired of books; I have had enough of them," [340c] he wrote later, and this, taken in conjunction with another sentence, viz., "My favourite, I might say my only study, is man," [340d] explains not only Borrow's Gypsyism, but also his casual philology. Languages he mostly learned that he might know men. In youth he read—he had to do something during the long office hours, and he read Danish and Welsh literature; but he did not trouble himself much with the literary wealth of other countries, beyond dipping into it. He had a brain of his own, and preferred to form theories from the knowledge he had acquired first hand, a most excellent thing for a man of the nature of George Borrow, but scarcely calculated to advance learning. He hated anything academic.

> "I cannot help thinking," he wrote, "that it was fortunate for myself, who am, to a certain extent, a philologist, that with me the pursuit of languages has been always modified by the love of horses . . . I might, otherwise, have become a mere philologist; one of those beings who toil night and day in culling useless words for some *opus magnum* which Murray will never publish and

> nobody ever read—beings without enthusiasm, who, having never mounted a generous steed, cannot detect a good point in Pegasus himself." [341]

This quotation clearly explains Borrow's attitude towards philology. As he told the *émigré* priest, he hoped to become something more than a philologist.

There was nothing in the sale of *The Zincali* to encourage Borrow to proceed with the other books he had partially prepared. Nearly seven weeks after publication, scarcely three hundred copies had been sold. In the spring of the following year (18th March) John Murray wrote: "The sale of the book has not amounted to much since the first publication; but in recompense for this the Yankees have printed two editions, one for twenty pence *complete*." As Borrow did not benefit from the sale of American editions, the news was not quite so comforting as it would have been had it referred to the English issue.

CHAPTER XXII
APRIL 1841–MARCH 1844

DURING his wanderings in Portugal and Spain Borrow had carried out his intention of keeping a journal, from which on several occasions he sent transcriptions to Earl Street instead of recapitulating in his letters the adventures that befell him. Many of his letters went astray, which is not strange

considering the state of the country. The letters and reports that Borrow wrote to the Bible Society, which still exist, may be roughly divided as follows:—

From his introduction until the end of the Russian expedition	17.50
Used for *The Bible in Spain*	30.00
Others written during the Spanish and Portuguese periods and not used for *The Bible in Spain*	52.50
	100.00

Thirty per cent, of the whole number of the letters was all that Borrow used for *The Bible in Spain*. In addition he had his Journal, and from these two sources he obtained all the material he required for the book that was to electrify the religious reading-public and make famous its writer.

Between Borrow and Ford a warm friendship had sprung up, and many letters passed between them. Ford, who was busily engaged upon his Hand-Book, sought Borrow's advice upon a number of points, in particular about Gypsy matters. There was something of the same atmosphere in his letters as in those of John Hasfeldt: a frank, affectionate interest in Borrow and what affected him that it was impossible to resent. "How I wish you had given us more about yourself," he wrote to Borrow *apropos* of *The Zincali*, "instead of the extracts from those blunder-headed old Spaniards, who knew nothing about Gypsies! I shall give you . . . a hint to publish your whole adventures for the last twenty years." But Hayim Ben-Attar, son of the miracle, had already brought lights, and *The Bible in Spain* had been

begun.

Ford's counsel was invariably sound and sane. He advised *El Gitano*, as he sometimes called Borrow, "to avoid Spanish historians and *poetry* like Prussic acid; to stick to himself, his biography and queer adventures," [343] to all of which Borrow promised obedience. Ford wrote to Borrow (Feb. 1841) suggesting that *The Bible in Spain* should be what it actually was. "I am delighted to hear," he wrote, "that you meditate giving us your travels in Spain. The more odd personal adventures the better, and still more so if *dramatic*; that is, giving the exact conversations."

In June 1841 Borrow received from Earl Street the originals of his letters to the Bible Society, and when he was eventually called upon to return them he retained a number, either through carelessness or by design. It was evidently understood that there should be no reference to any contentious matters. Borrow set to work with the aid of his "Country Amanuensis" to transcribe such portions of the correspondence as he required. The work proceeded slowly.

> "I still scribble occasionally for want of something better to do," he informs John Murray, Junr. (23rd Aug. 1841), and continues: " . . . A queer book will be this same *Bible in Spain*, containing all my queer adventures in that queer country whilst engaged in distributing the Gospel, but neither learning, nor disquisitions, fine writing, or poetry. A book with such a title and

> of this description can scarcely fail
> of success."

Through a dreary summer and autumn he wrote on complaining that there was "scarcely a gleam of sunshine." Remote from the world "with not the least idea of what is going on save in my immediate neighbourhood," he wrote merely to kill time. Such an existence was, to the last degree, uncongenial to a man who for years had been accustomed to sunshine and a life full of incident and adventure.

He grew restless and ill-content. He had been as free as the wind, with occupation for brain and body. He was now, like Achilles, brooding in his tent, and over his mind there fell a shadow of unrest. As early as July 1841 he had thought of settling in Berlin and devoting himself to study. Hasfeldt suggested Denmark, the land of the Sagas. Later in the same year Africa had presented itself to Borrow as a possible retreat, but Ford advised him against it as "the land from which few travellers return," and told him that he had much better go to Seville. Still later Constantinople was considered and then the coast of Barbary. Into his letters there crept a note of querulous complaint. John Hasfeldt besought him to remember how much he had travelled and he would find that he had wandered enough, and then he would accustom himself to rest.

The manuscript of *The Bible in Spain* was completed early in January (1842) and despatched to John Murray, who sent it to Richard Ford. From the "reader's report" it is to be gathered that in addition to the manuscript Borrow sent also the letters that he had borrowed from the Bible Society. Ford refers to the story of the man stung to death by vipers [344]

"in the letter of the 16th August 1837," and advises that "Mr Borrow should introduce it into his narrative." He further recommends him "to go carefully over the whole of his Letters, as it is very probable that other points of interest which they contain may have been omitted in the narrative. Some of the most interesting letters relate to journies not given in the MS."

The work when it reached Ford was apparently in a very rough state. In addition to many mistakes in spelling and grammar, a number of words were left blank. In a vast number of instances short sentences were run together. Mrs Borrow does not appear to have been a very successful amanuensis at this period. Perhaps the most interesting indication of how much the manuscript, as first submitted, differed from the published work is shown by one of Ford's criticisms:—

> "In the narrative there are at present two breaks—one from about March 1836 to June 1837 [Chapters XIII.–XX.],—and the other from November 1837 to July 1839 [Chapters XXXVI.–XLIX.]"

This represents a third of the book as finally printed. Ford objected to the sudden ending; but Borrow made no alteration in this respect. There were a number of other suggestions of lesser importance in this admirable piece of technical criticism. Ford disliked Borrow's striving to create an air of mystery as "taking an unwarrantable liberty with the reader"; he suggested a map and a short biographical sketch of the author, and especially the nature of his connection with the Bible Society. Finally he gives it

as his opinion that it is neither necessary nor advisable to insert any of his letters to the Bible Society, either in the body of the book or as an Appendix.

> "The Dialogues are amongst the best parts of the book," Ford wrote; "but in several of them the tone of the speakers, of those especially who are in humble life, is too correct and elevated, and therefore out of character. This takes away from their effect. I think it would be very advisable that Mr Borrow should go over them with reference to this point, simplifying a few of the turns of expression and introducing a few contractions—*don'ts*, *can'ts*, etc. This would improve them greatly."

This criticism applies to all Borrow's books, in particular to the passages dealing with the Gypsies, who, in spite of their love of high-sounding words, which they frequently misuse, do not speak with the academic precision of Borrow's works any more than do peers or princes or even pedagogues. Borrow met Ford's criticism with the assurance that "the lower classes in Spain are generally elevated in their style and scarcely ever descend to vulgarity."

Borrow's first impulse appears to have been to disregard the suggestion that the two breaks should be filled in. On 13th Jan. he wrote to John Murray, Junr.:

> "I have received the MS. and likewise your kind letter . . . Pray

> thank the Gentleman who perused the MS. in my name for his suggestions, which I will attend to. [By this it is clear that Borrow was not told that Ford was 'the Gentleman.'] I find that the MS. was full of trifling mistakes, the fault of my amanuensis; but I am going through it, and within three days shall have made all the necessary corrections."

No man, of however sanguine a temperament, could seriously contemplate the mere transcription of some eighty thousand words, in addition to the correction of twice that amount of manuscript, within three days. Nine days later Borrow wrote again to John Murray, Junr. "We are losing time; I have corrected seven hundred *consecutive* pages of MS., and the remaining two hundred will be ready in a fortnight." That he had taken so long was due to the fact that the greater part of the preceding week had been occupied with other and more exciting matters than correcting manuscript.

> "During the last week," he continues, "I have been chiefly engaged in horse-breaking. A most magnificent animal has found his way to this neighbourhood—a half-bred Arabian—he is at present in the hands of a low horse-dealer; he can be bought for eight pounds, but no person will have him; it is said that he kills everybody who mounts him. I have been *charming* him, and have so far succeeded that at present he

> does not fling me more than once in five minutes. What a contemptible trade is the Author's compared to that of the jockey."

It was not until towards the end of February that the corrected manuscript of the first volume of *The Bible in Spain* reached Albemarle Street. Later and better counsels had apparently prevailed, and Borrow had become reconciled to filling up the breaks.

Borrow had other occupations than preparing his manuscript for the printer's hands. He was ill and overwrought, and small things became magnified out of all proportion to their actual importance. There had been a dispute between Borrow's dog and that of the rector of Oulton, the Rev. E. P. Denniss, and as the place was small, the dogs met frequently and renewed their feud. Finally the masters of the animals became involved, and an interchange of frigid notes ensued. It appears that Borrow threatened to appeal to the Law and to the Bishop of the Diocese, and further seems to have suggested that in the interests of peace, the rector might do away with his own dog. The tone of the correspondence may be gathered from the following notes:—[347]

> "Mr Denniss begs to acknowledge Mr Borrow's note, and is sorry to hear that his dog and Mr Borrow's have again fallen out. Mr Denniss learns from his servant that Mr D's dog was no more in fault than Mr B's, which latter is of a very quarrelsome and savage disposition, as Mr Denniss can himself testify, as well as many

> other people. Mr Denniss regrets that these two animals cannot agree when they meet, but he must decline acceding to Mr Borrow's somewhat arbitrary demand, conceiving he has as much right to retain a favourite, and in reality very harmless, animal, as Mr Borrow has to keep a dog which has once bitten Mr Denniss himself, and oftentimes attacked him and his family. Mr Borrow is at perfect liberty to take any measure he may deem advisable, either before the magistrates or the Bishop of the Diocese, as Mr Denniss is quite prepared to meet them."
>
> "OULTON RECTORY, 22*nd April* 1842."

Borrow's reply (in the rough draft found among his papers after his death) ran:

> "Mr Borrow has received Mr Denniss' answer to his note. With respect to Mr Denniss' recrimination on the quarrelsome disposition of his harmless house-dog, Mr Borrow declines to say anything further. No one knows better than Mr Denniss the value of his own assertions . . . Circumstances over which Mr Borrow has at present no control will occasionally bring him and his family under the same roof with Mr Denniss; that roof, however, is the roof of the House of God, and the

> prayers of the Church of England are wholesome from whatever mouth they may proceed."

Borrow's most partisan admirer could not excuse the outrage to all decency contained in the last paragraph of his note, if indeed it were ever sent, in any other way than to plead the writer's ill-health.

It had been arranged that *The Bible in Spain* should make its appearance in May. In July Borrow wrote showing some impatience and urging greater expedition.

> "What are your intentions with respect to the *Bible in Spain*?" he enquires of John Murray. "I am a frank man, and frankness never offends me. Has anybody put you out of conceit with the book? . . . Tell me frankly and I will drink your health in Romany. Or would the appearance of the *Bible* on the first of October interfere with the avatar, first or second, of some very wonderful lion or Divinity, to whom George Borrow, who is *neither*, must of course give place? Be frank with me, my dear Sir, and I will drink your health in Romany and Madeira."

He goes on to offer to release John Murray from his "share in the agreement" and complete the book himself remitting to the printer "the necessary money for the purchase of paper."

To Ford, who had acted as a sort of godfather to *The Bible in Spain*, it was "a rum, very rum, mixture of gypsyism, Judaism, and missionary adventure," as he informed John Murray. He read it "with great delight," and its publisher may "depend upon it that the book will sell, which, after all, is the rub." He liked the sincerity, the style, the effect of incident piling on incident. It reminded him of *Gil Blas* with a touch of Bunyan. Borrow is "such a *trump* . . . as full of meat as an egg, and a fresh-laid one." All this he tells John Murray, and concludes with the assurance, "Borrow will lay you golden eggs, and hatch them after the ways of Egypt; put salt on his tail and secure him in your coop, and beware how any poacher coaxes him with 'raisins' or reasons out of the Albemarle preserve." [349]

Ford was never tired of applying new adjectives to Borrow and his work. He was "an extraordinary fellow," "this wild missionary," "a queer chap." Borrow, on the other hand, cherished a sincere regard for the man who had shown such enthusiasm for his work. To John Murray, Junr., he wrote (4th April 1843): "Pray remember me to Ford, who is no humbug and is one of the few beings that I care something about."

Throughout his correspondence with Borrow, Richard Ford showed a judgment and an appreciation of what the public would be likely to welcome that stamped him as a publishers' "reader" by instinct. Such advice as he gave to Borrow in the following letter set up a standard of what a book, such as Borrow had it in his power to write, actually should be. It unquestionably influenced Borrow:—

10*th June* 1842.

"My advice again and again is to avoid all fine writing, all descriptions of mere scenery and trivial events. What the world wants are racy, real, genuine scenes, and the more out of the way the better. Poetry is utterly to be avoided. If Apollo were to come down from Heaven, John Murray would not take his best manuscript as a gift. Stick to yourself, to what you have seen, and the people you have mixed with. The more you give us of odd Jewish people the better . . . Avoid words, stick to deeds. Never think of how you express yourself; for good matter must tell, and no fine writing will make bad matter good. Don't be afraid that what you may not think good will not be thought so by others. It often happens just the reverse . . . New facts seen in new and strange countries will please everybody; but old scenery, even Cintra, will not. We know all about that, and want something that we do not know . . . The grand thing is to be bold and to avoid the common track of the silver paper, silver fork, blue-stocking. Give us adventure, wild adventure, journals, thirty language book, sorcery, Jews, Gentiles, rambles, and the interior of Spanish prisons—the way you get in, the way you get out. No author has yet given us a Spanish prison. Enter

> into the iniquities, the fees, the slang, etc. It will be a little à la Thurtell, but you see the people like to have it so. Avoid rant and cant. Dialogues always tell; they are dramatic and give an air of reality."

The Bible in Spain was published 10th December, and one of the first copies that reached him was inscribed by the author to "Ann Borrow. With her son's best love, 13th Decr. 1842."

From the critics there was praise and scarcely anything but praise. It was received as a work bearing the unmistakable stamp of genius. Lockhart himself reviewed it in *The Quarterly Review*, confessing the shame he felt at not having reviewed *The Zincali*. "Very good—very clever—very neatly done. Only one fault to find—too laudatory," was Borrow's comment upon this notice.

And through the clamour and din of it all, old Mrs Borrow wrote to her daughter-in-law telling her of the call of an old friend, whom she had not seen for twenty-eight years, and who had come to talk with her of the fame of her son, "the most remarkable man that Dereham ever produced. Capt. Girling is a man of few words, but when he *do* speak it is to some purpose." Ford wrote also (he was always writing impulsive, boyish letters) telling how Borrow's name would "fill the trump of fame," and that "Murray is in high bone" about the book. Hasfeldt wrote, too, saying that he saw his "friend 'tall George,' wandering over the mountains until I ached in every joint with the vividness of his descriptions."

In all this chorus of praise there was the complaint of

the *Dublin Review* that "Borrow was a missionary sent out by a gang of conspirators against Christianity." Borrow's comment upon this notice was that "It is easier to call names and misquote passages in a dirty Review than to write *The Bible in Spain*."

A second edition of *The Bible in Spain* was issued in January, to which the author contributed a preface, "very funny, but wild," he assured John Murray, Junr., and he promised "yet another preface for the third edition, should one be called for." The third edition appeared in March, the fourth in June, and the fifth in July. When the Fourth Edition was nearing completion Borrow wrote to Murray: "Would it be as well to write a preface to this *fourth* edition with a tirade or two against the Pope, and allusions to the Great North Road?" To which Murray replied, "With due submission to you as author, I would suggest that you should not abuse the Pope in the new preface."

In the flush of his success Borrow could afford to laugh at the few cavilling critics.

> "Let them call me a nonentity if they will," he wrote to John Murray, Junr. (13th March). "I believe that some of those, who say I am a phantom, would alter their tone provided they were to ask me to a good dinner; bottles emptied and fowls devoured are not exactly the feats of a phantom. No! I partake more of the nature of a Brownie or Robin Goodfellow, goblins, 'tis true, but full of merriment and fun, and fond of good eating and drinking."

America echoed back the praise and bought the book in thousands. Publishers issued editions in Philadelphia and New York; but Borrow did not participate in the profits, as there was then no copyright protection for English books in the United States of America. The *Athenæum* reported (27th May 1843) that 30,000 copies had been sold in America. "I really never heard of anything so infamous," wrote Borrow to his wife. The only thing that America gave him was praise and (in common with other countries) a place in its biographical dictionaries and encyclopædias. *The Bible in Spain* was translated into French and German and subsequently (abridged) into Russian.

What appeared to please Borrow most was Sir Robert Peel's reference to him in the House of Commons, although he regretted the scanty report of the speech given in the newspapers. Replying to Dr Bowring's (at that time Borrow's friend) motion "for copies of the correspondence of the British Government with the Porte on the subject of the Bishop of Jerusalem," Sir Robert remarked: "If Mr Borrow had been deterred by trifling obstacles, the circulation of the Bible in Spain would never have been advanced to the extent which it had happily attained. If he had not persevered he would not have been the agent of so much enlightment." [352]

There were many things that contributed to the instantaneous success of *The Bible in Spain*. Apart from the vivid picture that it gave of the indomitable courage and iron determination of a man commanding success, its literary qualities, and enthralling interest, its greatest commercial asset lay in its appeal to the Religious Public. Never, perhaps, had they been invited to read such a book, because

never had the Bible been distributed by so amazing a missionary as George Borrow. *Gil Blas* with a touch of Bunyan, as Ford delightfully phrased it, and not too much Bunyan. Thieves, murderers, gypsies, bandits, prisons, wars—all knit together by the missionary work of a man who was *persona grata* with every lawless ruffian he encountered, and yet a sower of the seed. The Religious Public did not pause to ponder over the strangeness of the situation. They had fallen among thieves, and with breathless eagerness were prepared to enjoy to the full the novel experience.

Here was a religious book full of the most exquisite material thrills without a suggestion of a spiritual moral. Criminals were encountered, their deeds rehearsed and the customary sermon upon the evils arising from wickedness absent. It was a stimulating drink to unaccustomed palates. *The Bible in Spain* sold in its thousands.

The accuracy of the book has never been questioned; if it had, Borrow's letters to the Bible Society would immediately settle any doubt that might arise. If there be one incident in the work that appears invented, it is the story of Benedict Moll, the treasure-hunter; yet even that is authentic. In the following letter, dated 22nd June 1839, Rey Roméro, the bookseller of Santiago, refers to the unfortunate Benedict Moll:—

> "The German of the *Treasure*," he writes, "came here last year bearing letters from the Government for the purpose of discovering it. But, a few days after his arrival, they threw him into prison; from thence he

> wrote me, making himself known as the one you introduced to me; wherefore my son went to see him in prison. He told my son that you also had been arrested, but I could not credit it. A short time after, they took him off to Coruña; then they brought him back here again, and I do not know what has become of him since." [353]

Borrow now became the lion of the hour. He was fêted and feasted in London, and everybody wanted to meet the wonderful white-haired author of *The Bible in Spain*. One day he is breakfasting with the Prussian Ambassador, "with princes and members of Parliament, I was the star of the morning," he writes to his wife. "I thought to myself 'what a difference!'" Later he was present at a grand *soirée*, "and the people came in throngs to be introduced to me. To-night," he continues, "I am going to the Bishop of Norwich, to-morrow to another place, and so on." [354]

Borrow had been much touched by the news of the death of Allan Cunningham (1785–1842).

> "Only think, poor Allan Cunningham dead!" he wrote to John Murray, Junr. (25th Nov. 1842). "A young man—only fifty-eight—strong and tall as a giant; might have lived to a hundred and one, but he bothered himself about the affairs of this world far too much. That statue shop was his bane; took to book making likewise, in a word too fond

> of Mammon—awful death—no preparation—came literally upon him like a thief in the dark. Am thinking of writing a short life of him; old friend—twenty years' standing, knew a good deal about him; *Traditional Tales* his best work . . .
>
> "Pray send Dr Bowring a copy of Bible. Lives No. 1, Queen Square, Westminster, another old friend. Send one to Ford—capital fellow. Respects to Mr M. God bless you. Feel quite melancholy, Ever yours."

In these Jinglelike periods Borrow pays tribute to the man who praised his Romantic Ballads and contributed a prefatory poem. He returned to the subject ten days later in another letter to John Murray, Junr. "I can't get poor Allan out of my head," he wrote. "When I come up I intend to go and see his wife. What a woman!"

Fame did not dispel from Borrow's mind the old restlessness, the desire for action. He was still unwell, worried at the sight of "Popery . . . springing up in every direction . . . *There's no peace in this world.*" [355a] A cold contracted by his wife distressed him to the point of complaining that "there is little but trouble in this world; I am nearly tired of it." [355b] Exercise failed to benefit him. He was suffering from languor and nervousness. And through it all that Spartan woman who had committed the gravest of matrimonial errors, that of marrying a genius, soothed and comforted the sick lion, tired even of victory.

Small things troubled him and honours awakened in him no enthusiasm. The *Times* in reviewing *The Bible in Spain* had inferred that he was not a member of the Church of England, [355c] and the statement "must be contradicted." The Royal Institution was prepared to confer an honour upon him, and he could not make up his mind whether or not to accept it.

> "What would the Institute expect me to write?" he enquires of John Murray, Junr., 25th Feb. 1843. "(I have exhausted Spain and the Gypsies.) Would an essay on the Welsh language and literature suit, with an account of the Celtic tongues? Or would something about the ancient North and its literature be more acceptable? . . . Had it been the Royal Academy, I should have consented at once, and do hereby empower you to accept in my name any offer which may be made from that quarter. I should very much like to become an Academician, the thing would just suit me, more especially as 'they do not want *clever* men, but *safe* men.' Now I am safe enough, ask the Bible Society, whose secrets I have kept so much to their satisfaction, that they have just accepted at my hands an English Gypsy Gospel *gratis*." [356]

He declined an invitation to join the Ethnological Society.

> "Who are they?" he enquires in the same letter. "At present I am in great demand. A Bishop has just requested me to visit him. The worst of these Bishops is that they are all skinflints, saving for their families; their *cuisine* is bad and their Port-wine execrable, and as for their cigars—. . . "

Borrow strove to quiet his spirit by touring about Norfolk, "putting up at dead of night in country towns and small villages." He returned to Oulton at the end of a fortnight, having tired himself and knocked up his horse. Even the news that a new edition of *The Bible in Spain* was required could not awaken in him any enthusiasm. He was glad the book had sold, as he knew it would, and he would like a rough estimate of the profits. A few days later he writes to John Murray, Junr., with reference to a new edition of *The Zincali*, saying that he finds "that there is far more connection between the first and second volumes than he had imagined," and begging that the reprint may be the same as the first. "It would take nearly a month to refashion the book," he continues, "and I believe a month's mental labour at the present time would do me up." The weather in particular affected, him. For years he had been accustomed to sun-warmed Spain, and the gloom and greyness of England depressed him.

> "Strange weather this," he had written to John Murray (31st Dec. 1842)—"very unwholesome I believe both for man and beast. Several people dead and great mortality amongst the cattle. Am intolerably

> well myself, but get but little rest—
> disagreeable dreams—digestion not
> quite so good as I could wish—been
> on the water system—won't do—
> have left it off, and am now taking
> lessons in singing."

Many men have earned the reputation of madness for less eccentric actions than taking lessons in singing as a cure for indigestion, after the failure of the water cure.

Although he was receiving complimentary letters from all quarters and from people he had never even heard of, he seemed acutely unhappy.

> "I did wrong," he writes to his wife
> from London (29th May 1843), "not
> to bring you when I came, for
> without you I cannot get on at all.
> Left to myself, a gloom comes upon
> me which I cannot describe. I will
> endeavour to be home on Thursday,
> as I wish so much to be with you,
> without whom there is no joy for me
> nor rest. You tell me to ask for
> *situations*, etc. I am not at all suited
> for them. My place seems to be in
> our own dear cottage, where, with
> your help, I hope to prepare for a
> better world . . . I dare say I shall be
> home on Thursday, perhaps earlier,
> if I am unwell; for the poor bird
> when in trouble has no one to fly to
> but his mate." And a few days later:
> "I wish I had not left home. Take
> care of yourself. Kiss poor Hen."

During his stay in London, Borrow sat to Henry Wyndham Phillips, R.A., for his portrait. [357] On 21st June John Murray wrote: "I have seen your portrait. Phillips is going to saw off a bit of the panel, which will give you your proper and characteristic height. Next year you will doubtless cut a great figure in the Exhibition. It is the best thing young Phillips has done." The painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1844 as "George Borrow, Esq., author of *The Bible in Spain*," and is now in the possession of Mr John Murray.

There is a story told in connection with the painting of this portrait. Borrow was a bad sitter, and visibly chafed at remaining indoors doing nothing. To overcome this restlessness the painter had recourse to a clever stratagem. He enquired of his sitter if Persian were really a fine language, as he had heard; Borrow assured him that it was, and at Phillips' request, started declaiming at the top of his voice, his eyes flashing with enthusiasm. When he ceased, the wily painter mentioned other tongues, Turkish, Armenian, etc., in each instance with the same result, and the painting of the portrait became an easy matter.

On 23rd June John Murray (the Second) died, at the age of sixty-five, and was succeeded by his son. "Poor old Murray!" Ford wrote to Borrow, "We shall never see his like again. He . . . was a fine fellow in every respect." In another letter he refers to him as "that Prince of Bibliophiles, poor, dear, old Murray." Borrow's own relations with John Murray had always been most cordial. On one occasion, when writing to his son, he says: "I shall be most happy to see you and still more your father, whose jokes do one good. I wish all the world were as gay as he."

Then without a break, he goes on to deplore the fact that "a gentleman drowned himself last week on my property. I wish he had gone somewhere else." Such was George Borrow.



For some time past Borrow's thoughts had been directed towards obtaining a Government post abroad. The sentence, "You tell me to ask for situations, etc.," in a letter to his wife had reference to this ambition. He had previously (21st June 1841) written to Lord Clarendon suggesting for

himself a consulship; but the reply had not been encouraging. It was "quite hopeless to expect a consulship from Lord Palmerston, the applicants were too many and the appointments too few."

Borrow recognised the stagnation of his present life.

> "I wish the Government would give me some command in Ireland which would call forth my energies," he wrote to John Murray (25th Oct. 1843). "If there be an outbreak there I shall apply to them at once, for my heart is with them in the present matter: I hope they will be firm, and they have nothing to fear; I am sure that the English nation will back them, for the insolence and ingratitude of the Irish, and the cowardice of their humbug chief, have caused universal disgust." Later he wrote, also to John Murray, with reference to that "trumpery fellow O'Connell . . . I wish I were acquainted with Sir Robert Peel. I could give him many a useful hint with respect to Ireland and the Irish. I know both tolerably well. Whenever there's a row I intend to go over with Sidi Habismilk and put myself at the head of a body of volunteers."

He had previously written "the old Duke [Wellington] will at last give salt eel to that cowardly, bawling vagabond O'Connell." Borrow detested O'Connell as a "Dublin bully . . . a humbug,

without courage or one particle of manly feeling." Again (17th June) he had written: "Horrible news from Ireland. I wish sincerely the blackguards would break out at once; they will never be quiet until they have got a sound licking, and the sooner the better."

The finer side of Borrow's character was shown in his eagerness to obtain employment. There is a touch of pathos in the sight of this knight, armed and ready to fight anything for anybody, wasting his strength and his talents in feuds with his neighbours.

In the profits on the old and the preparation of new editions of *The Bible in Spain*, Borrow took a keen interest. The money he was making enabled him to assist his wife in disembarrassing her estate. "I begin to take considerable pleasure in making money," he wrote to his publisher, "which I hope is a good sign; for what is life unless we take pleasure in something?" Again he enquires, "Why does not the public call for another edition of them [*The Gypsies of Spain*]. You see what an unconscionable rascal I am becoming." During his lifetime Borrow received from the firm of Murray, £3437, 19s., most of which was on account of *The Bible in Spain* and, consequently, was paid to him during the first years of his association with Albemarle Street.

Caroline Fox gives an interesting picture of Borrow at this period as he appeared to her:—

"25*th Oct.* 1843.

"Catherine Gurney gave us a note to George Borrow, so on him we called, —a tall, ungainly, uncouth man, with great physical strength, a quick penetrating eye, a confident manner,

> and a disagreeable tone and pronunciation. He was sitting on one side of the fire, and his old mother on the other. His spirits always sink in wet weather, and to-day was very rainy, but he was courteous and not displeased to be a little lionised, for his delicacy is not of the most susceptible. He talked about Spain and the Spaniards; the lowest classes of whom, he says, are the only ones worth investigating, the upper and middle class being (with exceptions, of course) mean, selfish, and proud beyond description. They care little for Roman Catholicism, and bear faint allegiance to the Pope. They generally lead profligate lives, until they lose all energy and then become slavishly superstitious. He said a curious thing of the Esquimaux, namely, that their language is a most complex and highly artificial one, calculated to express the most delicate metaphysical subtleties, yet they have no literature, nor are there any traces of their ever having had one—a most curious anomaly; hence he simply argues that you can ill judge of a people by their language." [360a]

One of the strangest things about Borrow's personality was that it almost invariably struck women unfavourably. That he himself was not

indifferent to women is shown by the impression made upon him by the black eyes of one of the Misses Mills of Saxham Hall, where he was taken to dinner by Dr Hake, who states that "long afterwards, his inquiries after the black eyes were unfailing." [360b] He was also very kind and considerate to women. "He was very polite and gentlemanly in ladies' society, and we all liked him," wrote one woman friend [360c] who frequently accompanied him on his walks. She has described him as walking along "singing to himself or quite silent, quite forgetting me until he came to a high hill, when he would turn round, seize my hand, and drag me up. Then he would sit down and enjoy the prospect." [360d]

CHAPTER XXIII
MARCH 1844–1848

In March 1844 Borrow, unable longer to control the *Wanderlust* within him, gave up the struggle, and determined to make a journey to the East. He was in London on the 20th, as Lady Eastlake (then Miss Elizabeth Rigby) testifies in her Journal. "Borrow came in the evening," she writes: "now a fine man, but a most disagreeable one; a kind of character that would be most dangerous in rebellious times—one that would suffer or persecute to the utmost. His face is expressive of wrong-headed determination." [361]

He left London towards the end of April for Paris,

from which he wrote to John Murray, 1st May:—

> "Vidocq wishes very much to have a copy of my *Gypsies of Spain*, and likewise one of the Romany Gospels. On the other side you will find an order on the Bible Society for the latter, and perhaps you will be so kind as to let one of your people go to Earl Street to procure it. You would oblige me by forwarding it to your agent in Paris, the address is Monsr. Vidocq, Galerie Vivienne, No. 13 . . . V. is a strange fellow, and amongst other things dabbles in literature. He is meditating a work upon *Les Bohemiens*, about whom I see he knows nothing at all. I have no doubt that the *Zincali*, were it to fall into his hands, would be preciously gutted, and the best part of the contents pirated. By the way, could you not persuade some of the French publishers to cause it to be translated, in which event there would be no fear. Such a work would be sure to sell. I wish Vidocq to have a copy of the book, but I confess I have my suspicions; he is so extraordinarily civil."

From Paris he proceeded to Vienna, and thence into Hungary and Transylvania, where he remained for some months. He is known to have been "in the steppe of Debreczin," [362a] to Koloszvar, through Nagy-Szeben, or Hermannstadt, on his journey through Roumania to Bucharest. He visited

Wallachia “for the express purpose of discoursing with the Gypsies, many of whom I found wandering about.” [362b]

So little is known of Borrow’s Eastern Journey that the following account, given by an American, has a peculiar interest:—

> “My companions, as we rode along, related some marvellous stories of a certain English traveller who had been here [near Grosswardein] and of his influence over the Gypsies. One of them said that he was walking out with him one day, when they met a poor gypsy woman. The Englishman addressed her in Hungarian, and she answered in the usual disdainful way. He changed his language, however, and spoke a word or two in an unknown tongue. The woman’s face lighted up in an instant, and she replied in the most passionate, eager way, and after some conversation dragged him away almost with her. After this the English gentleman visited a number of their most private gatherings and was received everywhere as one of them. He did more good among them, all said, than all the laws over them, or the benevolent efforts for them, of the last half century. They described his appearance—his tall, lank, muscular form, and mentioned that he had been much in Spain, and I saw that it must be that most

> ubiquitous of travellers, Mr Borrow." [362c]

This was the fame most congenial to Borrow's strange nature. Dinners, receptions, and the like caused him to despise those who found pleasure in such "crazy admiration for what they called gentility." It was his foible, as much as "gentility nonsense" was theirs, to find pleasure in the *rôle* of the mysterious stranger, who by a word could change a disdainful gypsy into a fawning, awe-stricken slave. Fame to satisfy George Borrow must carry with it something of the greatness of Olympus.

A glimpse of Borrow during his Eastern tour is obtained from Mrs Borrow's letters to John Murray. After telling him that she possesses a privilege which many wives do not (viz.), permission to open her Husband's letters during his absence, she proceeds:—

> "The accounts from him are, I am thankful to say, very satisfactory. It is extraordinary with what marks of kindness even Catholics of distinction treat him when they know who he is, but it is clearly his gift of tongues which causes him to meet with so many adventures, several of which he has recorded of a most singular nature." [363]

At Vienna Borrow had arranged to wait until he should receive a letter from his wife, "being very anxious to know of his family," as Mrs Borrow informed John Murray (24th July).

> "Thus far," she continues, "thanks be

> to God, he has prospered in his journey. Many and wonderful are the adventures he has met with, which I hope at no distant period may be related to his friends. Doctor Bowring was very kind in sending me flattering tidings of my Husband."

Borrow was at Constantinople on 17th Sept. when he drew on his letter of credit. Leland tells an anecdote about Borrow at Constantinople; but it must be remembered that it was written when he regarded Borrow with anything but friendly feelings:—

> "Sir Patrick Colquhoun told me that once when he was at Constantinople, Mr Borrow came there, and gave it out that he was a marvellous Oriental scholar. But there was great scepticism on this subject at the Legation, and one day at the *table d'hôte*, where the great writer and divers young diplomatists dined, two who were seated on either side of Borrow began to talk Arabic, speaking to him, the result being that he was obliged to confess that he not only did not understand what they were saying, but did not even know what the language was. Then he was tried in Modern Greek, with the same result." [364]

The story is obviously untrue. Had Borrow been ignorant of Arabic he would not have risked writing to Dr Bowring (11th Sept. 1831; see *ante*, page 85)

expressing his enthusiasm for that language. Arabic had, apparently, formed one of the subjects of his preliminary examination at Earl Street. With regard to Modern Greek he confessed in a letter to Mr Brandram (12th June 1839), "though I speak it very ill, I can make myself understood."

Having obtained a Turkish passport, and after being presented to Abdûl Medjîd, the Sultan, Borrow proceeded to Salonika and, crossing Thessaly to Albania, visited Janina and Prevesa. He passed over to Corfù, and saw Venice and Rome, returning to England by way of Marseilles, Paris and Havre. He arrived in London on 16th November, after nearly seven months' absence, to find his "home particularly dear to me . . . after my long wanderings."

It is curious that he should have left no record of this expedition; but if he made notes he evidently destroyed them, as, with the exception of a few letters, nothing was found among his papers relating to the Eastern tour. There is evidence that he was occupied with his pen during this journey, in the existence at the British Museum of his *Vocabulary of the Gypsy Language as spoken in Hungary and Transylvania, compiled during an intercourse of some months with the Gypsies in those parts in the year* 1844, *by George Borrow*. In all probability he prepared his *Bohemian Grammar* at the same time. [365a]

From the time that he became acquainted with Borrow, Richard Ford had constituted himself the genius of *La Mezquita* (the Mosque), as he states the little octagonal Summer-house was called. He was for ever urging in impulsive, polyglot letters that the curtain to be lifted. "Publish your *whole* adventures

for the last twenty years," he had written. [365b] Ford saw that a man of Borrow's nature must have had astonishing adventures, and with *his* pen would be able to tell them in an astonishing manner.

As early as the summer of 1841 Borrow appears to have contemplated writing his *Autobiography*. On the eve of the appearance of *The Bible in Spain* (17th Dec.) he wrote to John Murray: "I hope our book will be successful; if so, I shall put another on the stocks. Capital subject: early life; studies and adventures; some account of my father, William Taylor, Whiter, Big Ben, etc. etc."

The first draft of notes for *Lavengro*, *an Autobiography*, as the book was originally advertised in the announcement, is extremely interesting. It runs:—

> "Reasons for studying languages:
> French, Italian, D'Eterville.
>
> Southern tongues. Dante.
>
> Walks. The Quaker's Home,
> Mousehold. Petulengro.
>
> The Gypsies.
>
> The Office. Welsh. Lhuyd.
>
> German. Levy. Billy Taylor.
>
> Danish. Kœmpe Viser. Billy Taylor.
> Dinner.
>
> Bowring.
>
> Hebrew. The Jew.
>
> Philosophy. Radicalism. Ranters.

Thurtell. Boxers. Petulengres.”
[365c]

Lavengro was planned in 1842 and the greater part written before the end of the following year, although the work was not actually completed until 1846. There are numerous references in Borrow’s letters of this period to the book on which he was then engaged, and he invariably refers to it as his *Life*. On 21st January 1843 he writes to John Murray, Junr.: “I meditate shortly a return to Barbary in quest of the *Witch Hamlet*, and my adventures in the land of wonders will serve capitally to fill the thin volume of *My Life*, *a Drama*, By G. B.” Again and again Borrow refers to *My Life*. Hasfeldt and Ford also wrote of it as the “wonderful life” and “the *Biography*.”

In his letters to John Murray, Borrow not only refers to the book as his *Life*, but from time to time gives crumbs of information concerning its progress. The Secretary of the Bible Society has just lent him his letters from Russia, “which will be of great assistance in the Life, as I shall work them up as I did those relating to Spain. The first volume,” he continues, “will be devoted to England entirely, and my pursuits and adventures in early life.” He recognises that he must be careful of the reputation that he has earned. His new book is to be original, as would be seen when it at last appears; but he confesses that occasionally he feels “tremendously lazy.” On another occasion (27th March 1843) he writes to John Murray, Junr.: “I hope by the end of next year that I shall have part of my life ready for the press in 3 vols.” Six months later (2nd Oct. 1843) he writes to John Murray:—

> "I wish I had another *Bible* ready; but slow and sure is my maxim. The book which I am at present about will consist, if I live to finish it of a series of Rembrandt pictures interspersed here and there with a Claude. I shall tell the world of my parentage, my early thoughts and habits; how I became a sap-engro, or viper-catcher; my wanderings with the regiment in England, Scotland and Ireland . . . Then a great deal about Norwich, Billy Taylor, Thurtell, etc.; how I took to study and became a lav-engro. What do you think of this as a bill of fare for the *first* Vol.? The second will consist of my adventures in London as an author in the year '23 (*sic*), adventures on the Big North Road in '24 (*sic*), Constantinople, etc. The third—but I shall tell you no more of my secrets."

In a letter to John Murray (25th Oct. 8843), the title is referred to as *Lavengro*: *A Biography*. It is to be "full of grave fun and solemn laughter like the *Bible*." On 6th December he again writes:—

> "I do not wish for my next book to be advertised yet; I have a particular reason. The Americans are up to everything which affords a prospect of gain, and I should not wonder that, provided I were to announce my title, and the book did not appear forthwith, they would write

> one for me and send forth their trash into the world under my name. For my own part I am in no hurry," he proceeds. "I am writing to please myself, and am quite sure that if I can contrive to please myself, I shall please the public also. Had I written a book less popular than the *Bible*, I should be less cautious; but I know how much is expected from me, and also know what a roar of exultation would be raised by my enemies (and I have plenty) were I to produce anything that was not first rate."

Time after time he insists upon his determination to publish nothing that is not "as good as the last." "I shall go on with my *Life*," he writes, to Ford (9th Feb. 1844), "but slowly and lazily. What I write, however, is *good*. I feel it is good, strange and wild as it is." [367]

From 24th–27th Jan. 1844 that "most astonishing fellow" Richard Ford visited Borrow at Oulton, urging again in person, most likely, the lifting of the veil that obscured those seven mysterious years. Ford has himself described this visit to Borrow in a letter written from Oulton Hall.

> "I am here on a visit to *El Gitano*;" he writes, "two 'rum' coves, in a queer country . . . we defy the elements, and chat over *las cosas de España*, and he tells me portions of his life, more strange even than his book. We scamper by day over the country in a sort of gig, which

> reminds me of Mr Weare on his trip with Mr THURTELL [Borrow's old preceptor]; 'Sidi Habismilk' is in the stable and a Zamarra [sheepskin coat] now before me, writing as I am in a sort of summer-house called *La Mezquita*, in which *El Gitano* concocts his lucubrations, and *paints* his pictures, for his object is to colour up and poetise his adventures."

By this last sentence Ford showed how thoroughly he understood Borrow's literary methods. A fortnight later Borrow writes to Ford:—

> "You can't think how I miss you and our chats by the fireside. The wine, now I am alone, has lost its flavour, and the cigars make me ill. I am frequently in my valley of the shadows, and had I not my summer jaunt [the Eastern Tour] to look forward to, I am afraid it would be all up with your friend and *Batushka*."

The Eastern Tour considerably interfered with the writing of *Lavengro*. There was a seven months' break; but Borrow settled down to work on it again, still determined to take his time and produce a book that should be better than *The Bible in Spain*.

Ford's *Hand-Book for Travellers in Spain and Readers at Home* appeared in 1845, a work that had cost its author upwards of sixteen years of labour. In a letter to Borrow he characterised it as "a *rum* book and has

queer stuff in it, although much expurgated for the sake of Spain." Ford was very anxious that Borrow should keep the promise that he had given two years previously to review the *Hand-Book* when it appeared. "You will do it *magnificently*. 'Thou art the man,'" Ford had written with the greatest enthusiasm. On 2nd June an article of thirty-seven folio pages was despatched by Borrow to John Murray for *The Quarterly Review*, with the following from Mrs Borrow:—

> "With regard to the article, it must not be received as a specimen of what Mr Borrow would have produced had he been well, but he considered his promise to Mr Ford sacred—and it is only to be wished that it had been written under more favourable circumstances." Borrow was ill at the time, having been "very unwell for the last month," as Mrs Borrow explains, "and particularly so lately. Shivering fits have been succeeded by burning fever, till his strength was much reduced; and he at present remains in a low, and weak state, and what is worse, we are by no means sure that the disease is subdued."

Ford saw in Borrow "a crack reviewer." " . . . You have," he assured him in 1843, "only to write a *long letter*, having read the book carefully and thought over the subject." Ford also wrote to Borrow (26th Oct. 1843): "I have written several letters to Murray recommending them to *bag* you forthwith, unless they are demented." There was no doubt in his,

Ford's, mind as to the acceptance of Borrow's article.

> "If insanity does not rule the *Q. R.* camp, they will embrace the offer with open arms in their present Erebus state of dullness," he tells Borrow, then, with a burst of confidence continues, "But, barring politics, I confidentially tell you that the *Ed*[*inburgh*] *Rev.* does business in a more liberal and more business-like manner than the *Q*[*uarterly*] *Rev.* I am always dunning this into Murray's head. More flies are caught with honey than vinegar. Soft sawder, especially if plenty of *gold* goes into the composition, cements a party and keeps earnest pens together. I grieve, for my heart is entirely with the *Q. R.*, its views and objects."

The article turned out to be, not a review of the *Hand-Book*, but a bitter attack on Spain and her rulers. The second part was to some extent germane to the subject, but it appears to have been more concerned with Borrow's view of Spain and things Spanish than with Ford's book. Lockhart saw that it would not do. In a letter to John Murray he explains very clearly and very justly the objections to using the article as it stood.

> "I am very sorry," he writes (13th June), "after Borrow has so kindly exerted himself during illness, that I must return his paper. I read the MS. with much pleasure; but clever

> and brilliant as he is sure always to be, it was very evident that he had not done such an article as Ford's merits required; and I therefore intended to adopt Mr Borrow's lively diatribe, but interweave with his matter and add to it, such observations and extracts as might, I thought, complete the paper in a *review sense*.
>
> "But it appears that Mr B. won't allow anybody to tamper with his paper; therefore here it is. It will be highly ornamental as it stands to any *Magazine*, and I have no doubt either *Blackwood* or *Fraser* or *Colburn* will be [only] too happy to insert it next month, if applied to now.
>
> "Mr Borrow would not have liked that, when his *Bible in Spain* came out, we should have printed a brilliant essay by Ford on some point of Spanish interest, but including hardly anything calculated to make the public feel that a new author of high consequence had made his appearance among us—one bearing the name, not of Richard Ford, but of George Borrow."

Lockhart was right and Borrow was wrong. There is no room for equivocation. Borrow should have sunk his pride in favour of his friendship for Ford, who had, even if occasionally a little tedious in his epistolary enthusiasm, always been a loyal friend;

but Borrow was ill and excuses must be made for him. Lockhart wrote also to Ford describing Borrow's paper as "just another capital chapter of his *Bible in Spain*," which he had read with delight, but there was "hardly a word of *review*, and no extract giving the least notion of the peculiar merits and style especially, of the *Hand-Book*." "He is unwell," continued Lockhart, "I should be very sorry to bother him more at present; and, moreover, from the little he has said of your *style*, I am forced to infer that a *review* of your book by him would never be what I could feel authorised to publish in the *Q. R.*" The letter concludes with a word of condolence that the *Hand-Book* will have to be committed to other hands.

Ford realised the difficulty of the situation in which he was placed, and strove to wriggle out of it by telling Borrow that his wife had said all along that

> "'Borrow can't write anything dull enough for your set; I wonder how I ever married one of them,'—I hope and trust you will not cancel the paper, for we can't afford to lose a scrap of your queer sparkle and 'thousand bright daughters circumvolving.' I have recommended its insertion in *Blackwood*, *Fraser*, or some of those clever Magazines, who will be overjoyed to get such a hand as yours, and I will bet any man £5 that your paper will be the most popular of all they print."

It is evident that Ford was genuinely distressed, and in his anxiety to be loyal to his friend rather overdid

it. His letter has an air of patronage that the writer certainly never intended. The outstanding feature is its absolute selflessness. Ford never seems to think of himself, or that Borrow might have made a concession to their friendship. Happy Ford! The unfortunate episode estranged Borrow from Ford. Letters between them became less and less frequent and finally ceased altogether, although Borrow did not forget to send to his old friend a copy of *Lavengro* when it appeared.

Worries seemed to rain down upon Borrow's head about this time. Samuel Morton Peto (afterwards Sir Samuel) had decided to enrich Lowestoft by improving the harbour and building a railway to Reedham, about half-way between Yarmouth and Norwich. He was authorised by Parliament and duly constructed his line, which not even Borrow's anger could prevent from passing through the Oulton Estate, between the Hall and the Cottage. Borrow could not fight an Act of Parliament, which forced him to cross a railway bridge on his way to church; but he never forgave the man who had contrived it, or his millions. His first thought had been to fly before the invader. All quiet would be gone from the place. "Sell and be off," advised Ford; "I hope you will make the railway pay dear for its whistle," quietly observed John Murray. At first Borrow was inclined to take Ford's advice and settle abroad; but subsequently relinquished the idea.

He was not, however, the man quietly to sit down before what he conceived to be an unjustifiable outrage to his right to be quiet. He never forgave railways, although forced sometimes to make use of them. Samuel Morton Peto became to him the embodiment of evil, and as "Mr Flamson flaming in

his coach with a million" he is immortalised in *The Romany Rye*.

It is said that Sir Samuel boasted that he had made more than the price he had paid for Borrow's land out of the gravel he had taken from off it. On one occasion, after he had bought Somerleyton Hall, happening to meet Borrow, he remarked that he never called upon him, and Borrow remembering the boast replied, "I call on you! Do you think I don't read my Shakespeare? Do you think I don't know all about those highwaymen Bardolph and Peto?" [372]

The neighbourhood of Oulton appears to have been infested with thieves, and poachers found admirable "cover" in the surrounding plantations, or small woods. On several occasions Borrow himself had been attacked at night on the highway between Lowestoft and Oulton. Once he had even been shot at and nearly overpowered. John Murray (the Second) on hearing of one of these assaults had written (1841) artfully enquiring, "Were your wood thieves Gypsies, and have the *Calés* got notice of your publication [*The Zincali*]?"

Borrow had written to John Murray, Junr. (10th May 1842):—

> "I have been dreadfully unwell since I last heard from you—a regular nervous attack. At present I have a bad cough, caught by getting up at night in pursuit of poachers and thieves. A horrible neighbourhood this—not a magistrate dares do his duty." On 18th September 1843 he again wrote to John Murray: "One of the Magistrates in this district is just

> dead. Present my compliments to Mr Gladstone and tell him that the *The Bible in Spain* would have no objection to become 'a great unpaid!'"

Gladstone is said greatly to have admired *The Bible in Spain*, even to the extent of writing to John Murray counselling him to have amended a passage that he considered ill-advised. Gladstone's letter was sent on to Borrow, and he acknowledges its receipt (6th November 1843) in the following terms:—

> "Many thanks for the perusal of Mr Gladstone's letter. I esteem it a high honour that so distinguished a man should take sufficient interest in a work of mine as to suggest any thing in emendation. I can have no possible objection to modify the passage alluded to. It contains some strong language, particularly the sentence about the scarlet Lady, which it would be perhaps as well to omit."

The offending passage was that in which Borrow says, when describing the interior of the Mosque at Tangier: "I looked around for the abominable thing, and found it not; no scarlet strumpet with a crown of false gold sat nursing an ugly changeling in a niche." In later editions the words "no scarlet strumpet," etc., were changed to "the besetting sin of the pseudo-Christian Church did not stare me in the face in every corner."

The amendment was little likely to please a

Churchman of Gladstone's calibre, or procure for the writer the magistracy he coveted, even if it had been made less grudgingly. "We must not make any further alterations here," Borrow wrote to Murray a few days later, "otherwise the whole soliloquy, which is full of vigor and poetry, and moreover of *truth*, would be entirely spoiled. As it is, I cannot help feeling that [it] is considerably damaged." There seems very little doubt that this passage was referred to in the letter that John Murray encloses in his of 10th July 1843 [374] with this reference: "(The writer of the enclosed note is a worthy canon of St Paul's, and has evidently seen only the 1st edition)." Borrow replied:—

> "Pray present my best respects to the Canon of St Paul's and tell him from me that he is a *burro*, which meaneth Jackass, and that I wish he would mind his own business, which he might easily do by attending a little more to the accommodation of the public in his ugly Cathedral."

Borrow appears to have set his mind on becoming a magistrate. He had written to Lockhart (November 1843) enquiring how he had best proceed to obtain such an appointment. Lockhart was not able to give him any very definite information, his knowledge of such things, as he confessed, "being Scotch." For the time being the matter was allowed to drop, to be revived in 1847 by a direct application from Borrow to Lord Clarendon to support his application with the Lord Chancellor. His claims were based upon (1) his being a large landed-proprietor in the district (Mrs Borrow had become the owner of the Oulton Hall Estate during the previous year); (2) the fact that the

neighbourhood was over-run with thieves and undesirable characters; (3) that there was no magistrate residing in the district. Lord Clarendon promised his good offices, but suggested that as all such appointments were made through the Lord-Lieutenant of the County, the Earl of Stradbroke had better be acquainted with what was taking place. This was done through the Hon. Wm. Rufus Rous, Lord Stradbroke's brother, whose interest was obtained by some of Borrow's friends.

After a delay of two months, Lord Stradbroke wrote to Lord Clarendon that he was quite satisfied with "the number and efficiency of the Magistrates" and also with the way in which the Petty Sessions were attended. He could hear of no complaint, and when the time came to increase the number of J.P.'s, he would be pleased to add Borrow's name to the list, provided he were advised to do so by "those gentlemen residing in the neighbourhood, who, living on terms of intimacy with them [the Magistrates], will be able to maintain that union of good feeling which . . . exists in all our benches of Petty Sessions."

Borrow would have made a good magistrate, provided the offender were not a gypsy. He would have caused the wrong-doer more fear the instrument of the law rather than the law itself, and some of his sentences might possibly have been as summary as those of Judge Lynch.

> "It was a fine thing," writes a contemporary, "to see the great man tackle a tramp. Then he scented the battle from afar, bearing down on the enemy with a quivering nostril.

> If the nomad happened to be a gypsy he was courteously addressed. But were he a mere native tatterdemalion, inclined to be truculent, Borrow's coat was off in a moment, and the challenge to decide there and then who was the better man flung forth. I have never seen such challenges accepted, for Borrow was robust and towering." [375]

It is not strange that Borrow's application failed; for he never refused leave to the gypsies to camp upon his land, and would sometimes join them beside their campfires. Once he took a guest with him after dinner to where the gypsies were encamped. They received Borrow with every mark of respect. Presently he "began to intone to them a song, written by him in Romany, which recounted all their tricks and evil deeds. The gypsies soon became excited; then they began to kick their property about, such as barrels and tin cans; then the men began to fight and the women to part them; an uproar of shouts and recriminations set in, and the quarrel became so serious that it was thought prudent to quit the scene." [376a] "In nothing can the character of a people be read with greater certainty and exactness than in its songs," [376b] Borrow had written. [376c]

These disappointments tended to embitter Borrow, who saw in them only a conspiracy against him. There is little doubt that Lord Stradbroke's enquiries had revealed some curious gossip concerning the Master of Oulton Hall, possibly the dispute with his rector over the inability of their respective dogs to live in harmony; perhaps even the would-be magistrate's predilection for the society of gypsies,

and his profound admiration for “the Fancy” had reached the Lord-Lieutenant’s ears.

The unfortunate and somewhat mysterious dispute with Dr Bowring was another anxiety that Borrow had to face. He had once remarked, “It’s very odd, Bowring, that you and I have never had a quarrel.” [376d] In the summer of 1842 he and Bowring seem to have been on excellent terms. Borrow wrote asking for the return of the papers and manuscripts that had remained in Bowring’s hands since 1829, when the *Songs of Scandinavia* was projected, as Borrow hoped to bring out during the ensuing year a volume entitled *Songs of Denmark*. The cordiality of the letter may best be judged by the fact that in it he announces his intention of having a copy of the forthcoming *Bible in Spain* sent “to my oldest, I may say my *only* friend.”

In 1847 Bowring wrote to Borrow enquiring as to the Russian route through Kiakhta, and asking if he could put him in the way of obtaining the information for the use of a Parliamentary Committee then enquiring into England’s commercial relations with China. Borrow’s reply is apparently no longer in existence; but it drew from Bowring another letter raising a question as to whether “‘two hundred merchants are allowed to visit Pekin every three years.’ Are you certain this is in practice now? Have you ever been to Kiakhta?” It would appear from Bowring’s “if summoned, your expenses must be paid by the public,” that Borrow had suggested giving evidence before the Committee, hence Bowring’s question as to whether Borrow could speak from personal knowledge of Kiakhta.

Borrow’s claim against Bowring is that after

promising to use all his influence to get him appointed Consul at Canton, he obtained the post for himself, passing off as his own the Manchu-Tartar New Testament that Borrow had edited in St Petersburg. There is absolutely no other evidence than that contained in Borrow's Appendix to *The Romany Rye*. There is very little doubt that Bowring was a man who had no hesitation in seizing everything that presented itself and turning it, as far as possible, to his own uses. In this he was doing what most successful men have done and will continue to do. He had been kind to Borrow, and had helped him as far as lay in his power. He no doubt obtained all the information he could from Borrow, as he would have done from anyone else; but he never withheld his help. It has been suggested that he really did mention Borrow as a candidate for the Consulship and later, when in financial straits and finding that Borrow had no chance of obtaining it, accepted Lord Palmerston's offer of the post for himself. It is, however, idle to speculate what actually happened. What resulted was that Bowring as the "Old Radical" took premier place in the Appendix-inferno that closed *The Romany Rye*. [378a]

Fate seemed to conspire to cause Borrow chagrin. Early in 1847 it came to his knowledge that there were in existence some valuable Codices in certain churches and convents in the Levant. In particular there was said to be an original of the Greek New Testament, supposed to date from the fourth century, which had been presented to the convent on Mount Sinai by the Emperor Justinian. Borrow received information of the existence of the treasure, and also a hint that with a little address, some of these priceless manuscripts might be secured to the British

Nation. It was even suggested that application might be made to the Government by the Trustees of the British Museum. [378b] Borrow's reply to this was an intimation that if requested to do so he would willingly undertake the mission. Nothing, however, came of the project, and the remainder of the manuscript of the Greek Testament (part of it had been acquired in 1843 by Tischendorf) was presented by the monks to Alexander II. and it is now in the Imperial Library at St Petersburg.

The information as to the existence of the manuscripts, it is alleged, was given to the Museum Trustees by the Hon. Robert Curzon, who had travelled much in Egypt and the Holy Land. It was certainly no fault of his that the mission was not sent out, and Borrow's subsequent antagonism to him and his family is difficult to understand and impossible to explain.

Borrow had achieved literary success: before the year 1847 *The Zincali* was in its Fourth Edition (nearly 10,000 copies having been printed) and *The Bible in Spain* had reached its Eighth Edition (nearly 20,000 copies having been printed). He was an unqualified success; yet he had been far happier when distributing Testaments in Spain. The greyness and inaction of domestic life, even when relieved by occasional excursions with Sidi Habismilk and the Son of the Miracle, were irksome to his temperament, ever eager for occupation and change of scene. He was like a war-horse champing his bit during times of peace.

> "Why did you send me down six copies [of *The Zincali*]?" he bursts out in a letter to John Murray (29th

> Jan. 1846). "Whom should I send them to? Do you think I have six friends in the world? Two I have presented to my wife and daughter (in law). I shall return three to you by the first opportunity."

In 1847, through the Harveys, he became acquainted with Dr Thomas Gordon Hake, who was in practice at Brighton 1832–37 and at Bury St Edmunds 1839–53, and who was also a poet. The two families visited each other, and Dr Hake has left behind him some interesting stories about, and valuable impressions of, Borrow. Dr Hake shows clearly that he did not allow his friendship to influence his judgment when in his *Memoirs* he described Borrow as

> "one of those whose mental powers are strong, and whose bodily frame is yet stronger—a conjunction of forces often detrimental to a literary career, in an age of intellectual predominance. His temper was good and bad; his pride was humility; his humility was pride; his vanity in being negative, was one of the most positive kind. He was reticent and candid, measured in speech, with an emphasis that made trifles significant." [379]

This rather laboured series of paradoxes quite fails to give a convincing impression of the man. A much better idea of Borrow is to be found in a letter (1847) by a fellow-guest at a breakfast given by the Prussian Ambassador. He writes that there was present

> "the amusing author of *The Bible in Spain*, a man who is remarkable for his extraordinary powers as a linguist, and for the originality of his character, not to speak of the wonderful adventures he narrates, and the ease and facility with which he tells them. He kept us laughing a good part of breakfast time by the oddity of his remarks, as well as the positiveness of his assertions, often rather startling, and like his books partaking of the marvellous." [380a]

Abandoning paradox, Dr Hake is more successful in his description of Borrow's person.

> "His figure was tall," he tells us, "and his bearing very noble; he had a finely moulded head, and thick white hair—white from his youth; his brown eyes were soft, yet piercing; his nose somewhat of the 'semitic' type, which gave his face the cast of the young Memnon. His mouth had a generous curve; and his features, for beauty and true power, were such as can have no parallel in our portrait gallery." [380b]

When not occupied in writing, Borrow would walk about the estate with his animals, between whom and their master a perfect understanding existed. Sidi Habismilk would come to a whistle and would follow him about, and his two dogs and cat would do the same. When he went for a walk the dogs and cat would set out with him; but the cat would turn back

after accompanying him for about a quarter of a mile. [381a]

The two young undergraduates who drove in a gig from Cambridge to Oulton to pay their respects to Borrow (*circa* 1846) described him as employed

> "in training some young horses to follow him about like dogs and come at the call of his whistle. As my two friends [381b] were talking with him, Borrow sounded his whistle in a paddock near the house, which, if I remember rightly, was surrounded by a low wall. Immediately two beautiful horses came bounding over the fence and trotted up to their master. One put his nose into Borrow's outstretched hand and the other kept snuffing at his pockets in expectation of the usual bribe for confidence and good behaviour."

Borrow's love of animals was almost feminine. The screams of a hare pursued by greyhounds would spoil his appetite for dinner, and he confessed himself as "silly enough to feel disgust and horror at the squeals of a rat in the fangs of a terrier." [381c] When a favourite cat was so ill that it crawled away to die in solitude, Borrow went in search of it and, discovering the poor creature in the garden-hedge, carried it back into the house, laid it in a comfortable place and watched over it until it died. His care of the much persecuted "Church of England cat" at Llangollen [381d] is another instance of his tender-heartedness with regard to animals.

Borrow had ample evidence that he was still a celebrity. "He was much courted . . . by his neighbours and by visitors to the sea-side," Dr Hake relates; but unfortunately he allowed himself to become a prey to moods at rather inappropriate moments. As a lion, Borrow accompanied Dr Hake to some in the great houses of the neighbourhood. On one occasion they went to dine at Hardwick Hall, the residence of Sir Thomas and Lady Cullum. The last-named subsequently became a firm friend of Borrow's during many years.

> "The party consisted of Lord Bristol; Lady Augusta Seymour, his daughter; Lord and Lady Arthur Hervey; Sir Fitzroy Kelly; Mr Thackeray, and ourselves. At that date, Thackeray had made money by lectures on *The Satirists*, and was in good swing; but he never could realise the independent feelings of those who happen to be born to fortune—a thing which a man of genius should be able to do with ease. He told Lady Cullum, which she repeated to me, that no one could conceive how it mortified him to be making a provision for his daughters by delivering lectures; and I thought she rather sympathised with him in this degradation. He approached Borrow, who, however, received him very dryly. As a last attempt to get up a conversation with him, he said, 'Have you read my Snob Papers in *Punch*?'"

> "'In *Punch*?' asked Borrow. 'It is a periodical I never look at!'
>
> "It was a very fine dinner. The plates at dessert were of gold; they once belonged to the Emperor of the French, and were marked with his "N" and his Eagle.
>
> "Thackeray, as if under the impression that the party was invited to look at him, thought it necessary to make a figure, and absorb attention during the dessert, by telling stories and more than half acting them; the aristocratic party listening, but appearing little amused. Borrow knew better how to behave in good company, and kept quiet; though, doubtless he felt his mane." [382]

There were other moments when Borrow caused acute embarrassment by his rudeness. Once his hostess, a simple unpretending woman desirous only of pleasing her distinguished guest, said, "Oh, Mr Borrow, I have read your books with so much pleasure!" "Pray, what books do you mean, madam? Do you mean my account books?" was the ungracious retort. He then rose from the table, fretting and fuming and walked up and down the dining-room among the servants "during the whole of the dinner, and afterwards wandered about the rooms and passage, till the carriage could be ordered for our return home." [383a] The reason for this unpardonable behaviour appears to have been ill-judged loyalty to a friend. His host was a well-

known Suffolk banker who, having advanced a large sum of money to a friend of Borrow's, the heir to a considerable estate, who was in temporary difficulties, then "struck the docket" in order to secure payment. Borrow confided to another friend that he yearned "to cane the banker." His loyalty to his friend excuses his wrath; it was his judgment that was at fault. He should undoubtedly have caned the banker, in preference to going to his house as a guest and revenging his friend upon the gentle and amiable woman who could not be held responsible for her husband's business transgressions.

Unfortunate remarks seemed to have a habit of bursting from Borrow's lips. When Dr Bowring introduced to him his son, Mr F. J. Bowring, and with pardonable pride added that he had just become a Fellow of Trinity, Borrow remarked, "Ah! Fellows of Trinity always marry their bed-makers." Agnes Strickland was another victim. Being desirous of meeting him and, in spite of Borrow's unwillingness, achieving her object, she expressed in rapturous terms her admiration of his works, and concluded by asking permission to send him a copy of *The Queens of England*, to which he ungraciously replied, "For God's sake, don't, madam; I should not know where to put them or what to do with them." "What a damned fool that woman is!" he remarked to W. B. Donne, who was standing by. [383b]

There is a world of meaning in a paragraph from one of John Murray's (the Second) letters (21st June 1843) to Borrow in which he enquires, "Did you receive a note from Mme. Simpkinson which I forwarded ten days ago? I have not seen her since your abrupt departure from her house."

It is rather regrettable that the one side of Borrow's character has to be so emphasised. He could be just and gracious, even to the point of sternly rebuking one who represented his own religious convictions and supporting a dissenter. After a Bible Society's meeting at Mutford Bridge (the nearest village to Oulton Hall), the speakers repaired to the Hall to supper. One of the guests, an independent minister, became involved in a heated argument with a Church of England clergyman, who reproached him for holding Calvinistic views. The nonconformist replied that the clergy of the Established Church were equally liable to attack on the same ground, because the Articles of their Church were Calvinistic, and to these they had all sworn assent. The reply was that the words were not necessarily to be taken in their literal sense. At this Borrow interposed, attacking the clergyman in a most vigorous fashion for his sophistry, and finally reducing him to silence. The Independent minister afterwards confessed that he had never heard "one man give another such a dressing down as on that occasion." [384a]

Borrow was capable of very deep feeling, which is nowhere better shown than in his retort to Richard Latham whom he met at Dr Hake's table. Well warmed by the generous wine, Latham stated that he should never do anything so low as dine with his publisher. "You do not dine with John Murray, I presume?" he added. "Indeed I do," Borrow responded with deep emotion. "He is a most kind friend. When I have had sickness in the house he has been unfailing in his goodness towards me. There is no man I more value." [384b]

Borrow was a frequent visitor to the Hakes at Bury St Edmunds. W. B. Donne gives a glimpse to him in a

letter to Bernard Barton (12th Sept. 1848).

> "We have had a great man here—and I have been walking with him and aiding him to eat salmon and mutton and drink port—George Borrow—and what is more we fell in with some gypsies and I heard his speech of Egypt, which sounded wondrously like a medley of broken Spanish and dog Latin. Borrow's face lighted by the red turf fire of the tent was worth looking at. He is ashy-white now—but twenty years ago, when his hair was like a raven's wing, he must have been hard to discriminate from a born Bohemian. Borrow is best on the tramp: if you can walk 4.5 miles per hour, as I can with ease and do by choice, and can walk 15 of them at a stretch—which I can compass also—then he will talk Iliads of adventures even better than his printed ones. He cannot abide those Amateur Pedestrians who saunter, and in his chair he is given to groan and be contradictory. But on Newmarket-heath, in Rougham Woods he is at home, and specially when he meets with a thorough vagabond like your present correspondent." [385a]

The present Mr John Murray recollects Borrow very clearly as

> "tall, broad, muscular, with very

> heavy shoulders" and of course the white hair. "He was," continues Mr Murray, "a figure which no one who has seen it is likely to forget. I never remember to have seen him dressed in anything but black broad cloth, and white cotton socks were generally distinctly visible above his low shoes. I think that with Borrow the desire to attract attention to himself, to inspire a feeling of awe and mystery, must have been a ruling passion."

Borrow was frequently the guest of his publisher at Albemarle Street, in times well within the memory of Mr Murray, who relates how on one occasion

> "Borrow was at a dinner-party in company with Whewell [385b] [who by the way it has been said was the original of the Flaming Tinman, although there is very little to support the statement except the fact that Dr Whewell was a proper man with his hands] both of them powerful men, and both of them, if report be true, having more than a superficial knowledge of the art of self-defence. A controversy began, and waxed so warm that Mrs Whewell, believing a personal encounter to be imminent, fainted, and had to be carried out of the room. Once when Borrow was dining with my father he disappeared into a small back room

after dinner, and could not be found. At last he was discovered by a lady member of the family, stretched on a sofa and groaning. On being spoken to and asked to join the other guests, he suddenly said: Go away! go away! I am not fit company for respectable people. There was no apparent cause for this strange conduct, unless it were due to one of those unaccountable fits to which men of genius (and this description will be allowed him by many) are often subject.

"On another occasion, when dining with my father at Wimbledon, he was regaled with a 'haggis,' a dish which was new to him, and of which he partook to an extent which would have astonished many a hardy Scotsman. One summers day, several years later, he again came to dinner, and having come on foot, entered the house by a garden door, his first words—without any previous greetings—were: 'Is there a haggis to-day?'" [386]

CHAPTER XXIV
LAVENGRO—1843–1851

DURING all these years *Lavengro* had been making progress towards completion, irregular and spasmodic it would appear; but still each year brought it nearer to the printer. "I cannot get out of my old habits," Borrow wrote to Dawson Turner (15th January 1844), "I find I am writing the work . . . in precisely the same manner as *The Bible in Spain*, viz., on blank sheets of old account books, backs of letters, etc. In slovenliness of manuscript I almost rival Mahomet, who, it is said, wrote his *Coran* on mutton spade bones." "His [Borrow's] biography will be passing strange if he tells the *whole* truth," Ford writes to a friend (27th February 1843). "He is now writing it by my advice. I go on . . . scribbling away, though with a palpitating heart," Borrow informs John Murray (5th February 1844), "and have already plenty of scenes and dialogues connected with my life, quite equal to anything in *The Bible in Spain*. The great difficulty, however, is to blend them all into a symmetrical whole." On 17th September 1846 he writes again to his publisher:

> "I have of late been very lazy, and am become more addicted to sleep than usual, am seriously afraid of apoplexy. To rouse myself, I rode a little time ago to Newmarket. I felt all the better for it for a few days. I have at present a first rate trotting horse who affords me plenty of exercise. On my return from Newmarket, I rode him nineteen miles before breakfast."

Another cause of delay was the "shadows" that were constantly descending upon him. His determination

to give only the best of which he was capable, is almost tragic in the light of later events. To his wife, he wrote from London (February 1847): "Saw M[urray] who is in a hurry for me to begin [the printing]. I will not be hurried though for anyone."

In the *Quarterly Review*, July 1848, under the heading of Mr Murray's List of New Works in Preparation, there appeared the first announcement of *Lavengro*, *an Autobiography*, by George Borrow, Author of *The Bible in Spain*, etc., 4 vols. post 8vo. This was repeated in October. During the next two months the book was advertised as *Life*; *A Drama*, in *The Athenæum* and *The Quarterly Review*, and the first title-page (1849) was so printed. On 7th October John Murray wrote asking Borrow to send the manuscript to the printer. This was accordingly done, and about two-thirds of it composed. Then Borrow appears to have fallen ill. On 5th January 1849 John Murray wrote to Mrs Borrow:

> "I trust Mr Borrow is now restored to health and tranquillity of mind, and that he will soon be able to resume his pen. I desire this on his own account and for the sake of poor Woodfall [the printer], who is of course inconvenienced by having his press arrested after the commencement of the printing."

Writing on 27th November 1849, John Murray refers to the work having been "first sent to press—now nearly eighteen months." This is clearly a mistake, as on 7th October 1848, thirteen and a half months previously, he asks Borrow to send the manuscript to the printer that he may begin the composition. John

Murray was getting anxious and urges Borrow to complete the work, which a year ago had been offered to the booksellers at the annual trade-dinner.

"I know that you are fastidious, and that you desire to produce a work of distinguished excellence. I see the result of this labour in the sheets as they come from the press, and I think when it does appear it will make a sensation," wrote the tactful publisher. "Think not, my dear friend," replied Borrow, "that I am idle. I am finishing up the concluding part. I should be sorry to hurry the work towards the last. I dare say it will be ready by the middle of February." The correspondence grew more and more tense. Mrs Borrow wrote to the printer urging him to send to her husband, who has been overworked to the point of complaint, "one of your kind encouraging notes." Later Borrow went to Yarmouth, where sea-bathing produced a good effect upon his health; but still the manuscript was not sent to the despairing printer. "I do not, God knows! wish you to overtask yourself," wrote the unhappy Woodfall; "but after what you last said, I thought I might fully calculate on your taking up, without further delay, the fragmentary portions of your 1st and 2nd volumes and let us get them out of hand."

Letters continued to pass to and fro, but the balance of manuscript was not forthcoming until November 1850, when Mrs Borrow herself took it to London. Another trade-dinner was at hand, and John Murray had written to Mrs Borrow, "If I cannot show the book then—I must throw it up." To Mrs Borrow this meant tragedy. The poor woman was distracted, and from time to time she begs for encouraging letters. In response to one of these appeals, John Murray wrote with rare insight into Borrow's character, and

knowledge of what is most likely to please him: "There are passages in your book equal to De Foe."

The preface when eventually submitted to John Murray disturbed him somewhat. "It is quaint," he writes to Mrs Borrow, "but so is everything that Mr Borrow writes." He goes on to suggest that the latter portion looks too much as if it had been got up in the interests of "Papal aggression," and he calls attention to the oft-repeated "Damnation cry". There appears to have been some modification, a few "Damnation Cries" omitted, the last sheet passed for press, and on 7th February 1851 *Lavengro* was published in an edition of three thousand copies, which lasted for twenty-one years.

The appearance of *Lavengro* was indeed sensational: but not quite in the way its publisher had anticipated. Almost without exception the verdict was unfavourable. The book was attacked vigorously. The keynote of the critics was disappointment. Some reviews were purely critical, others personal and abusive, but nearly all were disapproving. "Great is our disappointment" said the *Athenæum*. "We are disappointed," echoed *Blackwood*. Among the few friendly notices was that of Dr Hake, in which he prophesied that "*Lavengro's* roots will strike deep into the soil of English letters." Even Ford wrote (8th March):

> "I frankly own that I am somewhat disappointed with the very *little* you have told us about *yourself*. I was in hopes to have a full, true, and particular account of your marvellously varied and interesting biography. I do hope that some day

you will give it to us."

In this chorus of dispraise Borrow saw a conspiracy. "If ever a book experienced infamous and undeserved treatment," he wrote, [390] "it was that book. I was attacked in every form that envy and malice could suggest." In *The Romany Rye* he has done full justice to the subject, exhibiting the critics with blood and foam streaming from their jaws. In the original draft of the Advertisement to the same work he expresses himself as "proud of a book which has had the honour of being rancorously abused and execrated by every unmanly scoundrel, every sycophantic lacquey, and *every political and religious renegade* in Britain." A few years previously, Borrow had written to John Murray, "I have always myself. If you wish to please the public leave the matter [the revision of *The Zincali*] to me." [391a] From this it is evident that Borrow was unprepared for anything but commendation from critics and readers.

Dr Bowring had some time previously requested the editor of *The Edinburgh Review* to allow him to review *Lavengro*; but no notice ever appeared. In all probability he realised the impossibility of writing about a book in which he and his family appeared in such an unpleasant light. It is unlikely that he asked for the book in order to prevent a review appearing in *The Edinburgh*, as has been suggested.

In the Preface, *Lavengro* is described as a dream; yet there can be not a vestage of doubt that Borrow's original intention had been to acknowledge it as an autobiography. This work is a kind of biography in the Robinson Crusoe style, he had written in 1844. This he contradicted in the Appendix to *The Romany Rye*; yet in his manuscript autobiography [391b] (13th

Oct. 1862) he says: “In 1851 he published *Lavengro*, a work in which he gives an account of his early life.” Why had Borrow changed his mind?

When *Lavengro* was begun, as a result of Ford’s persistent appeals, Borrow was on the crest of the wave of success. He saw himself the literary hero of the hour. *The Bible in Spain* was selling in its thousands. The press had proclaimed it a masterpiece. He had seen himself a great man. The writer of a great book, however, does not occupy a position so kinglike in its loneliness as does gentleman a gypsy, round whom flock the *gitanos* to kiss his hand and garments as if he were a god or a hero. The literary and social worlds that *The Bible in Spain* opened to Borrow were not to be awed by his mystery, or, disciplined into abject hero-worship by one of those steady penetrating gazes, which cowed jockeys and *alguacils*. They claimed intellectual kinship and equality, the very things that Borrow had no intention of conceding them. He would have tolerated their “gentility nonsense” if they would have acknowledged his paramountcy. He found that to be a social or a literary lion was to be a tame lion, and he was too big for that. His conception of genius was that it had its moods, and mediocrity must suffer them.

Borrow would rush precipitately from the house where he was a guest; he would be unpardonably rude to some inoffensive and well-meaning woman who thought to please him by admiring his books; he would magnify a fight between their respective dogs into a deadly feud between himself and the rector of his parish: thus he made enemies by the dozen and, incidentally, earned for himself an extremely unenviable reputation. A hero with a lovable nature

is twice a hero, because he is possessed of those qualities that commend themselves to the greater number. Wellington could never be a serious rival in a nation's heart to dear, weak, sensitive, noble Nelson, who lived for praise and frankly owned to it.

Borrow's lovable qualities were never permitted to show themselves in public, they were kept for the dingle, the fireside, or the inn-parlour. That he had a sweeter side to his nature there can be no doubt, and those who saw it were his wife, his step-daughter, and his friends, in particular those who, like Mr Watts-Dunton and Mr A. Egmont Hake, have striven for years to emphasise the more attractive part of his strange nature.

Borrow's attitude towards literature in itself was not calculated to gain friends for him. He was uncompromisingly and caustically severe upon some of the literary idols of his day, men who have survived that terrible handicap, contemporary recognition and appreciation.

He was not a deep reader, hardly a reader at all in the accepted meaning of the word. He frankly confessed that books were to him of secondary importance to man as a subject for study. In his criticisms of literature, he was apt to confuse the man with his works. His hatred of Scott is notorious; it was not the artist he so cordially disliked, but the politician; he admitted that Scott "wrote splendid novels about the Stuarts." [393a] He hailed him as "greater than Homer;" [393b] but the House of Stuart he held in utter detestation, and when writing or speaking of Scott he forgot to make a rather necessary distinction. He wrote:

> "He admires his talents both as a

> prose writer and a poet; as a poet especially. [393c] . . . As a prose writer he admires him less, it is true, but his admiration for him in that capacity is very high, and he only laments that he prostituted his talents to the cause of the Stuarts and gentility . . . in conclusion, he will say, in order to show the opinion which he entertains of the power of Scott as a writer, that he did for the spectre of the wretched Pretender what all the kings of Europe could not do for his body—placed it on the throne of these realms." [393d]

In later years Borrow paid a graceful tribute to Scott's memory. When at Kelso, in spite of the rain and mist, he "trudged away to Dryburgh to pay my respects to the tomb of Walter Scott, a man with whose principles I have no sympathy, but for whose genius I have always entertained the most intense admiration." [393e] It was just the same with Byron, "for whose writings I really entertained considerable admiration, though I had no particular esteem for the man himself." [393f]

With Wordsworth it was different, and it was his cordial dislike of his poetry that prompted Borrow to introduce into *The Romany Rye* that ineffectual episode of the man who was sent to sleep by reading him. Tennyson he dismissed as a writer of "duncie books."

For Dickens he had an enthusiastic admiration as "a second Fielding, a young writer who . . . has evinced

such talent, such humour, variety and profound knowledge of character, that he charms his readers, at least those who have the capacity to comprehend him." [394a] He was delighted with *The Pickwick Papers* and *Oliver Twist*.

His reading was anything but thorough, in fact he occasionally showed a remarkable ignorance of contemporary writers. Mr A. Egmont Hake tells how:

> "His conversation would sometimes turn on modern literature, with which his acquaintance was very slight. He seemed to avoid reading the products of modern thought lest his own strong opinions should undergo dilution. We were once talking of Keats whose fame had been constantly increasing, but of whose poetry Borrow's knowledge was of a shadowy kind, when suddenly he put a stop to the conversation by ludicrously asking, in his strong voice, 'Have they not been trying to resuscitate him?'" [394b]

By the time that *Lavengro* appeared, Borrow was estranged from his generation. The years that intervened between the success of *The Bible in Spain* and the publication of *Lavengro* had been spent by him in war; he had come to hate his contemporaries with a wholesome, vigorous hatred. He would give them his book; but they should have it as a stray cur has a bone—thrown at them. Above all, they should not for a moment be allowed to think that it

contained an intimate account of the life of the supreme hater who had written it. When there had been sympathy between them, Borrow was prepared to allow his public to peer into the sacred recesses of his early life. Now that there was none, he denied that *Lavengro* was more than "a dream", forgetting that he had so often written of it as an autobiography, had even seen it advertised as such, and insisted that it was fiction.

When *Lavengro* was published Borrow was an unhappy and disappointed man. He had found what many other travellers have found when they come home, that in the wilds he had left his taste and toleration for conventional life and ideas. The life in the Peninsula had been thoroughly congenial to a man of Borrow's temperament: hardships, dangers, imprisonments,—they were his common food. He who had defied the whole power of Spain, found himself powerless to prevent his Rector from keeping a dog, or a railway line from being cut through his own estate and his peace of mind disturbed by the rumble of trains and the shriek of locomotive-whistles. He had beaten the Flaming Tinman and Count Ofalia, but Samuel Morton Peto had vanquished and put him to flight by virtue of an Act of Parliament, in all probability without being conscious of having achieved a signal victory. Borrow's life had been built up upon a wrong hypothesis: he strove to adapt, not himself to the Universe; but the Universe to himself.

It is easy to see that a man with this attitude of mind would regard as sheer vindictiveness the adverse criticism of a book that he had written with such care, and so earnest an endeavour to maintain if not improve upon the standard created in a former

work. It never for a moment struck him that the men who had once hailed him "great", should now admonish him as a result of the honest exercise of their critical faculties. No; there was conspiracy against him, and he tortured himself into a pitiable state of wrath and melancholy. A later generation has been less harsh in its judgment. The controversial parts of *Lavengro* have become less controversial and the magnificent parts have become more magnificent, and it has taken its place as a star of the second magnitude.

The question of what is actual autobiography and what is so coloured as to become practically fiction, must always be a matter of opinion. The early portion seems convincing, even the first meeting with the gypsies in the lane at Norman Cross. It has been asked by an eminent gypsy scholar how Borrow knew the meaning of the word "sap", or why he addressed the gypsy woman as "my mother". When the Gypsy refers to the "Sap there", the child replies, "what, the snake"? The employment of the other phrase is obviously an inadvertent use of knowledge he gained later.

In writing to Mrs George Borrow (24th March 1851) to tell her that W. B. Donne had been unable to obtain *Lavengro* for *The Edinburgh Review* as it had been bespoken a year previously by Dr Bowring, Dr Hake adds that Donne had written "putting the editor in possession of his view of *Lavengro*, as regards verisimilitude, vouching for the Daguerreotype-like fidelity of the picture in the first volume, etc., etc., in order to prevent him from being *taken in by* a spiteful article." This passage is very significant as being written by one of Borrow's most intimate friends, with the sure knowledge that its

contents would reach him. It leaves no room for doubt that, although Borrow denied publicly the autobiographical nature of *Lavengro*, in his own circle it was freely admitted and referred to as a life.

"What is an autobiography?" Borrow once asked Mr Theodore Watts-Dunton (who had called his attention to several bold coincidences in *Lavengro*). "Is it the mere record of the incidents of a man's life? or is it a picture of the man himself—his character, his soul?" [396] Mr Watts-Dunton confirms Borrow's letters when he says "That he [Borrow] sat down to write his own life in *Lavengro* I know. He had no idea then of departing from the strict line of fact."

At times Borrow seemed to find his pictures flat, and heightened the colour in places, as a painter might heighten the tone of a drapery, a roof or some other object, not because the individual spot required it, but rather because the general effect he was aiming at rendered it necessary. He did this just as an actor rouges his face, darkens his eyebrows and round his eyes, that he may appear to his audience a living man and not an animated corpse.

Borrow was drawing himself, striving to be as faithful to the original as Boswell to Johnson. Incidents! what were they? the straw with which the bricks of personality are made. A comparison of *Lavengro* with Borrow's letters to the Bible Society is instructive; it is the same Borrow that appears in both, with the sole difference that in the Letters he is less mysterious, less in the limelight than in *Lavengro*.

Mr Watts-Dunton, with inspiration, has asked whether or not *Lavengro* and *The Romany Rye* form a spiritual autobiography; and if they do, whether that autobiography does or does not surpass every other

for absolute truth of spiritual representation. Borrow certainly did colour his narrative in places. Who could write the story of his early life with absolute accuracy? without dwelling on and elaborating certain episodes, perhaps even adjusting them somewhat? That would not necessarily prove them untrue.

There are, unquestionably, inconsistencies in *Lavengro* and *The Romany Rye*—they are admitted, they have been pointed out. There are many inaccuracies, it must be confessed; but because a man makes a mistake in the date of his birth or even the year, it does not prove that he was not born at all. Borrow was for ever making the most inaccurate statements about his age.

In the main *Lavengro* would appear to be autobiographical up to the period of Borrow's coming to London. After this he begins to indulge somewhat in the dramatic. The meeting with the pickpocket as a thimble-rigger at Greenwich might pass muster were it not for the *rencontre* with the apple-woman's son near Salisbury. The Dingle episode may be accepted, for Mr John Sampson has verified even the famous thunder-storm by means of the local press. Isopel Berners is not so easy to settle; yet the picture of her is so convincing, and Borrow was unable to do more than colour his narrative, that she too must have existed.

The failure of *Lavengro* is easily accounted for. Borrow wrote of vagabonds and vagabondage; it did not mitigate his offence in the eyes of the critics or the public that he wrote well about them. His crime lay in his subject. To Borrow, a man must be ready and able to knock another man down if necessity

arise. When nearing sixty he lamented his childless state and said very mournfully: “I shall soon not be able to knock a man down, and I have no son to do it for me.” [398] He glorified the bruisers of England, in the face of horrified public opinion. England had become ashamed of its bruisers long before *Lavengro* was written, and this flaunting in its face of creatures that it considered too low to be mentioned, gave mortal offence. That in *Lavengro* was the best descriptions of a fight in the language, only made the matter worse. Borrow’s was an age of gentility and refinement, and he outraged it, first by glorifying vagabondage, secondly by decrying and sneering at gentility.

> “Qui n’ a pas l’esprit de son âge,
> De son âge a tout le malheur.”

And Borrow proved Voltaire’s words.

It is not difficult to understand that an age in which prize-fighting is anathema should not tolerate a book glorifying the ring; but it is strange that Borrow’s simple paganism and nature-worship should not have aroused sympathetic recognition. Poetry is ageless, and such passages as the description of the sunrise over Stonehenge should have found some, at least, to welcome them, even when found in juxtaposition with bruisers and gypsies.

Borrow loved to mystify, but in *Lavengro* he had overreached himself. “Are you really in existence?” wrote one correspondent who was unknown to Borrow, “for I also have occasionally doubted whether things exist, as you describe your own feelings in former days.”

John Murray wrote (8th Nov. 1851):—

> "I was reminded of you the other day by an enquiry after *Lavengro* and its author, made by the Right Honourable John Wilson Croker. [399a] Knowing how fastidious and severe a critic he is, I was particularly glad to find him expressing a favourable opinion of it; and thinking well of it his curiosity was piqued about you. Like all the rest of the world, he is mystified by it. He knew not whether to regard it as truth or fiction. How can you remedy this defect? I call it a defect, because it really impedes your popularity. People say of a chapter or of a character: 'This is very wonderful, *if true*; but if fiction it is pointless.'—Will your new volumes explain this and dissolve the mystery? If so, pray make haste and get on with them. I hope you have employed the summer in giving them the finishing touches."

"There are," says a distinguished critic, [399b] "passages in *Lavengro* which are unsurpassed in the prose literature of England—unsurpassed, I mean, for mere perfection of style—for blending of strength and graphic power with limpidity and music of flow." Borrow's own generation would have laughed at such a value being put upon anything in *Lavengro*.

Another thing against the books success was its style. It lacked what has been described as the poetic ecstacy or sentimental verdure of the age. Trope, imagery, mawkishness, were all absent, for

Borrow had gone back to his masters, at whose head stood the glorious Defoe. Borrow's style was as individual as the man himself. By a curious contradiction, the tendency is to overlook literary lapses in the very man towards whom so little latitude was allowed in other directions. Many Borrovians have groaned in anguish over his misuse of that wretched word "Individual." A distinguished man of letters [400a] has written:—"I would as lief read a chapter of *The Bible in Spain* as I would *Gil Blas*; nay, I positively would give the preference to Señor Giorgio." Another critic, and a severe one, has written:—

> "It is not as philologist, or traveller, or wild missionary, or folk-lorist, or antiquary, that Borrow lives and will live. It is as the master of splendid, strong, simple English, the prose Morland of a vanished road-side life, the realist who, Defoe-like, could make fiction seem truer than fact. To have written the finest fight in the whole world's literature, the fight with the Flaming Tinman, is surely something of an achievement." [400b]

It is Borrow's personality that looms out from his pages. His mastery over the imagination of his reader, his subtle instinct of how to throw his own magnetism over everything he relates, although he may be standing aside as regards the actual events with which he is dealing, is worthy of Defoe himself. It is this magnetism that carries his readers safely over the difficult places, where, but for the author's grip upon them, they would give up in despair; it is

this magnetism that prompts them to pass by only with a slight shudder, such references as the feathered tribe, fast in the arms of Morpheus, and, above all, those terrible puns that crop up from time to time. There is always the strong, masterful man behind the words who, like a great general, can turn a reverse to his own advantage.

In his style perhaps, after all, lay the secret of Borrow's unsuccess. He was writing for another generation; speaking in a voice too strong to be heard other than as a strange noise by those near to him. It may be urged that *The Bible in Spain* disproves these conclusions; but *The Bible in Spain* was a peculiar book. It was a chronicle of Christian enterprise served up with *sauce picaresque*. It pleased and astonished everyone, especially those who had grown a little weary of godly missioners. It had the advantage of being spontaneous, having been largely written on the spot, whereas *Lavengro* and *The Romany Rye* were worked on and laboured at for years. Above all, it had the inestimable virtue of being known to be True. To the imaginative intellectual, Truth or Fiction are matters of small importance, he judges by Art; but to the general public of limited intellectual capacity, Truth is appreciated out of all proportion to its artistic importance. If Borrow had published *The Bible in Spain* after the failure of *Lavengro*, it would in all probability have been as successful as it was appearing before.

CHAPTER XXV

SEPTEMBER 1849–FEBRUARY 1854

ONE of the finest traits in Borrow's character was his devotion to his mother. He was always thoughtful for her comfort, even when fighting that almost hopeless battle in Russia, and later in the midst of bandits and bloody patriots in Spain. She was now, in 1849, an old woman, too feeble to live alone, and it was decided to transfer her to Oulton. An addition to the Hall was constructed for her accommodation, and she was to be given an attendant-companion in the person of the daughter of a local farmer.

For thirty-three years she had lived in the little house in Willow Lane; yet it was not she, but Borrow, who felt the parting from old associations. "I wish," she writes to her daughter-in-law on 16th September 1849, "my dear George would not have such fancies about *the old house*; it is a mercy it has not fallen on my head before this." The old lady was anxious to get away. It would not be safe, she thought, for her to be shut up alone, as the old woman who had looked after her could, for some reason or other, do so no longer. She urges her daughter-in-law to represent this to Borrow.

> "There is a low, noisy set close to me," she continues. "I shall not die one day sooner, or live one day longer. If I stop here and die on a sudden, half the things might be lost or stolen, therefore it seems as if the Lord would provide me a *safer*

> *home*. I have made up my mind to the change and only pray that I may be able to get through the trouble."

It would appear that the move, which took place at the end of September, was brought about by the old lady's appeals and insistence, and that Borrow himself was not anxious for it. He felt a sentimental attachment to the old place, which for so many years had been a home to him.

In 1853 Borrow removed to Great Yarmouth. During the summer of that year, Dr Hake had peremptorily ordered Mrs George Borrow not to spend the ensuing winter and spring at Oulton, and the move was made in August. The change was found to be beneficial to Mrs Borrow and agreeable to all, and for the next seven years (Aug. 1853–June 1860) Borrow's headquarters were to be at Great Yarmouth, where he and his family occupied various lodgings.

Shortly before leaving Oulton, Borrow had received the following interesting letter from FitzGerald:—

> BOULGE, WOODBRIDGE, 22nd *July* 1853.
>
> MY DEAR SIR,—I take the liberty of sending you a book [Six Dramas from Calderon], of which the title-page and advertisement will sufficiently explain the import. I am afraid that I shall in general be set down at once as an impudent fellow in making so free with a Great Man; but, as usual, I shall feel least fear before a man like yourself, who both do fine things in your own language

> and are deep read in those of others. I mean, that whether you like or not what I send you, you will do so from knowledge and in the candour which knowledge brings.
>
> I had even a mind to ask you to look at these plays before they were printed, relying on our common friend Donne for a mediator; but I know how wearisome all MS. inspection is; and, after all, the whole affair was not worth giving you such a trouble. You must pardon all this, and believe me,—
> Yours very faithfully,
>
> EDWARD FITZGERALD.

Soon after his arrival by the sea, Borrow performed an act of bravery of which *The Bury Post* (17th Sept. 1852) gave the following account, most likely written by Dr Hake:—

> "INTREPIDITY.—Yarmouth jetty presented an extra-ordinary and thrilling spectacle on Thursday, the 8th inst., about one o'clock. The sea raged frantically, and a ship's boat, endeavouring to land for water, was upset, and the men were engulfed in a wave some thirty feet high, and struggling with it in vain. The moment was an awful one, when George Borrow, the well-known author *of Lavengro*, and *The Bible in Spain*, dashed into the surf and saved

> one life, and through his instrumentality the others were saved. We ourselves have known this brave and gifted man for years, and, daring as was this deed we have known him more than once to risk his life for others. We are happy to add that he has sustained no material injury."

Borrow was a splendid swimmer. [404a] In the course of one of his country walks with Robert Cooke (John Murray's partner), with whom he was on very friendly terms,

> "he suggested a bathe in the river along which they were walking. Mr Cooke told me that Borrow, having stripped, took a header into the water and disappeared. More than a minute had elapsed, and as there were no signs of his whereabouts, Mr Cooke was becoming alarmed, lest he had struck his head or been entangled in the weeds, when Borrow suddenly reappeared a considerable distance off, under the opposite bank of the stream, and called out 'What do you think of that?'" [404b]

Elizabeth Harvey, in telling the same story, says that on coming up he exclaimed: "There, if that had been written in one of my books, they would have said it was a lie, wouldn't they?" [404c]

The paragraph about Borrow's courage was printed

in various newspapers throughout the country, amongst others in the *Plymouth Mail* under the heading of "Gallant Conduct of Mr G. Borrow," and was read by Borrow's Cornish kinsmen, who for years had heard nothing of Thomas Borrow. Apparently quite convinced that George was his son, they deputed Robert Taylor, a farmer of Penquite Farm (who had married Anne Borrow, granddaughter of Henry Borrow), to write to Borrow and invite him to visit Trethinnick. The letter was dated 10th October and directed to "George Borrow, Yarmouth." Borrow replied as follows:—

YARMOUTH, 14*th Octr.*, 1853.

MY DEAR SIR,—I beg leave to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. in which you inform me of the kind desire of my Cornish relatives to see me at Trethinnock (sic). Please to inform them that I shall be proud and happy to avail myself of their kindness and to make the acquaintance of "one and all" [405] of them. My engagements will prevent my visiting them at present, but I will appear amongst them on the first opportunity. I am delighted to learn that there are still some living at Trethinnock who remember my honoured father, who had as true a Cornish heart as ever beat.

I am at present at Yarmouth, to which place I have brought my wife for the benefit of her health; but my

> residence is Oulton Hall, Lowestoft, Suffolk. With kind greetings to my Cornish kindred, in which my wife and my mother join,—I remain, my dear Sir, ever sincerely yours,—
>
> GEORGE BORROW.

Borrow was not free to visit his kinsfolk until the following Christmas. First advising Robert Taylor of his intention, and receiving his approval and instructions for the journey, Borrow set out from Great Yarmouth on 23rd December. He spent the night at Plymouth. Next morning on finding the Liskeard coach full, he decided to walk. Leaving his carpet-bag to be sent on by the mail, and throwing over his arm the cloak that had seen many years of service, he set out upon his eighteen-mile tramp. He arrived at Liskeard in the afternoon, and was met by his cousin Henry Borrow and Robert Taylor, as well as by several local celebrities.

After tea Borrow, accompanied by Robert Taylor, rode to Penquite, four miles away. "Ride by night to Penquite, Borrow records in his *Journal*. House of stone and slate on side of a hill. Mrs Taylor. Hospitable reception. Christmas Eve. Log on fire." He found alive of his own generation, Henry, William, Thomas, Elizabeth (who lived to be 94 years of age) and Nicholas, the children of Henry Borrow, Captain Borrow's eldest brother. Also Anne, daughter of Henry, who married Robert Taylor, and their daughter, likewise named Anne, and William Henry, son of Nicholas.

In the Cornish Note Books there appears under the date of 3rd January the following entry: "Rain and snow. Rode with Mr Taylor to dine at Trethinnick.

House dilapidated. A family party. Hospitable people." On first entering his father's old home tears had sprung to Borrow's eyes, and he was much affected. There was present at the dinner the vicar of St Cleer, the Rev. J. R. P. Berkeley, a pleasant Irish clergyman who, years later, was able to give to Dr Knapp an account of what took place. He noticed the "vast difference in appearance and manners between the simple yet shrewd Cornish farmers and the betravelled gentleman their kinsman;" yet for all this there were shades of resemblance—in a look, some turn of thought or tone of voice. George Borrow was not at his best that evening, Mr Berkeley relates of the dinner at Trethinnick:

> "his feelings were too much excited. He was thinking of the time when his father's footsteps and his father's voice re-echoed in the room in which we were sitting. His eyes wandered from point to point, and at times, if I was not mistaken, a tear could be seen trembling in them. At length he could no longer control his feelings. He left the hall suddenly, and in a few moments, but for God's providential care, the career of George Borrow would have been ended. There was within a few feet of the house a low wall with a drop of some feet into a paved yard. He walked rapidly out, and, it being nearly dark, he stepped one side of the gate and fell over the wall. He did not mention the accident, although he bruised himself a good

> deal, and it was some days before I heard of it. His words to me that evening, when bidding me good-bye, were: 'Well, we have shared the old-fashioned hospitality of old-fashioned people in an old-fashioned house.'" [407a]

Borrow created something of a sensation in the neighbourhood. As a celebrity his autograph was much sought after; but he would gratify nobody. His hosts experienced many little surprises from their guest's strange ways. He would plunge into a moorland pool to fetch a bird that had fallen to his gun, or, round the family fireside, he would shout his ballads of the North, at one time alarming his audience by seizing a carving-knife and brandishing it about in the air to emphasize the passionate nature of his song. When a card-party proved too dull he slipped off and found his way into some slums, picking up all the disreputable characters he could find, working off his knowledge of cant on them, and getting out of them what he could. [407b]

On one occasion when dining at the house of a local celebrity he was suddenly missed from table during dessert.

> "A search revealed him in a remote room surrounded by the children of the house, whom he was amusing by his stories and catechising in the subject of their studies and pursuits. He excused his absence by saying that he had been fascinated by the intelligence of the children, and had forgotten about the dinner." [407c]

His hatred of gentility led him into some actions that can only be characterised as childish. Even in Cornwall he was on the lookout for his fetish. On one occasion when dining with the ex-Mayor of Liskeard, he pulled out of his pocket and used instead of a handkerchief, a dirty old grease-stained rag with which he was wont to clean his gun. [408] This was done as a protest against something or other that seemed to him to suggest mock refinement.

When at Wolsdon as the guest of the Pollards there arrived a lady and gentleman of the name of Hambly, according to the Note Books. In spite of this brief reference, Borrow immediately recognised a hated name. Never was one of the name good, he informed Mr Berkeley. He may even have been informed that they were descendants of the Headborough whom his father had knocked down. He showed his detestation for the name by being as rude as he could to those who bore it.

Borrow was as incapable of dissimulating his dislikes as he was of controlling his moods. Even during his short stay at Penquite he was on one occasion, at least, plunged into a deep melancholy, sitting before a huge fire entirely oblivious to the presence of others in the room. Mrs Berkeley, who, with the vicar himself, was a caller, thinking to produce some good effect upon the gloomy man, sat down at the piano and played some old Irish and Scottish airs. After a time Borrow began to listen, then he raised his head, and finally “he suddenly sprang to his feet, clapped his hands several times, danced about the room, and struck up some joyous melody. From that moment he was a different man.” He told them “tales and side-splitting anecdotes,” he joined the

party at supper, and when the vicar and his wife rose to take their leave he pressed Mrs Berkeley's hands, and told her that her music had been as David's harp to his soul.

To the young man he met during this visit who informed him that he had left the Army as it was no place for a gentleman, Borrow replied that it was no place for a man who was not a gentleman, and that he was quite right in leaving it. To speak against the Army to Borrow was to speak against his honoured father.

How Borrow struck his Cornish kinsfolk is shown in a letter written by his hostess to a friend. "I must tell you," she writes, "a bit about our distinguished visitor." She gives one of the most valuable portraits of Borrow that exists. He was to her:

> "A fine tall man of about six feet three, well-proportioned and not stout; able to walk five miles an hour successively; rather florid face without any hirsute appendages; hair white and soft; eyes and eyebrows dark; good nose and very nice mouth; well-shaped hands—altogether a person you would notice in a crowd. His character is not so easy to portray. The more I see of him the less I know of him. He is very enthusiastic and eccentric, very proud and unyielding. He says very little of himself, and one cannot ask him if inclined to . . . He is a marvel in himself. There is no one here to draw him out. He has an

> astonishing memory as to dates
> when great events have taken place,
> no matter in what part of the world.
> He seems to know everything." [409]

Borrow was gratified at the welcome he received, and was much pleased with the neighbourhood and its people. "My relations are most excellent people," he wrote to his wife, "but I could not understand more than half they said." He was puzzled to know why the head of a family, which was reputed to be worth seventy thousand pounds, should live in a house which could not boast of a single grate —"nothing but open chimneys."

He remained at Penquite for upwards of a fortnight, at one time galloping over snowy hills and dales with Anne Taylor, Junr., "as gallant a girl as ever rode," at another, alert as ever for fragments of folk-lore or philology, jotting down the story of a pisky-child from the dictation of his cousin Elizabeth.

On 9th January Borrow left Penquite on a tour to Truro, Penzance, Mousehole, and Land's End, armed with the inevitable umbrella, grasped in the centre by the right hand, green, manifold and bulging, that so puzzled Mr Watts-Dunton and caused him on one occasion to ask Dr Hake, "Is he a genuine Child of the Open Air?" It was one of the first things to which Borrow's pedestrian friends had to accustom themselves. With this "damning thing . . . gigantic and green," Borrow set out upon his excursion, now examining some Celtic barrow, now enquiring his way or the name of a landmark, occasionally singing in that tremendous voice of his, "Look out, look out, Swayne Vonved!"

At Mousehole he called upon a relative, H. D. Burney

(who was, it would seem, in charge of the Coast Guard Station), to whom he had a letter of introduction from Robert Taylor. Mr Burney entertained him with stories, showed him places and things of interest in the neighbourhood, and accompanied him on his visit to St Michael's Mount. Borrow returned to Penquite on the 25th with a considerable store of Cornish legends and Cornish words, and the knowledge that you can only see Cornwall or know anything about it by walking through it.

The next excursion was to the North Coast, Pentire Point, Tintagel, King Arthur's Castle, etc. On the 1st of February he left Penquite, and slept the night at Trethinnick. The next morning he set out on horseback accompanied by Nicholas Borrow.

To the vicar of St Cleer and his family, Borrow was a very welcome visitor. Mr Berkeley's eldest son, a boy of ten years of age, on being introduced to the distinguished caller, gazed at him for some moments and then without a word left the room and, going straight to his mother in another apartment cried, "Well, mother, that *is* a man." Borrow was delighted when he heard of the child's enthusiasm. Mr Berkeley give a picture of his distinguished visitor far more prepossessing than many that exist. He was particularly struck, as was everybody, by the beauty of Borrow's hands, and their owner's vanity over them as the legacy of his Huguenot ancestors. Mr Berkeley found Borrow's countenance pleasing, betokening calm firmness, self-confidence and a mind under control, though capable of passion. He could on occasion prove a delightful talker, and he gave to the vicar's family a new maxim to implant upon their Christianity, the old prize-fighters receipt

for a quiet life: “Learn to box, and keep a civil tongue in your head.” He would often drop in at the vicarage in the evening, when he would

> “sit in the centre of a group before the fire with his hands on his knees —his favourite position—pouring forth tales of the scenes he had witnessed in his wanderings. . . . Then he would suddenly spring from his seat and walk to and fro the room in silence; anon he would clap his hands and sing a Gypsy song, or perchance would chant forth a translation of some Viking poem; after which he would sit down again and chat about his father, whose memory he revered as he did his mother’s; [411] and finally he would recount some tale of suffering or sorrow with deep pathos—his voice being capable of expressing triumphant joy or the profoundest sadness.”

It was Borrow’s intention to write a book about his visit to Cornwall, and he even announced it at the end of *The Romany Rye*. He was delighted with the Duchy, and evidently gave his relatives to understand that it was his intention to use the contents of his Note Books as the nucleus of a book. “He will undoubtedly write a description of his visit,” Mrs Taylor wrote to her friend. “I walked through the whole of Cornwall and saw everything,” Borrow wrote to his wife after his return to London. “I kept a Journal of every day I was there, and it fills *two* pocket books.”

Borrow left Cornwall the second week in February and was in London on the 10th, where he was to break his journey home in order to obtain some data at the British Museum for the Appendix of *The Romany Rye*. [412a] On 13th February he writes to his wife:—

> "For three days I have been working hard at the Museum, I am at present at Mr Webster's, but not in the three guinea lodgings. I am in rooms above, for which I pay thirty shillings a week. I live as economically as I can; but when I am in London I am obliged to be at certain expense. I must be civil to certain friends who invite me out and show me every kindness. Please send me a five pound note by return of post."

His wife appears to have been anxious for his return home, and on the 17th he writes to her:—

> "It is hardly worth while making me more melancholy than I am. Come home, come home! is the cry. And what are my prospects when I get home? though it is true that they are not much brighter here. I have nothing to look forward to. Honourable employments are being given to this and that trumpery fellow; while I, who am an honourable man, must be excluded from everything."

Of literature he expressed himself as tired, there was little or nothing to be got out of it, save by writing humbug, which he refused to do. “My spirits are very low,” he continues, “and your letters make them worse. I shall probably return by the end of next week; but I shall want more money. I am sorry to spend money for it is our only friend, and God knows I use as little as possible, but I can’t travel without it.” [412b] A few days later there is another letter with farther reference to money, and protests that he is spending as little as possible. “Perhaps you had better send another note,” he writes, “and I will bring it home unchanged, if I do not want any part of it. I have lived very economically as far as I am concerned personally; I have bought nothing, and have been working hard at the Museum.” [413]

These constant references to money seem to suggest either some difference between Borrow and his wife, or that he felt he was spending too much upon himself and was anticipating her thoughts by assuring her of how economically he was living. He had an unquestioned right to spend, for he had added considerable sums to the exchequer from the profits of his first two books.

Borrow returned to Yarmouth on 25th February. *The Romany Rye* was now rapidly nearing completion; but there was no encouragement to publish a new book. He worked at *The Romany Rye*, not because he saw profit in it, not because he was anxious to give another book to an uneager public; but because of the sting in its tail, because of the thunderbolt Appendix in which he paid off old scores against the critics and his personal enemies. *The Romany Rye* was to him a work of hate; it was a bomb disguised as a book, which he intended to throw into the camp

of his foes. He was tired of literature, by which he meant that he was tired of producing his best for a public that neither wanted nor understood it. He forgot that the works of a great writer are sometimes printed in his own that they may be read in another generation.

CHAPTER XXVI
MARCH 1854–MAY 1856

DURING the months that followed Borrow's return to Great Yarmouth, the question of the coming summer holiday was discussed. From the first Borrow himself had been for Wales. He was eager to pursue his Celtic researches further north. "I should not wonder if he went into Wales before he returns," Mrs Robert Taylor had written to her friend during Borrow's stay in Cornwall. His wife and Henrietta had "a hankering after what is fashionable," and suggested Harrogate or Leamington. To which Borrow replied that there was nothing he "so much hated as fashionable life." He, however, gave way, the two women followed suit, as he had intended they should, and Wales was decided upon. For Borrow the literature of Wales had always exercised a great attraction. Her bards were as no other bards. Ab Gwilym was to him the superior of Chaucer, and Huw Morris "the greatest songster of the seventeenth century." It was, he confessed, a desire to put to practical use his knowledge of the Welsh tongue, "such as it was," that first gave him the idea of going to Wales.

The party left Great Yarmouth on 27th July 1854, spending one night at Peterborough and three at Chester. They reached Llangollen, which was to be their head-quarters, on 1st August. On 9th August

Mrs George Borrow wrote to the old lady at Oulton, "We all much enjoy this wonderful and beautiful country. We are in a lovely quiet spot. Dear George goes out exploring the mountains, and when he finds remarkable views takes us of an evening to see them."

Borrow wanted to see Wales and get to know the people, and, above all, to speak with them in their own language, and on 27th August he started upon a walking tour to Bangor, where he was to meet his wife and Henrietta, who were to proceed thither by rail. It was during this excursion that he encountered the delightful Papist-Orange fiddler, whose fortunes and fingers fluctuated between "Croppies Get Up" and "Croppies Lie Down."

From Bangor Borrow explored the surrounding places of interest. He ascended Snowdon arm-in-arm with Henrietta, singing "at the stretch of my voice a celebrated Welsh stanza," the boy-guide following wonderingly behind. In spite of the fatigues of the climb, "the gallant girl" reached the summit and heard her stepfather declaim two stanzas of poetry in Welsh, to the grinning astonishment of a small group of English tourists and the great interest of a Welshman, who asked Borrow if he were *a Breton*.

There is no question that Borrow was genuinely attached to Henrietta. "I generally call her daughter," he writes, "and with good reason, seeing that she has always shown herself a daughter to me —that she has all kinds of good qualities, and several accomplishments, knowing something of conchology, more of botany, drawing capitally in the Dutch style," [415a] not to speak of her ability to play on the Spanish guitar. She was "the dear girl," or "the

gallant girl," between whom and her stepfather existed a true spirit of comradeship. In 1844 she wrote to him, "And then that *funny* look [415b] would come into your eyes and you would call me 'poor old Hen.'" He seemed incapable of laughing, and one intimate friend states that she "never saw him even smiling, but there was a twinkle in his eyes which told you that he was enjoying himself just the same." [416]

About this time Mrs George Borrow wrote to old Mrs Borrow at Oulton Hall, saying that all was well with her son.

> "He is very regular in his morning and evening devotions, so that we all have abundant cause for thankfulness . . . As regards your dear son and his peace and comfort, you have reason to praise and bless God on his account . . . He is fully occupied. He keeps a *daily* Journal of all that goes on, so that he can make a most amusing book in a month, whenever he wishes to do so."

The first sentence is very puzzling, and would seem to suggest that Borrow's moods were somehow or other associated with outbursts against religion. "Be sure you *burn* this, or do not leave it about," the old lady is admonished.

On the day following the ascent of Snowdon, Mrs Borrow and Henrietta returned to Llangollen by train, leaving Borrow free to pursue his wanderings. He eventually arrived at Llangollen on 6th September, by way of Carnarvon, Festiniog and

Bala. After remaining another twenty days at Llangollen, he despatched his wife and stepdaughter home by rail. He then bought a small leather satchel, with a strap to sling it over his shoulder, packed in it a white linen shirt, a pair of worsted stockings, a razor and a prayer-book. Having had his boots resoled and his umbrella repaired, he left Llangollen for South Wales, upon an excursion which was to occupy three weeks. During the course of this expedition he was taken for many things, from a pork-jobber to Father Toban himself, as whom he pronounced "the best Latin blessing I could remember" over two or three dozen Irish reapers to their entire satisfaction. Eventually he arrived at Chepstow, having learned a great deal about wild Wales.

One of the excursions that Borrow made from Bangor was to Llanfair in search of Gronwy, the birthplace of Gronwy Owen. He found in the long, low house an old woman and five children, descendants of the poet, who stared at him wonderingly. To each he gave a trifle. Asking whether they could read, he was told that the eldest could read anything, whether Welsh or English. In *Wild Wales* he gives an account of the interview.

> "'Can you write?' said I to the child [the eldest], a little stubby girl of about eight, with a broad flat red face and grey eyes, dressed in a chintz gown, a little bonnet on her head, and looking the image of notableness.
>
> "The little maiden, who had never taken her eyes off of me for a

> moment during the whole time I had been in the room, at first made no answer; being, however, bid by her grandmother to speak, she at length answered in a soft voice, 'Medraf, I can.'
>
> "'Then write your name in this book,' said I, taking out a pocket-book and a pencil, 'and write likewise that you are related to Gronwy Owen—and be sure you write in Welsh.'
>
> "The little maiden very demurely took the book and pencil, and placing the former on the table wrote as follows:—
>
> "'Ellen Jones yn perthyn o bell i gronow owen.' [417a]
>
> "That is, 'Ellen Jones belonging, from afar off to Gronwy Owen.'" [417b]

Ellen Jones is now Ellen Thomas, and she well remembers Borrow coming along the lane, where she was playing with some other children, and asking for the house of Gronwy Owen. Later, when she entered the house, she found him talking to her grandmother, who was a little deaf as described in *Wild Wales*. Mrs Thomas' recollection of Borrow is that he had the appearance of possessing great strength. He had "bright eyes and shabby dress, more like a merchant than a gentleman, or like a man come to buy cattle [others made the same mistake]. But, dear me! he did speak *funny* Welsh,"

she remarked to a student of Borrow who sought her out, “he could not pronounce the ‘ll’ [pronouncing the word “pell” as if it rhymed with tell, whereas it should be pronounced something like “pelth”], and his voice was very high; but perhaps that was because my grandmother was deaf.” He had plenty of words, but bad pronunciation. William Thomas [418a] laughed many a time at him coming talking his funny Welsh to him, and said he was glad he knew a few words of Spanish to answer him with. Borrow was, apparently, unconscious of any imperfection in his pronunciation of the “ll”. He has written: “‘Had you much difficulty in acquiring the sound of the “ll”?’ I think I hear the reader inquire. None whatever: the double l of the Welsh is by no means the terrible guttural which English people generally suppose it to be.” [418b]

Mrs Thomas is now sixty-seven years of age (she was eleven and not eight at the time of Borrow’s visit) and still preserves carefully wrapped up the book from which she read to the white-haired stranger. The episode was not thought much of at the time, except by the child, whom it much excited. [418c]

It was in all probability during this, his first tour in Wales, that Borrow was lost on Cader Idris, and spent the whole of one night in wandering over the mountain vainly seeking a path. The next morning he arrived at the inn utterly exhausted. It was quite in keeping with Borrow’s nature to suppress from his book all mention of this unpleasant adventure. [419a]

The Welsh holiday was unquestionably a success. Borrow’s mind had been diverted from critics and his lost popularity. He had forgotten that in official quarters he had been overlooked. He was in the land

of Ab Gwilym and Gronwy Owen. "There never was such a place for poets," he wrote; "you meet a poet, or the birthplace of a poet, everywhere." [419b] He was delighted with the simplicity of the people, and in no way offended by their persistent suspicion of all things Saxon. At least they knew their own poets; and he could not help comparing the Welsh labouring man who knew Huw Morris, with his Suffolk brother who had never heard of Beowulf or Chaucer. He discoursed with many people about their bards, surprising them by his intimate knowledge of the poets and the poetry of Wales. He found enthusiasm "never scoffed at by the noble simple-minded genuine Welsh, whatever treatment it may receive from the coarse-hearted, sensual, selfish Saxon." [419c] Sometimes he was reminded "of the substantial yoemen of Cornwall, particularly . . . of my friends at Penquite." [419d] Wherever he went he experienced nothing but kindness and hospitality, and it delighted him to be taken for a Cumro, as was frequently the case.

What Borrow writes about his Welsh is rather contradictory. Sometimes he represents himself as taken for a Welshman, at others as a foreigner speaking Welsh. "Oh, what a blessing it is to be able to speak Welsh!" [420a] he exclaims. He acknowledged that he could read Welsh with far more ease than he could speak it. There is absolutely no posing or endeavour to depict himself a perfect Welsh scholar, whose accent could not be distinguished from that of a native. The literary results of the Welsh holiday were four Note Books written in pencil, from which *Wild Wales* was subsequently written. Borrow was in Wales for nearly sixteen weeks (1st Aug.—16th November), of which about a third was devoted to expeditions on

foot.

In the annual consultations about holidays, Borrow's was always the dominating voice. For the year 1855 the Isle of Man was chosen, because it attracted him as a land of legend and quaint customs and speech. Accordingly during the early days of September Mrs Borrow and Henrietta were comfortably settled at Douglas, and Borrow began to make excursions to various parts of the island. He explored every corner of it, conversing with the people in Manx, collecting ballads and old, smoke-stained *carvel* [420b] (or carol) books, of which he was successful in securing two examples. He discovered that the island possessed a veritable literature in these *carvels*, which were circulated in manuscript form among the neighbours of the writers.

The old runic inscriptions that he found on the tombstones exercised a great fascination over Borrow. He would spend hours, or even days (on one occasion as much as a week), in deciphering one of them. Thirty years later he was remembered as an accurate, painstaking man. His evenings were frequently occupied in translating into English the Manx poem *Illiam Dhoo*, or Brown William. He discovered among the Manx traditions much about Finn Ma Coul, or M'Coyle, who appears in *The Romany Rye* as a notability of Ireland. He ascended Snaefell, sought out the daughter of George Killey, the Manx poet, and had much talk with her, she taking him for a Manxman. The people of the island he liked.

> "In the whole world," he wrote in his 'Note Books,' "there is not a more honest, kindly race than the genuine

> Manx. Towards strangers they exert unbounded hospitality without the slightest idea of receiving any compensation, and they are, whether men or women, at any time willing to go two or three miles over mountain and bog to put strangers into the right road."

During his stay in the Isle of Man, news reached Borrow of the death of a kinsman, William, son of Samuel Borrow, his cousin, a cooper at Devonport. William Borrow had gone to America, where he had won a prize for a new and wonderful application of steam. His death is said to have occurred as the result of mental fatigue. In this Borrow saw cause for grave complaint against the wretched English Aristocracy that forced talent out of the country by denying it employment or honour, which were all for their "connections and lick-spittles."

The holiday in the Isle of Man had resulted in two quarto note books, aggregating ninety-six pages, closely written in pencil. Again Borrow planned to write a book, just as he had done on the occasion of the Cornish visit. Nothing, however, came of it. Among his papers was found the following draft of a suggested title-page:—

BAYR JAIRGEY

AND

GLION DOO

THE RED PATH AND THE BLACK VALLEY

WANDERINGS IN QUEST OF MANX LITERATURE

A curious feature of Mrs Borrow's correspondence is

her friendly conspiracies, sometimes with John Murray, sometimes with Woodfall, the printer, asking them to send encouraging letters that shall hearten Borrow to greater efforts. On 26th November 1850 John Murray wrote to her: "I have determined on engraving [by W. Holl] Phillips' portrait [422] . . . as a frontispiece to it [*Lavengro*]. I trust that this will not be disagreeable to you and the author—in fact I do it in confident expectation that it will meet with *your* assent; I do not ask Mr Borrow's leave, remember."

It must be borne in mind that Mrs Borrow had been in London a few days previously, in order to deliver to John Murray the manuscript of *Lavengro*. Mrs Borrow's reply to this letter is significant. With regard to the engraving, she writes (28th November), "*I like the idea of it*, and when Mr Borrow remarked that he did not wish it (as we expected he would) I reminded him that *his* leave *was* not asked."

Again, on 30th October 1852, Mrs Borrow wrote to Robert Cooke asking that either he or John Murray would write to Borrow enquiring as to his health, and progress with *The Romany Rye*, and how long it would be before the manuscript were ready for the printer. "Of course," she adds, "all this is in perfect confidence to Mr Murray and yourself as you *both* of you know my truly excellent Husband well enough to be aware how much he every now and then requires an impetus to cause the large wheel to move round at a quicker pace . . . Oblige me by committing this to the flames, and write to him just as you would have done, without hearing *a word from me*." On yet another occasion when she and Borrow were both in London, she writes to Cooke asking that either he "or Mr Murray will give my

Husband a look, if it be only for a few minutes . . . He seems rather low. Do, *not* let this note remain on your table," she concludes, "or *mention* it."

If Borrow were a problem to his wife and to his publisher, he presented equal difficulties to the country folk about Oulton. To one he was "a missionary out of work," to another "a man who kep' 'isself to 'isself"; but to none was he the tired lion weary of the chase. "His great delight . . . was to plunge into the darkening mere at eventide, his great head and heavy shoulders ruddy in the rays of the sun. Here he hissed and roared and spluttered, sometimes frightening the eel-catcher sailing home in the half-light, and remembering suddenly school legends of river-sprites and monsters of the deep." [423a]

In the spring following his return from the Isle of Man, Borrow made numerous excursions on foot through East Anglia. He seemed too restless to remain long in one place. During a tramp from Yarmouth to Ely by way of Cromer, Holt, Lynn and Wisbech, he called upon Anna Gurney. [423b] His reason for doing so was that she was one of the three celebrities of the world he desired to see. The other two were Daniel O'Connell [423c] and Lamplighter (the sire of Phosphorus), Lord Berners winner of the Derby. Two of the world's notabilities had slipped through his fingers by reason of their deaths, but he was determined that Anna Gurney, who lived at North Repps, should not evade him. He gave her notice of his intention to call, and found her ready to receive him.

"When, according to his account,
[424] he had been but a very short

> time in her presence, she wheeled her chair round and reached her hand to one of her bookshelves and took down an Arabic grammar, and put it into his hand, asking for explanation of some difficult point, which he tried to decipher; but meanwhile she talked to him continuously; when, said he, 'I could not study the Arabic grammar and listen to her at the same time, so I threw down the book and ran out of the room.'"

It is said that Borrow ran until he reached Old Tucker's Inn at Cromer, where he ate "five excellent sausages" and found calm. He then went on to Sheringham and related the incident to the Upchers.

These lonely walking tours soothed Borrow's restless mind. He had constant change of scene, and his thoughts were diverted by the adventures of the roadside. He encountered many and interesting people, on one occasion an old man who remembered the fight between Painter and Oliver; at another time he saw a carter beating his horse which had fallen down. "Give him a pint of ale, and I will pay for it," counselled Borrow. After the second pint the beast got up and proceeded, "pulling merrily . . . with the other horses."

Ale was Borrow's sovereign remedy for the world's ills and wrongs. It was by ale that he had been cured when the "Horrors" were upon him in the dingle. "Oh, genial and gladdening is the power of good ale, the true and proper drink of Englishmen," he exclaims after having heartened Jack Slingsby and

his family. "He is not deserving of the name of Englishman," he continues, "who speaketh against ale, that is good ale." [425a] To John Murray (the Third) he wrote in his letter of sympathy on the death of his father: "Pray keep up your spirits, and that you may be able to do so, take long walks and drink plenty of Scotch ale with your dinner . . . God bless you."

He liked ale "with plenty of malt in it, and as little hop as well may be—ale at least two years old." [425b] The period of its maturity changed with his mood. In another place he gives nine or ten months as the ideal age. [425c] He was all for an Act of Parliament to force people to brew good ale. He not only drank good ale himself; but prescribed it as a universal elixir for man and beast. Hearing from Elizabeth Harvey "of a lady who was attached to a gentleman," Borrow demanded bluntly, "Well, did he make her an offer?" "No," was the response. "Ah," Borrow replied with conviction, "if she had given him some good ale he would." [425d]

He loved best old Burton, which, with '37 port, were his favourites; yet he would drink whatever ale the roadside-inn provided, as if to discipline his stomach. It has been said that he habitually drank "swipes," a thin cheap ale, because that was the drink of his gypsy friends; but Borrow's friendship certainly did not often involve him in anything so distasteful.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE ROMANY RYE. 1854–1859

BORROW was not a great correspondent, and he left behind him very few letters from distinguished men of his time. Among those few were several from Edward FitzGerald, whose character contrasted so strangely with that of the tempestuous Borrow. In 1856 FitzGerald wrote:—

31 GREAT PORTLAND STREET,
LONDON, 27*th October* 1856.

MY DEAR SIR,—It is I who send you the new Turkish Dictionary [Redhouse's Turkish & English Dictionary] which ought to go by this Post; my reasons being that I bought it really only for the purpose of doing that little good to the spirited Publisher of the book (who thought when he began it that the [Crimean] War was to last), and I send it to you because I should be glad of your opinion, if you can give it. I am afraid that you will hardly condescend to *use* it, for you abide in the old Meninsky; but if you *will* use it, I shall be very glad. I don't think *I* ever shall; and so what is to be done with it now it is bought?

I don't know what Kerrich told you of my being too *lazy* to go over to Yarmouth to see you a year ago. No such thing as that. I simply had

doubts as to whether you would not rather remain unlookt for. I know I enjoyed my evening with you a month ago. I wanted to ask you to read some of the *Northern Ballads* too; but you shut the book.

I must tell you. I am come up here on my way to Chichester to be married! to Miss Barton (of Quaker memory) and our united ages amount to 96!—a dangerous experiment on both sides. She at least brings a fine head and heart to the bargain—worthy of a better market. But it is to be, and I dare say you will honestly wish we may do well.

Keep the book as long as you will. It is useless to me. I shall be to be heard of through Geldeston Hall, Beccles. With compliments to Mrs Borrow, believe me,

Yours truly,

EDWARD FITZGERALD.

P.S.—Donne is well, and wants to know about you.

A few months later FitzGerald wrote again:

ALBERT HOUSE, GORLESTON,
6*th July* 1857.

DEAR BORROW,—Will you send me [The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam]

by bearer. I only want to look at him, for that Frenchman [427] has been misquoting him in a way that will make [Professor] E. Cowell [of Cambridge] answerable for another's blunder, which must not be. You shall have '*Omar* back directly, or whenever you want him, and I should really like to make you a copy (taking my time) of the best Quatrains. I am now looking over the Calcutta MS. which has 500!—very many quite as good as those in the MS. you have; but very many in *both* MSS. are well omitted.

I have been for a fortnight to Geldeston where Kerrich is not very well. I shall look for you one day in my Yarmouth rounds, and you know how entirely disengaged and glad to see you I am here. I have two fresh Nieces with me—and I find I gave you the *worst* wine of two samples Diver sent me. I wish you would send word by bearer you are better —this one word written will be enough you see.

My old Parson Crabbe is bowing down under epileptic fits, or something like, and I believe his brave old white head will soon sink into the village Churchsward. Why, *our* time seems coming. Make way, Gentlemen!—Yours very truly,

EDWARD FITZGERALD.

What effect the sweet gentleness of FitzGerald's nature had upon that of Borrow is not known, for the replies have not been preserved. FitzGerald was a man capable of soothing the angriest and most discontented mind, and it is a misfortune that he saw so little of Borrow. In the early part of the following year (24th Jan. 1857) FitzGerald wrote to Professor E. B. Cowell of Cambridge:—

> "I was with Borrow a week ago at Donne's, and also at Yarmouth three months ago: he is well, but not yet agreed with Murray. He read me a long Translation he had made from the Turkish: which I could not admire, and his Taste becomes stranger than ever." [428a]

From Wales Mrs George Borrow had written (Sept. 1854) to old Mrs Borrow: "He [Borrow] will, I expect at Christmas, publish his other work [*The Romany Rye*] together with his poetry in all the European languages." [428b] In November (1854) the manuscript of *The Romany Rye* was delivered to John Murray, who appears to have taken his time in reading it; for it was not until 23rd December that he expressed his views in the following letter. Even when the letter was written it was allowed to remain in John Murray's desk for five weeks, not being sent until 27th January:—

> MY DEAR BORROW,—I have read with care the MS. of *The Romany Rye* and have pondered anxiously over it; and in what I am about to write I

think I may fairly claim the privilege of a friend deeply interested in you personally, as well as in your reputation as author, and by no means insensible to the abilities displayed in your various works. It is my firm conviction then, that you will incur the certainty of failure and run the risque of injuring your literary fame by publishing the MS. as it stands. Very large omissions seem to me—and in this, Elwin, [429] no mean judge, concurs—absolutely indispensable. That *Lavengro* would have profited by curtailment, I stated before its publication. The result has verified my anticipations, and in the present instance I feel compelled to make it the condition of publication. You can well imagine that it is not my *interest* to shorten a book from two volumes to one unless there were really good cause.

Lavengro clearly has not been successful. Let us not then risque the chance of another failure, but try to avoid the rock upon which we then split. You have so great store of interesting matter in your mind and in your notes, that I cannot but feel it to be a pity that you should harp always upon one string, as it were. It seems to me that you have dwelt too long on English ground in this new work, and have resuscitated

some characters of the former book (such as F. Ardry) whom your readers would have been better pleased to have left behind. Why should you not introduce us rather to those novel scenes of Moscovite and Hungarian life respecting which I have heard you drop so many stimulating allusions. Do not, I pray, take offence at what I have written. It is difficult and even painful for me to assume the office of critic, and this is one of the reasons why this note has lingered so long in my desk. Fortunately, in the advice I am tendering I am supported by others of better literary judgment than myself, and who have also deep regard for you. I will specify below some of the passages which I would point out for omission.—With best remembrances, I remain, my dear Borrow, Your faithful publisher and sincere friend,

JOHN MURRAY.

Suggestions for Omission.

The Hungarian in No. 6.

The Jockey Story, terribly spun out, No. 7.

Visit to the Church, too long.

Interview with the Irishman, Do.

Learning Chinese, too much

repetition in this part of a very interesting chapter.

The Postilion and Highwayman.

Throughout the MS. condensation is indispensable. Many of the narratives are carried to a tedious length by details and repetition.

The dialogue with Ursula, the song, etc., border on the indelicate. I like much Horncastle Fair, the Chinese scholar, except objection noted above.

Grooming of the horse.

January 27, 1855.

On 29th January, Mrs Borrow wrote to John Murray a letter that was inspired by Borrow himself. Dr Knapp discovered the original draft, some of which was in Borrow's own hand. It runs:—

DEAR MR MURRAY,—We have received your letters. In the first place I beg leave to say something on a very principal point. You talk about *conditions* of publishing. Mr Borrow has not the slightest wish to publish the book. The MS. was left with you because you wished to see it, and when left, you were particularly requested not to let it pass out of your own hands. But it seems you have shown it to various individuals whose opinions you

repeat. What those opinions are worth may be gathered from the following fact.

The book is one of the most learned works ever written; yet in the summary of the opinions which you give, not one single allusion is made to the learning which pervades the book, no more than if it contained none at all. It is treated just as if all the philological and historical facts were mere inventions, and the book a common novel . . .

With regard to *Lavengro* it is necessary to observe that if ever a book experienced infamous and undeserved treatment it was that book. It was attacked in every form that envy and malice could suggest, on account of Mr Borrow's acquirements and the success of *The Bible in Spain*, and it was deserted by those whose duty it was, in some degree to have protected it. No attempt was ever made to refute the vile calumny that it was a book got up against the Popish agitation of '51. It was written years previous to that period—a fact of which none is better aware than the Publisher. Is that calumny to be still permitted to go unanswered?

If these suggestions are attended to, well and good; if not, Mr Borrow can

> bide his time. He is independent of the public and of everybody. Say no more on that Russian Subject. Mr Borrow has had quite enough of the press. If he wrote a book on Russia, it would be said to be like *The Bible in Spain*, or it would be said to be unlike *The Bible in Spain*, and would be blamed in either case. He has written a book in connection with England such as no other body could have written, and he now rests from his labours. He has found England an ungrateful country. It owes much to him, and he owes nothing to it. If he had been a low ignorant impostor, like a person he could name, he would have been employed and honoured.—I remain, Yours sincerely,
>
> MARY BORROW.

On 5th April 1856 Mrs Borrow wrote again, requesting Murray to return the manuscript, but for what purpose she does not state. Two days later it was despatched by rail from Albemarle Street.

Some years before, Borrow had met Rev. Whitwell Elwin, Rector of Booton, somewhere about the time he (Elwin) came up to London to edit *The Quarterly Review*, viz., 1853. [431] The first interview between the two men has been described as characteristic of both.

> "Borrow was just then very sore with his slashing critics, and on someone

> mentioning that Elwin was a '*Quartering* reviewer,' he said, 'Sir, I wish you a better employment.' Then hastily changing the subject, he called out, 'What party are you in the Church—Tractarian, Moderate, or Evangelical? I am happy to say, *I* am the old *High*.' 'I am happy to say I am *not*,' was Elwin's emphatic reply. Borrow boasted of his proficiency in the Norfolk dialect, which he endeavoured to speak as broadly as possible. 'I told him,' said Elwin, 'that he had not cultivated it with his usual success.' As the conversation proceeded it became less disputatious, and the two ended by becoming so cordial that they promised to visit each other. Borrow fulfilled his promise in the following October, when he went to Booton, and was 'full of anecdote and reminiscence,' and delighted the rectory children by singing them songs in the gypsy tongue. Elwin during this visit urged him to try his hand at an article for the Review. 'Never,' he said, 'I have made a resolution never to have anything to do with such a blackguard trade.'" [432a]

Elwin became greatly interested in *The Romany Rye*. He endeavoured to influence its composition, and even wrote to Borrow begging him "to give his sequel to *Lavengro* more of an historical, and less of a

romancing air." He was not happy about the book. He wrote to John Murray in March:—

> "'It is not the statements themselves which provoke incredulity, but the melodramatic effect which he tries to impart to all his adventures.' Instead of 'roaring like a lion,' in reply, as Elwin had expected, he returned quite a 'lamb-like' note, which gave promise of a greater success for his new work than its precursor." [432b]

Borrow appears to have become tired of biding his time with regard to *The Romany Rye*, and on 27th Feb. 1857 he wrote to John Murray to say that "the work must go to press, and that unless the printing is forthwith commenced, I must come up to London and make arrangements myself. Time is passing away. It ought to have appeared many years ago. I can submit to no more delays." The work was accordingly proceeded with, and Elwin wrote a criticism of the work for *The Quarterly Review* from the proof-sheets:—

> "When the review was almost finished, it was on the point of being altogether withdrawn, owing to a passage in *Romany Rye* which Elwin said was clearly meant to be a reflection on his friend Ford, 'to avenge the presumed refusal of the latter to praise *Lavengro* in *The Quarterly Review*.' 'I am very anxious,' he said, 'to get Borrow justice for rare merits which have

> been entirely overlooked, but if he persists in publishing an attack of this kind I shall, I fear, not be able to serve him.' The objectionable paragraphs had been written by Borrow under a misapprehension, and he cancelled them as soon as he was convinced of his error." [433]

John Murray determined not to publish the book unless the offending passage were removed. He wrote to Borrow the following letter:—

> 8*th April* 1857.
>
> MY DEAR BORROW,—When I have done anything towards you deserving of apology I will not hesitate to offer one. As it is, I have acted loyally towards you, and with a view to maintain your interests.
>
> I agreed to publish your present work solely with the object of obliging you, and in a great degree at the strong recommendation of Cooke. I meant (as was my duty) to do my very best to promote its success. You on your side promised to listen to me in regard to any necessary omissions; and on the faith of this, I pointed out one omission, which I make the indispensable condition of my proceeding further with the book. I have asked nothing unfair nor unreasonable—nay, a compliance with the request is

> essential for your own character as an author and a man.
>
> You are the last man that I should ever expect to "frighten or bully"; and if a mild but firm remonstrance against an offensive passage in your book is interpreted by you into such an application, I submit that the grounds for the notion must exist nowhere but in your own imagination. The alternative offered to you is to omit or publish elsewhere. Nothing shall compel me to publish what you have written. Think calmly and dispassionately over this, and when you have decided let me know.
>
> Yours very faithfully,
>
> JOHN MURRAY.

The reference that had so offended Murray and Elwin had, in all probability been interpolated in proof form, otherwise it would have been discovered either when Murray read the manuscript or Elwin the proofs. By return of post came the following reply from Borrow, then at Great Yarmouth:—

> DEAR SIR,—Yesterday I received your letter. You had better ask your cousin [Robert Cooke] to come down and talk about matters. *After* Monday I shall be disengaged and shall be most happy to see him. And now I must tell you that you are exceedingly injudicious. You call a

> chapter heavy, and I, not wishing to appear unaccommodating, remove or alter two or three passages for which I do not particularly care, whereupon you make most unnecessary comments, obtruding your private judgment upon matters with which you have no business, and of which it is impossible that you should have a competent knowledge. If you disliked the passages you might have said so, but you had no right to say anything more. I believe that you not only meant no harm, but that your intentions were good; unfortunately, however, people with the best of intentions occasionally do a great deal of harm. In your language you are frequently in the highest degree injudicious; for example, in your last letter you talk of obliging me by publishing my work. Now is not that speaking very injudiciously? Surely you forget that I could return a most cutting answer were I disposed to do so.
>
> I believe, however, that your intentions are good, and that you are disposed to be friendly.—Yours truly,
>
> GEORGE BORROW.

The tone of this letter is strangely reminiscent of some of the Rev Andrew Brandram's admonitions to

Borrow himself, during his association with the Bible Society. Borrow bowed to the wind, and the offending passage was deleted, and *The Romany Rye* eventually appeared on 30th April 1857, in an edition of a thousand copies. The public, or such part of it as had not forgotten Borrow, had been kept waiting six years to know what had happened on the morning after the storm. *Lavengro* had ended by the postilion concluding his story with "Young gentleman, I will now take a spell on your blanket—young lady, good-night," and presumably the three, Borrow, Isopel Berners and their guest had lain down to sleep, and a great quiet fell upon the dingle, and the moon and the stars shone down upon it, and the red glow from the charcoal in the brazier paled and died away.

The Romany Rye is a puzzling book. The latter portion, at least, seems to suggest "spiritual autobiography." It reveals the man, his atmosphere, his character, and nowhere better than among the jockeys at Horncastle. It gives a better and more convincing picture of Borrow than the most accurate list of dates and occurrences, all vouched for upon unimpeachable authority. It is impressionism applied to autobiography, which has always been considered as essentially a subject for photographic treatment. Borrow thought otherwise, with the result that many people decline to believe that his picture is a portrait, because there is a question as to the dates.

Among the reviews, which were on the whole unfriendly, was the remarkable notice in *The Quarterly Review*, by the Rev. Whitwell Elwin:—[435]

"Nobody," he wrote, "sympathises

> with wounded vanity, and the world only laughs when a man angrily informs it that it does not rate him at his true value. The public to whom he appeals must, after all, be the judge of his pretensions. Their verdict at first is frequently wrong, but it is they themselves who must reverse it, and not the author who is upon his trial before them. The attacks of critics, if they are unjust, invariably yield to the same remedy. Though we do not think that Mr Borrow is a good counsel in his own cause, we are yet strongly of the opinion that Time in this case has some wrongs to repair, and that *Lavengro* has *not* obtained the fame which was its due. It contains passages which in their way are not surpassed by anything in English Literature."

The value of these prophetic words lies in the fine spirit of fatherly reproof in which the whole review was written. It is the work of a critic who regarded literature as a thing to be approached, both by author and reviewer, with grave and deliberate ceremony, not with enthusiasm or prejudice. From any other source the following words would not have possessed the significance they did, coming from a man of such sane ideas with the courage to express them:—

> "Various portions of the history are known to be a faithful narrative of Mr Borrow's career, while we

> ourselves can testify, as to many other parts of his volumes, that nothing can excel the fidelity with which he has described both men and things. Far from his showing any tendency to exaggeration, such of his characters as we chance to have known, and they are not a few, are rather within the truth than beyond it. However picturesquely they may be drawn, the lines are invariably those of nature. Why under these circumstances he should envelop the question in mystery is more than we can divine. There can be no doubt that the larger part, and possibly the whole, of the work is a narrative of actual occurrences." [436]

The Appendix itself, which had drawn from Elwin the grave declaration that "Mr Borrow is very angry with his critics," is a fine piece of rhetorical denunciation. It opens with the deliberate restraint of a man who feels the fury of his wrath surging up within him. It tells again the story of *Lavengro*, pointing morals as it goes. Then the studied calm is lost—Priestcraft, "Foreign Nonsense," "Gentility Nonsense," "Canting Nonsense," "Pseudo-Critics," "Pseudo-Radicals" he flogs and pillories mercilessly until, arriving at "The Old Radical," he throws off all restraint and lunges out wildly, mad with hate and despair. As a piece of literary folly, the Appendix to *The Romany Rye* has probably never been surpassed. It alienated from Borrow all but his personal friends, and it sealed his literary fate as far as his own generation was concerned. In short, he had burnt his

boats.

Borrow had sent a copy of *The Romany Rye* to FitzGerald, which is referred to by him in a letter written from Gorleston to Professor Cowell (5th June 1857):—

> "Within hail almost lives George Borrow who has lately published, and given me, two new Volumes of Lavengro called *Romany Rye*, with some excellent things, and some very bad (as I have made bold to write to him—how shall I face him!). You would not like the Book at all, I think." [437a]

Borrow was bitterly disappointed at the effect produced by *The Romany Rye*. On someone once saying that it was the finest piece of literary invective since Swift, he replied, "Yes, I meant it to be; and what do you think the effect was? No one took the least notice of it!" [437b]

The Romany Rye was not a success. The thousand copies lasted a year. When it appeared likely that a second edition would be required, Borrow wrote to John Murray urging him not to send the book to the press again until he "was quite sure the demand for it will at least defray all attendant expenses." He saw that whatever profits had resulted from the publication of the first edition, were in danger of being swallowed up in the preparation of a second. When this did eventually make its appearance in 1858, it was limited to 750 copies, which lasted until 1872.

Borrow's own attitude with regard to the work and

his wisdom in publishing it is summed up in a letter to John Murray (17th Sept. 1857):—

> "I was very anxious to bring it out," he writes; "and I bless God that I had the courage and perseverance to do so. It is of course unpalatable to many; for it scorns to foster delusion, to cry 'peace where there is no peace,' and denounces boldly the evils which are hurrying the country to destruction, and which have kindled God's anger against it, namely, the pride, insolence, cruelty, covetousness, and hypocrisy of its people, and above all the rage for gentility, which must be indulged in at the expense of every good and honourable feeling."

The writing of the Appendix had aroused in Borrow all his old enthusiasm, and he appears to have come to the determination to publish a number of works, including a veritable library of translations. At the end of *The Romany Rye* appeared a lengthy list of books in preparation. [438]

In August 1857 Borrow paid a second visit to Wales, walking "upwards of four hundred miles." Starting from Laugharne in Carmarthenshire, he visited Tenby, Pembroke, Milford Haven, Haverford, St David's, Fishguard, Newport, Cardigan, Lampeter; passing into Brecknockshire, he eventually reached Mortimer's Cross in Hereford and thence to Shrewsbury. In October he was at Leighton, Donnington and Uppington, where he found traces of Gronwy Owen, the one-time curate and all-time poet.

Throughout his life Borrow had shown by every action and word written about her, the great love he bore his mother. When his wife wrote to her and he was too restless to do so himself, he would interpolate two or three lines to "My dear Mamma." She was always in his thoughts, and he never wavered in his love for her and devotion to her comfort; whilst she looked upon him as only a mother so good and so tender could look upon a son who had become her "only hope."

For many years of her life it had been ordained that this brave old lady should live alone. [439] In the middle of August 1858 the news reached Borrow that his mother had been taken suddenly ill. She was in her eighty-seventh year, and at such an age all illnesses are dangerous. Borrow hastened to Oulton, and arrived just in time to be with her at the last.

Thus on 16th August 1858, of "pulmonary congestion," died Anne Borrow, who had followed her husband about with his regiment, and had reared and educated her two boys under circumstances of great disadvantage. She had lost one; but the other, her youngest born, whom she had so often shielded from his father's reproaches, had been spared to her, and she had seen him famous. Upon her grave in Oulton Churchyard the son caused to be inscribed the words, "She was a good wife and a good mother," than which no woman can ask more. [440a]

The death of his mother was a great shock to Borrow. "He felt the blow keenly," Mrs Borrow wrote to John Murray, "and I advised a tour in Scotland to recruit his health and spirits." Accordingly he went North early in October, leaving his wife and Henrietta at Great Yarmouth. He visited

the Highlands, walking several hundred miles. Mull struck him as "a very wild country, perhaps the wildest in Europe." Many of its place-names reminded him strongly of the Isle of Man. At the end of November he finished up the tour at Lerwick in Shetland, where he bought presents for his "loved ones," having seen Greenock, Glasgow, Perth, Aberdeen, Inverness, Wick, Thurso among other places. His impressions were not altogether favourable to the Scotch. "A queerer country I never saw in all my life," he wrote later . . . "a queerer set of people than the Scotch you would scarcely see in a summer's day." [440b]

In the following year (1859) an excursion was made to Ireland by Borrow and his family. Making Dublin his headquarters, where he left his wife and Henrietta comfortably settled, he tramped to Connemara and the Giant's Causeway, the expedition being full of adventure and affording him "much pleasure," in spite of the fact that he was "frequently wet to the skin, and indifferently lodged."

Borrow had inherited from his mother some property at Mattishall Burgh, one and a half miles from his birth-place, consisting of some land, a thatched house and outbuildings, now demolished. This was let to a small-holder named Henry Hill. Borrow thought very highly of his tenant, and for hours together would tramp up and down beside him as he ploughed the land, asking questions, and hearing always something new from the amazing stores of nature knowledge that Henry Hill had acquired. This Norfolk worthy appears to have been possessed of a genius for many things. He was well versed in herbal lore, a self-taught 'cellist, playing each Sunday in the Congregational Chapel at Mattishall, and an

equally self-taught watch-repairer; but his chief claim to fame was as a bee-keeper, local tradition crediting him with being the first man to keep bees under glass. He would solemnly state that his bees, whom he looked upon as friends, talked to him. On Sundays the country folk for miles round would walk over to Mattishall Burgh to see old Henry Hill's bees, and hear him expound their lore. It was perforce Sunday, there was no other day for the Norfolk farm-labourer of that generation, who seemed always to live on the verge of starvation. Borrow himself expressed regret to Henry Hill that it had not been possible to add the education of the academy to that of the land. He saw that the combination would have produced an even more remarkable man.

In Norfolk all strangers are regarded with suspicion. Lifelong friendships are not contracted in a day. The East Anglian is shrewd, and requires to know something about those whom he admits to the sacred inner circle of his friendship. Borrow was well-known in the Mattishall district, and was looked upon with more than usual suspicion. He was unquestionably a strange man, in speech, in appearance, in habits. He could and would knock down any who offended him; but, worst of all, he was the intimate of gypsies, sat by their fires, spoke in their tongue. The population round about was entirely an agricultural one, and all united in hating the gypsies as their greatest enemies, because of their depredations. Add to this the fact that Borrow was a frequenter of public-houses, of which there were *seven* in the village, and was wont to boast that you could get at the true man only after he had been mellowed into speech by good English ale. Then he would open his heart and unburden his mind of all the accumulated knowledge that he possessed, and

add something to the epic of the soil. Borrow's overbearing manner made people shy of him. On one occasion he told John, the son and successor of Henry Hill, that he ought to be responsible for the debt of his half-brother; the debt, it may be mentioned, was to Borrow.

There is no better illustration of the suspicion with which Borrow was regarded locally, than an incident that occurred during one of his visits to Mattishall. He called upon John Hill at Church Farm to collect his rent. The evening was spent very agreeably. Borrow recited some of his ballads, quoted Scripture and languages, and sang a song. He was particularly interested on account of Mrs Hill being from London, where she knew many of his haunts. He remained the whole evening with the family and partook of their meal; but was allowed to go to one of the seven public-houses for a bed, although there were spare bedrooms in the house that he might have occupied. Such was the suspicion that Borrow's habits created in the minds of his fellow East Anglians. [442]

CHAPTER XXVIII
JULY 1859–JANUARY 1869

AFTER his second tour in Wales, Borrow had submitted to John Murray the manuscript of his translation of *The Sleeping Bard*, which in 1830 had so alarmed the little Welsh bookseller of Smithfield. "I really want something to do," Borrow wrote, "and

seeing the work passing through the press might amuse me." Murray, however, could not see his way to accept the offer, and the manuscript was returned. Borrow decided to publish the book at his own expense, and accordingly commissioned a Yarmouth man to print him 250 copies, upon the title-page of which John Murray permitted his name to appear.

In the note in which he tells of the Welsh bookseller's doubts and fears, Borrow goes on to assure his readers that there is no harm in the book.

> "It is true," he says, "that the Author is any thing but mincing in his expressions and descriptions, but there is nothing in the Sleeping Bard which can give offence to any but the over fastidious. There is a great deal of squeamish nonsense in the world; let us hope however that there is not so much as there was. Indeed can we doubt that such folly is on the decline, when we find Albemarle Street in '60, willing to publish a harmless but plain speaking book which Smithfield shrank from in '30."

The edition was very speedily exhausted, largely on account of an article entitled, *The Welsh and Their Literature*, written years before, that Borrow adapted as a review of the book, and published anonymously in *The Quarterly Review* (Jan. 1861). *The Sleeping Bard* was not reprinted.

The next event of importance in Borrow's life was his

removal to London with Mrs Borrow and Henrietta. Towards the end of the Irish holiday (4th Nov. 1859), Mrs Borrow had written to John Murray: “If all be well in the Spring, I shall wish to look around, and select a pleasant, healthy residence within from three to ten miles of London.” Borrow may have felt more at liberty to make the change now that his mother was dead, although whilst she was at Oulton he was as little company for her at Great Yarmouth as he would have been in London. Whatever led them to the decision to take up their residence in London, Borrow and his wife left Great Yarmouth at the end of June, and immediately proceeded to look about them for a suitable house. Their choice eventually fell upon number 22 Hereford Square, Brompton, which had the misfortune to be only a few doors from number 26, where lived Frances Power Cobbe. The rent was £65 per annum. The Borrows entered upon their tenancy at the Michaelmas quarter, and were joined by Henrietta, who had remained behind at Great Yarmouth during the house-hunting.

Miss Cobbe has given in her Autobiography a very unlovely picture of George Borrow during the period of his residence in Hereford Square. No woman, except his relatives and dependants, will tolerate egoism in a man. Borrow was an egoist. If not permitted to lead the conversation, he frequently wrapped himself in a gloomy silence and waited for an opportunity to discomfit the usurper of the place he seemed to consider his own. Among his papers were found after his death a large number of letters from poor men whom Borrow had assisted. His friend the Rev. Francis Cunningham once wrote to him a letter protesting against his assisting Nonconformist schools. He gave to Church and

Chapel alike. This disproves misanthropy, and leaves egoism as the only explanation of his occasional lapses into bitterness or rudeness. When in happy vein, however, "his conversation . . . was unlike that of any other man; whether he told a long story or only commented on some ordinary topic, he was always quaint, often humorous." [445a]

Miss Cobbe would not humour an egoist, because constitutionally women, especially clever women, dislike them, unless they wish to marry them. When she heard it said, as it very frequently was said, that Borrow was a gypsy by blood, she caustically remarked that if he were not he "*ought* to have been." Miss Cobbe had living with her a Miss Lloyd who, "amused by his quaint stories and his (real or sham) enthusiasm for Wales, . . . cultivated his acquaintance. I," continued Miss Cobbe frankly, "never liked him, thinking him more or less of a hypocrite." [445b]

On one occasion Borrow had accepted an invitation from Miss Cobbe to meet some friends, but subsequently withdrew his acceptance "on finding that Dr Martineau was to be of the party . . . nor did he ever after attend our little assemblies without first ascertaining that Dr Martineau would not be present!" This she explained by the assertion that Dr Martineau had "horsed" Borrow when he was punished for running away from school at Norwich. It appeared "irresistibly comic" to her mind.

There is an amusing account given by Miss Cobbe of how she worsted Borrow, which is certainly extremely flattering to her accomplishments. Once when talking with him she happened to say

"something about the imperfect

education of women, and he said it was *right* they should be ignorant, and that no man could endure a clever wife. I laughed at him openly," she continues, "and told him some men knew better. What did he think of the Brownings? 'Oh, he had heard the name; he did not know anything of them. Since Scott, he read no modern writer; Scott *was greater than Homer*! What he liked were curious, old, erudite books about mediæval and northern things.' I said I knew little of such literature, and preferred the writers of our own age, but indeed I was no great student at all. Thereupon he evidently wanted to astonish me; and, talking of Ireland, said, 'Ah, yes; a most curious, mixed race. First there were the Firbolgs,—the old enchanters, who raised mists.' . . . 'Don't you think, Mr Borrow,' I asked, 'it was the Tuatha-de-Danaan who did that? Keatinge expressly says that they conquered the Firbolgs by that means.' (Mr B. somewhat out of countenance), 'Oh! Aye! Keatinge is *the* authority; a most extraordinary writer.' 'Well, I should call him the Geoffrey of Monmouth of Ireland.' (Mr B. changing the *venue*), 'I delight in Norse-stories; they are far grander than the Greek. There is the story of Olaf the Saint of Norway. Can

> anything be grander? What a noble character!' 'But,' I said, 'what do *you* think of his putting all those poor Druids on the Skerry of Shrieks, and leaving them to be drowned by the tide?' (Thereupon Mr B. looked at me askant out of his gipsy eyes, as if he thought me an example of the evils of female education!) 'Well! Well! I forgot about the Skerry of Shrieks. Then there is the story of Beowulf the Saxon going out to sea in his burning ship to die.' 'Oh, Mr Borrow! that isn't a Saxon story at all. It is in the Heimskringla! It is told of Hakon of Norway.' Then, I asked him about the gipsies and their language, and if they were certainly Aryans? He didn't know (or pretended not to know) what Aryans were; and altogether displayed a miraculous mixture of odd knowledge and more odd ignorance. Whether the latter were real or assumed I know not!" [446]

These were some of the neighbourly little pleasantries indulged in by Miss Cobbe, regarding a man who was a frequent guest at her house.

> "His has indeed been a fantastic fate!" writes Mr Theodore Watts-Dunton. "When the shortcomings of any illustrious man save Borrow are under discussion, '*les défauts de ses qualités*' is the criticism—wise as charitable—which they evoke. Yes,

> each one is allowed to have his angularities save Borrow. Each one is allowed to show his own pet unpleasant facets of character now and then—allowed to show them as inevitable foils to the pleasant ones —save Borrow. *His* weaknesses no one ever condones. During his lifetime his faults were for ever chafing and irritating his acquaintances, and now that he and they are dead, these faults of his seem to be chafing and irritating people of another generation. A fantastic fate, I say, for him who was so interesting to some of us!" [447a]

On occasion Borrow could be inexcusably rude, as he was to a member of the Russian Embassy who one day called at Hereford Square for a copy of *Targum* for the Czar, when he told him that his Imperial master could fetch it himself. Again, no one can defend him for affronting the "very distinguished scholar" with whom he happened to disagree, by thundering out, "Sir, you're a fool!" Such lapses are deplorable; but why should we view them in a different light from those of Dr Johnson?

What would have been regarded in another distinguished man as a pleasant vein of humour was in Borrow's case looked upon as evidence of his unveracity. A contemporary tells how, on one occasion, he went with him into "a tavern" for a pint of ale, when Borrow pointed out

> "a yokel at the far end of the apartment. The foolish bumpkin

> was slumbering. Borrow in a stage whisper, gravely assured me that the man was a murderer, and confided to me with all the emphasis of honest conviction the scene and details of his crime. Subsequently I ascertained that the elaborate incidents and fine touches of local colour were but the coruscations of a too vivid imagination, and that the villain of the ale-house on the common was as innocent as the author of *The Romany Rye*." [447b]

If Borrow had been called upon to explain this little pleasantry he would in all probability have replied in the words of Mr Petulengro, that he had told his acquaintance "things . . . which are not exactly true, simply to make a fool of you, brother."

It is strange how those among his contemporaries who disliked him, denied Borrow the indulgence that is almost invariably accorded to genius. Those who were not for him were bitterly against him. In their eyes he was either outrageously uncivil or insultingly rude. Dr Hake, although a close friend, saw Borrow's dominant weakness, his love of the outward evidences of fame. Dr Hake's impartiality gives greater weight to his testimony when he tells of Borrow's first meeting with Dr Robert Latham, the ethnologist, philologist and grammarian. Latham much wanted to meet Borrow, and promised Dr Hake to be on his best behaviour. He was accordingly invited to dinner with Borrow. Latham as usual began to show off his knowledge. He became aggressive, and finally very excited; but throughout the meal Borrow showed the utmost patience and

courtesy, much to his host's relief. When he subsequently encountered Latham in the street he always stopped "to say a kind word, seeing his forlorn condition."

Dr Hake had settled at Coombe End, Roehampton, and now that the Borrows were in London, the two families renewed their old friendship. Borrow would walk over to Coombe End, and on arriving at the gate would call out, "Are you alone?" If there were other callers he would pass by, if not he would enter and frequently persuade Dr Hake, and perhaps his sons, to accompany him for a walk.

"There was something not easily forgotten," writes Mr A. Egmont Hake, "in the manner in which he would unexpectedly come to our gates, singing some gypsy song, and as suddenly depart." [448] They had many pleasant tramps together, mostly in Richmond Park, where Borrow appeared to know every tree and showed himself very learned in deer. He was

> "always saying something in his loud, self-asserting voice; sometimes stopping suddenly, drawing his huge stature erect, and changing the keen and haughty expression of his face into the rapt and half fatuous look of the oracle, he would without preface recite some long fragment from Welsh or Scandinavian bards, his hands hanging from his chest and flapping in symphony. Then he would push on again, and as suddenly stop, arrested by the beautiful scenery, and exclaim, 'Ah! this is England, as the Pretender said

> when he again looked on his fatherland.' Then on reaching any town, he would be sure to spy out some lurking gypsy, whom no one but himself would have known from a common horse-dealer. A conversation in Romany would ensue, a shilling would change hands, two fingers would be pointed at the gypsy, and the interview would be at an end." [449a]

One day he asked Dr Hake's youngest boy if he knew how to fight a man bigger than himself, and on being told that he didn't, advised him to "accept his challenge, and tell him to take off his coat, and while he was doing it knock him down and then run for your life." [449b]

Once Borrow arrived at Dr Hake's house to find another caller in the person of Mr Theodore Watts-Dunton, and they "went through a pleasant trio, in which Borrow, as was his wont, took the first fiddle . . . Borrow made himself agreeable to Watts [-Dunton], recited a fairy tale in the best style to him, and liked him." [449c] Borrow did not recognise in Mr Watts-Dunton the young man whom he had seen bathing on the beach at Great Yarmouth, pleased to be near his hero, but too much afraid to venture to address him. Writing of this meeting at Coombe End, Mr Watts-Dunton says: "There is however no doubt that Borrow would have run away from me had I been associated in his mind with the literary calling. But at that time I had written nothing at all save poems, and a prose story or two of a romantic kind." [450] Borrow hated the literary man, he was at war with the whole genus.



Mr Watts-Dunton confesses that he made great efforts to enlist Borrow's interest. He touched on Bamfylde Moore Carew, beer, bruisers, philology, "gentility nonsense," the "trumpery great"; but without success. Borrow was obviously suspicious of him. Then with inspiration he happened to mention what proved to be a magic name.

"I tried other subjects in the same

direction," Mr Watts-Dunton continues, "but with small success, till in a lucky moment I bethought myself of Ambrose Gwinett, . . . the man who, after having been hanged and gibbeted for murdering a traveller with whom he had shared a double-bedded room at a seaside inn, revived in the night, escaped from the gibbet-irons, went to sea as a common sailor, and afterwards met on a British man-of-war the very man he had been hanged for murdering. The truth was that Gwinett's supposed victim, having been attacked on the night in question by a violent bleeding of the nose, had risen and left the house for a few minutes' walk in the sea-breeze, when the press-gang captured him and bore him off to sea, where he had been in service ever since. The story is true, and the pamphlet, Borrow afterwards told me (I know not on what authority), was written by Goldsmith from Gwinett's dictation for a platter of cow-heel.

"To the bewilderment of Dr Hake, I introduced the subject of Ambrose Gwinett in the same manner as I might have introduced the story of 'Achilles' wrath,' and appealed to Dr Hake (who, of course, had never heard of the book or the man) as to whether a certain incident in the

pamphlet had gained or lost by the dramatist who, at one of the minor theatres, had many years ago dramatized the story. Borrow was caught at last. 'What?' said he, 'you know that pamphlet about Ambrose Gwinett?' 'Know it?' said I, in a hurt tone, as though he had asked me if I knew 'Macbeth'; 'of course I know Ambrose Gwinett, Mr Borrow, don't you?' 'And you know the play?' said he. 'Of course I do, Mr Borrow,' I said, in a tone that was now a little angry at such an insinuation of crass ignorance. 'Why,' said he, 'it's years and years since it was acted; I never was much of a theatre man, but I did go to see *that*.' 'Well I should rather think you *did*, Mr Borrow,' said I. 'But,' said he, staring hard at me, 'you—you were not born!' 'And I was not born,' said I, 'when the "Agamemnon" was produced, and yet one reads the "Agamemnon," Mr Borrow. I have read the drama of "Ambrose Gwinett." I have it bound in morocco, with some more of Douglas Jerrold's early transpontine plays, and some Æschylean dramas by Mr Fitzball. I will lend it to you, Mr Borrow, if you like.' He was completely conquered, 'Hake!' he cried, in a loud voice, regardless of my presence, 'Hake! your friend knows everything.' Then he murmured to himself. 'Wonderful

> man! Knows Ambrose Gwinett!'
>
> "It is such delightful reminiscences as these that will cause me to have as long as I live a very warm place in my heart for the memory of George Borrow." [451a]

After this, intercourse proved easy. At Borrow's suggestion they walked to the Bald-Faced Stag, in Kingston Vale, to inspect Jerry Abershaw's sword. This famous old hostelry was a favourite haunt of Borrow's, where he would often rest during his walk and drink "a cup of ale" (which he would call "swipes," and make a wry face as he swallowed) and talk of the daring deeds of Jerry the highwayman.

Many people have testified to the pleasure of being in the company of the whimsical, eccentric, humbug-hating Borrow.

> "He was a choice companion on a walk," writes Mr A. Egmont Hake, "whether across country or in the slums of Houndsditch. His enthusiasm for nature was peculiar; he could draw more poetry from a wide-spreading marsh with its straggling rushes than from the most beautiful scenery, and would stand and look at it with rapture." [451b]

Since the tour in Wales in 1854, from which he returned with the four "Note Books," Borrow had been working steadily at *Wild Wales*. In 1857 the book had been announced as "ready for the press"; but this was obviously an anticipation. The

manuscript was submitted to John Murray early in November 1861. On the 20th of that month he wrote the following letter, addressing it, not to Borrow, but to his wife:—

> DEAR MRS BORROW,—The MS. of *Wild Wales* has occupied my thoughts almost ever since Friday last.
>
> I approached this MS. with some diffidence, recollecting the unsatisfactory results, on the whole, of our last publication—*Romany Rye*. I have read a large part of this new work with care and attention, and although it is beautifully written and in a style of English undefiled, which few writers can surpass, there is yet a want of stirring incident in it which makes me fearful as to the result of its publication.
>
> In my hands at least I cannot think it would succeed even as well as *Romany Rye*—and I am fearful of not doing justice to it. I do not like to undertake a work with the chance of reproach that it may have failed through my want of power to promote its circulation, and I do wish, for Borrow's own sake, that in this instance he would try some other publisher and perhaps some other form of publication.
>
> In my hands I am convinced the work will not answer the author's

> expectations, and I am not prepared to take on me this amount of responsibility.
>
> I will give the best advice I can if called upon, and shall be only too glad if I can be useful to Mr Borrow. I regret to have to write in this sense, but believe me always, Dear Mrs Borrow,
>
> Your faithful friend,
>
> JOHN MURRAY.

The reply to this letter has not been preserved. It would appear that some "stirring incidents" were added, among others most probably the account of Borrow blessing the Irish reapers, who mistook him for Father Toban. This anecdote was one of John Murray's favourite passages. It is evident that some concession was made to induce Murray to change his mind. In any case *Wild Wales* appeared towards the close of 1862 in an edition of 1000 copies. The publisher's misgivings were not justified, as the first edition produced a profit, up to 30th June 1863, of £531, 14s., which was equally divided between author and publisher. The second, and cheap, edition of 3000 copies lasted for thirteen years, and the deficiency on this absorbed the greater part of the publisher's profit.

In a way it is the most remarkable of Borrow's books; for it shows that he was making a serious effort to regain his public. It is an older, wiser and chastened Borrow that appears in its pages, striding through the land of the bards at six miles an hour, his satchel slung over his shoulder, his green umbrella grasped

in his right hand, shouting the songs of Wales, about which he knew more than any man he met. There are no gypsies (except towards the end of the book a reference to his meeting with Captain Bosvile), no bruisers, the pope is scarcely mentioned, and "gentility-nonsense" is veiled almost to the point of elimination. It seems scarcely conceivable that the hand that had written the appendix to *The Romany Rye* could have so restrained itself as to write *Wild Wales*. Borrow had evidently read and carefully digested Whitwell Elwin's friendly strictures upon *The Romany Rye*. Instead of the pope, the gypsies and the bruisers of England, there were the vicarage cat, the bards and the thousand and one trivial incidents of the wayside. There were occasional gleams of the old fighting spirit, notably when he characterises sherry, [453] as "a silly, sickly compound, the use of which will transform a nation, however bold and warlike by nature, into a race of sketchers, scribblers, and punsters,—in fact, into what Englishmen are at the present day." He has created the atmosphere of Wales as he did that of the gypsy encampment. He shows the jealous way in which the Welsh cling to their language, and their suspicion of the *Saesneg*, or Saxon. Above all, he shows how national are the Welsh poets, belonging not to the cultured few; but to the labouring man as much as to the landed proprietor. Borrow earned the respect of the people, not only because he knew their language; but on account of his profound knowledge of their literature, their history, and their traditions. No one could escape him, he accosted every soul he met, and evinced a desire for information as to place-names that instantly arrested their attention.

The most curious thing about *Wild Wales* is the omission of all mention of the Welsh Gypsies, who,

with those of Hungary, share the distinction of being the aristocrats of their race. Several explanations have been suggested to account for the curious circumstance. Had Borrow's knowledge of Welsh Romany been scanty, he could very soon have improved it. The presence of his wife and stepdaughter was no hindrance; for, as a matter of fact, they were very little with him, even when they and Borrow were staying at Llangollen; but during the long tours they were many miles away. In all probability the Welsh Gypsies were sacrificed to British prejudice, much as were pugilism and the baiting of the pope.

In spite of its simple charm and convincing atmosphere, *Wild Wales* did not please the critics. Those who noticed it (and there were many who did not) either questioned its genuineness, or found it crowded with triviality and self-glorification. It was full of the superfluous, the superfluous repeated, and above all it was too long (some 250,000 words). *The Spectator* notice was an exception; it did credit to the critical faculty of the man who wrote it. He declined "to boggle and wrangle over minor defects in what is intrinsically good," and praised *Wild Wales* as "the first really clever book . . . in which an honest attempt is made to do justice to Welsh literature."

Borrow had much time upon his hands in London, which he occupied largely in walking. He visited the Metropolitan Gypsyries at Wandsworth, "the Potteries," and "the Mounts," as described in *Romano Lavo-Lil*. Sometimes he would be present at some sporting event, such as the race between the Indian Deerfoot and Jackson, styled the American Deer—tame sport in comparison with the "mills" of his boyhood. He did very little writing, and from 1862,

when *Wild Wales* appeared, until he published *The Romano Lavo-Lil* in 1874, his literary output consisted of only some translations contributed to *Once a Week* (January 1862 to December 1863).

In 1865 he was to lose his stepdaughter, who married a William MacOubrey, M.D., described in the marriage register as a physician of Sloane Street, London, and subsequently upon his tombstone as a barrister. In the July of 1866 Borrow and his wife went to Belfast on a visit to the newly married pair. From Belfast Borrow took another trip into Scotland, crossing over to Stranraer. From there he proceeded to Glen Luce and subsequently to Newton Stewart, Castle Douglas, Dumfries, Ecclefechan, Gretna Green, Carlisle, Langholm, Hawick, Jedburgh, Yetholm (where he saw Esther Blyth of Kirk Yetholm), Kelso, Abbotsford, Melrose, Berwick, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and so back to Belfast, having been absent for nearly four weeks.

Mrs Borrow's health had been the cause of the family leaving Oulton for Great Yarmouth, and about the time of the Irish visit it seems to have become worse. When Borrow was away upon his excursion he received a letter at Carlisle in which his wife informed him that she was not so well; but urging him not to return if he were enjoying his trip and it were benefiting his health.

In the autumn of the following year (1867) they were at Bognor, Mrs Borrow taking the sea air, her husband tramping about the country and penetrating into the New Forest. On their return to town Mrs Borrow appears to have become worse. There was much correspondence to be attended to with regard to the Oulton Estate, and she had to go down to

Suffolk to give her personal attention to certain important details. Miss Cobbe throws a little light on the period in a letter to a friend, in which she says:

> "Mr Borrow says his wife is very ill and anxious to keep the peace with C. (a litigious neighbour). Poor old B. was very sad at first, but I cheered him up and sent him off quite brisk last night. He talked all about the Fathers again, arguing that their quotations went to prove that it was *not* our gospels they had in their hands. I knew most of it before, but it was admirably done. I talked a little theology to him in a serious way (finding him talk of his 'horrors') and he abounded in my sense of the non-existence of Hell, and of the presence and action on the soul of *a* Spirit, rewarding and punishing. He would not say 'God'; but repeated over and over again that he spoke not from books but from his own personal experience." [456]

On 24th January (1869) Mrs Borrow was taken suddenly ill and the family doctor being out of town, Borrow sent for Dr W. S. Playfair of 5 Curzon Street. A letter from Dr Playfair, 25th January, to the family doctor is the only coherent testimony in existence as to what was actually the matter with Mrs Borrow. It runs:—

> "I found great difficulty in making out the case exactly," he writes,

> "since Mr Borrow himself was so agitated that I could get no very clear account of it. I could detect no marked organic affection about the heart or lungs, of which she chiefly complained. It seemed to me to be either a very aggravated form of hysteria, or, what appears more likely, some more serious mental affection. In any case, the chief requisite seemed very careful and intelligent nursing or management, and I doubt very much, from what I saw, whether she gets that with her present surroundings. If it is really the more serious mental affection, I should fancy that the sooner means are taken to have her properly taken care of, the better."

Dr Playfair saw in Borrow's highly nervous excitable nature, if not the cause of his wife's breakdown, at least an obstacle to her recovery, and was of opinion that Mrs Borrow's disorder had been greatly aggravated by her husband's presence.

Mrs Borrow never rallied from the attack, and on the 30th she died of "valvular disease of the heart and dropsy," being then in her seventy-seventh year. On 4th February she was buried in Brompton Cemetery, and the lonely man, her husband, returned to Hereford Square. The grave bears the inscription, "To the Beloved Memory of My Mother, Mary Borrow, who fell asleep in Jesus, 30th January 1869." It is strange that this should be in Henrietta's and not Borrow's name.

Mrs Borrow evidently made over her property to her husband during her lifetime, as there is no will in existence, and no application appears to have been made either by Borrow or anyone else for letters of administration.

CHAPTER XXIX
JANUARY 1869–1881

THE death of his wife was a last blow to Borrow, and he soon retired from the world. At first he appears to have sought consolation in books, to judge from the number of purchases he made about this time; but it was, apparently, with pitiably unsuccessful results. In a letter to a friend Miss Cobbe gives a picture in his lonliness:

> "Poor old Borrow is in a sad state," she wrote. "I hope he is starting in a day or two for Scotland. I sent C. with a note begging him to come and eat the Welsh mutton you sent me to-day, and he sent back word, 'Yes.' Then, an hour afterwards, he arrived, and in a most agitated manner said he had come to say 'he would rather not. He would not trouble anyone with his sorrows.' I made him sit down, and talked as gently to him as possible, saying: 'It won't be a trouble Mr. Borrow, it

will be a pleasure to me.' But it was all of no use. He was so cross, so *rude*, I had the greatest difficulty in talking to him. I asked about his servant, and he said I could not help him. I asked him about Bowring, and he said: 'Don't speak of it.' (It was some dispute with Sir John Bowring, who was an acquaintance of mine, and with whom I offered to mediate.) 'I asked him would he look at the photos of the Siamese,' and he said: 'Don't show them to me!' So, in despair, as he sat silent, I told him I had been at a pleasant dinner-party the night before, and had met Mr L—, who told me of certain curious books of mediæval history. 'Did he know them?' 'No, and he *dare said* Mr L— did not, either! Who was Mr L—?' I described that *obscure* individual, (one of the foremost writers of the day), and added that he was immensely liked by everybody. Whereupon Borrow repeated at least twelve times, 'Immensely liked! As if a man could be immensely liked!' quite insultingly. To make a diversion (I was very patient with him as he was in trouble), 'I said I had just come home from the Lyell's and had heard—' . . . But there was no time to say what I had heard! Mr Borrow asked: 'Is that old Lyle I met here once, the man who stands at

> the door (of some den or other) and *bets*?' I explained who Sir Charles was, [459a] (of course he knew very well), but he went on and on, till I said gravely: 'I don't think you will meet those sort of people here, Mr Borrow. We don't associate with blacklegs, exactly.'" [459b]

In the Autumn of 1870 Borrow became acquainted with Charles G. Leland ("Hans Breitmann") as the result of receiving from him the following letter:—

BRIGHTON, 24*th October* 1870.

> DEAR SIR,—During the eighteen months that I have been in England, my efforts to find some mutual friend who would introduce me to you have been quite in vain. As the author of two or three works which have been kindly received in England, I have made the acquaintance of many literary men and enjoyed much hospitality; but I assure you very sincerely that my inability to find you out or get at you has been a source of great annoyance to me. As you never published a book which I have not read through five times—excepting *The Bible in Spain* and *Wild Wales*, which I have only read once—you will perfectly understand why I should be so desirous of meeting you.

> As you have very possibly never heard of me before, I would state that I wrote a collection of Ballads satirising Germany and the Germans under the title of *Hans Breitmann*.
>
> I never before in my life solicited the favour of any man's acquaintance, except through the regular medium of an introduction. If my request to be allowed the favour of meeting and seeing you does not seem too *outré*, I would be to glad to go to London, or wherever you may be, if it can be done without causing you any inconvenience, and if I should not be regarded as an intruder. I am an American, and among us such requests are *parfaitment* (sic) *en régle*.
>
> I am, . . .
>
> CHARLES G. LELAND.

Borrow replied on 2nd Nov.:

> SIR,
>
> I have received your letter and am gratified by the desire you express to make my acquaintance.
>
> Whenever you please to come I shall be happy to see you.
>
> Truly yours,
>
> GEORGE BORROW. [460a]

The meeting unquestionably took place at Hereford Square, and Leland found Borrow "a tall, large, fine-looking man who must have been handsome in his youth." [460b] The result of the interview was that Leland sent to Borrow a copy of his *Ballads* and also *The Music Lesson of Confucius*, then about to appear. At the same time he wrote to Borrow drawing his attention to one of the ballads written in German Romany *jib*, and enquiring if it were worth anything. Whilst deprecating his "impudence" in writing a Romany *gili* and telling, as a pupil might a master, of his interest in and his association with the gypsies, he continues: "My dear Mr Borrow, for all this you are entirely responsible. More than twenty years ago your books had an incredible influence on me, and now you see the results." After telling him that he can *never* thank him sufficiently for the instructions he has given in *The Romany Rye* as to how to take care of a horse on a thirty mile ride, he concludes —"With apologies for the careless tone of this letter, and with sincere thanks for your kindness in permitting me to call on you and for your courteous note,—I am your sincere admirer."

The account that Leland gives of this episode in his *Memoirs* is puzzling and contradictory in the light of his first letter. He writes:

> "There was another hard old character with whom I became acquainted in those days, and one who, though not a Carlyle, still, like him, exercised in a peculiar way a great influence on English literature. This was George Borrow. I was in the habit of reading a great deal in the British Museum, where

> he also came, and there I was introduced to him. [461a] [Leland seems to be in error here; see *ante*, page 460.] He was busy with a venerable-looking volume in old Irish, and made the remark to me that he did not believe there was a man living who could read old Irish with ease (which I now observe to myself was 'fished' out of Sir W. Betham). We discussed several Gypsy words and phrases. I met him in the same place several times." [461b]

Leland states that he sent a note to Borrow, care of John Murray, asking permission to dedicate to him his forthcoming book, *The English Gypsies and Their Language*; but received no reply, although Murray assured him that the letter had been received by Borrow. "He received my note on the Saturday," Leland writes—"never answered it—and on Monday morning advertised in all the journals his own forthcoming work on the same subject." [461c] Had Borrow asked him to delay publishing his own book, Leland says he would have done so, "for I had so great a respect for the Nestor of Gypsyism, that I would have been very glad to have gratified him with such a small sacrifice." [462a]

However Borrow may have heard that Leland had in preparation a book on the English Gypsies, he seemed to feel that it was a trespass upon ground that was peculiarly his own. Having revised and prepared for the press the new edition of the Gypsy St Luke for the Bible Society (published December 1872), and the one-volume editions of *Lavengro* and

The Romany Rye, he set to work to forestall Leland with his own *Romano Lavo-Lil*.

In spite of his haste, however, Borrow was beaten in the race, and Leland got his volume out first. When the *Romano Lavo-Lil* [462b] appeared in March 1874, Borrow found what, in all probability he had not dreamed of, that the thirty-three years intervening between its publication and that of *The Zincali*, had changed the whole literary world as regards "things of Egypt." In 1841 Borrow had produced a unique book, such as only one man in England could have written, and that man himself [462c]; but in 1874 he found himself not only out of date, but out-classed.

The title very thoroughly explains the scope of the work. The Vocabulary had existed in manuscript for many years. For some reason, difficult to explain, Borrow had omitted from this Vocabulary a number of the gypsy words that appeared in *Lavengro* and *The Romany Rye*. In spite of this "Mr Borrow's present vocabulary makes a goodly show," wrote F. H. Groome, ". . . containing no fewer than fourteen hundred words, of which about fifty will be entirely new to those who only know Romany in books." [463a]

After praising the Gypsy songs as the best portion of the book, Groome proceeds:

> "Of his prose I cannot say so much. It is the Romany of the study rather than of the tents [!] Mr Borrow has attempted to rehabilitate English Romany by enduing it with forms and inflections, of which some are still rarely to be heard, some extinct, and others absolutely incorrect;

> while Mr Leland has been content to give it as it really is. Of the two methods I cannot doubt that most readers will agree with me in thinking that Mr Leland's is the more satisfactory." [463b]

The *Athenæum* sternly rebuked Borrow for seeming "to make the mistake of confounding the amount of Rommanis which he has collected in this book with the actual extent of the language itself." The reviewer pays a somewhat grudging tribute to other portions of the book, the accounts of the Gypsyries and the biographical particulars of the Romany worthies, but the work suffers by comparison with those of Paspati and Leland. He acknowledges that Borrow was one of the pioneers of those who gave accounts of the Gypsies in English, who gave to many their present taste for Gypsy matters,

> "but," he proceeds, "we cannot allow merely sentimental considerations to prevent us from telling the honest truth. The fact is that the *Romano Lavo-Lil* is nothing more than a *réchauffé* of the materials collected by Mr Borrow at an early stage of his investigations, and nearly every word and every phrase may be found in one form or another in his earlier works. Whether or not Mr Borrow *has* in the course of his long experience become the *deep* Gypsy which he has always been supposed to be, we cannot say; but it is certain that his present book contains little more

> than he gave to the public forty years ago, and does not by any means represent the present state of knowledge on the subject. But at the present day, when comparative philology has made such strides, and when want of accurate scholarship is as little tolerated in strange and remote languages as in classical literature, the *Romano Lavo-Lil* is, to speak mildly, an anachronism."

This notice, if Borrow read it, must have been very bitter to him. All the loyalty to, and enthusiasm for, Borrow cannot disguise the fact that his work, as far as the Gypsies were concerned, was finished. He had first explored the path, but others had followed and levelled it into a thoroughfare, and Borrow found his facts and theories obsolete—a humiliating discovery to a man so shy, so proud, and so sensitive.

The *Romano Lavo-Lil* was Borrow's swan song. He lived for another seven years; but as far as the world was concerned he was dead. In an obituary notice of Robert Latham, Mr Watts-Dunton tells a story that emphasizes how thoroughly his existence had been forgotten. At one of Mrs Procter's "at homes" he was talking of Latham and Borrow, but when he happened to mention that both men were still alive, that is in the early Seventies, and that quite recently he had been in the company of each on separate occasions, he found that he had lost caste in the eyes of his hearers for talking about men as alive "who were well known to have been dead years ago." [464]

There is an interesting picture of Borrow as he appeared in the Seventies, given by F. H. Groome,

who writes:

> "The first time I ever saw him was at Ascot, the Wednesday evening of the Cup week in, I think, the year 1872. I was stopping at a wayside inn, half-a-mile on the Windsor road, just opposite which inn there was a great encampment of Gypsies. One of their lads had on the Tuesday affronted a soldier; so two or three hundred redcoats came over from Windsor, intending to wreck the camp. There was a babel of cursing and screaming, much brandishing of belts and tent-rods, when suddenly an arbiter appeared, a white-haired, brown-eyed, calm Colossus, speaking Romany fluently, and drinking deep draughts of ale—in a quarter of an hour Tommy Atkins and Anselo Stanley were sworn friends over a loving-quart. "Mr Burroughs," said one of the Gypsies (it is the name by which Gypsies still speak of him), and I knew that at last I had met him whom of all men I most wished to meet. Matty Cooper, the 'celebrated Windsor Frog' (*vide* Leland), presented me as 'a young gentleman, *Rya*, a scholard from Oxford'; and 'H'm,' quoth Colossus, 'a good many fools come from Oxford.' It was a bad beginning, but it ended well, by his asking me to walk with him to the station, and on

the way inviting me to call on him in London. I did so, but not until nearly a twelve-month afterwards, when I found him in Hereford Square, and when he set strong ale before me, as again on the occasion of my third and last meeting with him in the tent of our common acquaintance, Shadrach Herne, at the Potteries, Notting Hill. Both these times we had much talk together, but I remember only that it was partly about East Anglia, and more about 'things of Egypt.' Conversations twenty years old are easy to imagine, hard to reproduce . . . Probably Borrow asked me the Romany for 'frying-pan,' and I modestly answered, 'Either *maasalli* or *tasseromengri*' (this is password No. 1), and then I may have asked him the Romany for 'brick,' to which he will have answered, that 'there is no such word' (this is No. 2). But one thing I do remember, that he was frank and kindly, interesting and interested; I was only a lad, and he was verging on seventy. I could tell him about a few 'travellers' whom he had not recently seen—Charlie Pinfold, the hoary polygamist, Plato and Mantis Buckland, Cinderella Petulengro, and Old Tom Oliver ('Ha! so he has seen Tom Oliver,' I seem to remember that)." [466a]

There was nothing now to keep Borrow in London. Nobody wanted to read his books, other stars had risen in the East. His publisher had exclaimed with energy, as Borrow himself would relate, "I want to meet with good writers, but there are none to be had: I want a man who can write like Ecclesiastes." There is something tragic in the account that Mr Watts-Dunton gives of his last encounter with Borrow:

> "The last time I ever saw him," he writes, "was shortly before he left London to live in the country. It was, I remember well, on Waterloo Bridge, where I had stopped to gaze at a sunset of singular and striking splendour, whose gorgeous clouds and ruddy mists were reeling and boiling over the West-End. Borrow came up and stood leaning over the parapet, entranced by the sight, as well he might be. Like most people born in flat districts, he had a passion for sunsets. Turner could not have painted that one, I think, and certainly my pen could not describe it . . . I never saw such a sunset before or since, not even on Waterloo Bridge; and from its association with 'the last of Borrow,' I shall never forget it." [466b]

In 1874 Borrow withdrew to Oulton, there to end his lonely life, his spirit seeming to enjoy the dreary solitude of the Cottage, with its mournful surroundings. His stepdaughter, the Henrietta of old, remained in London with her husband, and Borrow's

loneliness was complete. Sometimes he was to be seen stalking along the highways at a great pace, wearing a broad-brimmed hat and a Spanish cloak, a tragic figure of solitude and despair, speaking to no one, no one daring to speak to him, who locally was considered as "a funny tempered man."

In a fragment of a letter from Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne (June 1874), there is an interesting reference to Borrow:—

> "Wait!" he writes. "I have one little thing to tell you, which, little as it is, is worth all the rest, if you don't know already.
>
> "*Borrow*—has got back to his own Oulton Lodge. My Nephew, Edmund Kerrich, now Adjutant to some Volunteer Battalion, wants a house *near*, not *in*, Lowestoft: and got some Agent to apply for Borrow's—who sent word that he is himself there—an old Man—wanting Retirement, etc. This was the account Edmund got.
>
> "I saw in some Athenæum a somewhat contemptuous notice of G. B.'s 'Rommany Lil' or whatever the name is. I can easily understand that B. should not meddle with *science* of any sort; but some years ago he would not have liked to be told so, however Old Age may have cooled him now." [467]

Borrow sent a message to FitzGerald through

Edmund Kerrich of Geldeston, asking him to visit Oulton Cottage. The reply shows all the sweetness of the writer's nature:—

LITTLE GRANGE, WOODBRIDGE,
Jan. 10/75.

DEAR BORROW,—My nephew Kerrich told me of a very kind invitation that you sent to me, through him, some while ago. I think the more of it because I imagine, from what I have heard, that you have slunk away from human company as much—as I have! For the last fifteen years I have not visited any one of my very oldest friends, except the daughters of my old [?friend] George Crabbe, and Donne—once only, and for half a day, just to assure myself by—my own eyes how he was after the severe illness he had last year, and which he never will quite recover from, I think; though he looked and moved better than I expected.

Well—to tell you all about *why* I have thus fallen from my company would be a tedious thing, and all about one's self too—whom, Montaigne says, one never talks about without detriment to the person talked about. Suffice to say, 'so it is'; and one's friends, however kind and 'loyal' (as the phrase goes), do manage to exist and enjoy

themselves pretty reasonably without one.

So with me. And is it not much the same with you also? Are you not glad now to be mainly alone, and find company a heavier burden than the grasshopper? If one ever had this solitary habit, it is not likely to alter for the better as one grows older—as one grows *old*. I like to think over my old friends. There they are, lingering as ineffaceable portraits—done in the prime of life—in my memory. Perhaps we should not like one another so well after a fifteen-years separation, when all of us change and most of us for the worse. I do not say *that* would be your case; but you must, at any rate, be less inclined to disturb the settled repose into which you, I suppose, have fallen. I remember first seeing you at Oulton, some twenty-five years ago; then at Donne's in London; then at my own happy home in Regent's Park; then *ditto* at Gorleston—after which, I have seen nobody, except the nephews and nieces left me by my good sister Kerrich.

So shall things rest? I could not go to you, after refusing all this while to go to older—if not better—friends, fellow Collegians, fellow schoolfellows; and yet will you still

believe me (as I hope *they* do)

Yours and theirs sincerely,

EDWARD FITZGERALD.

Borrow was still a remarkably robust man. Mr Watts-Dunton tells how,

> "At seventy years of age, after breakfasting at eight o'clock in Hereford Square, he would walk to Putney, meet one or more of us at Roehampton, roam about Wimbledon and Richmond Park with us, bathe in the Fen Ponds with a north-east wind cutting across the icy water like a razor, run about the grass afterwards like a boy to shake off some of the water-drops, stride about the park for hours, and then, after fasting for twelve hours, eat a dinner at Roehampton that would have done Sir Walter Scott's eyes good to see. Finally, he would walk back to Hereford Square, getting home late at night. And if the physique of the man was bracing, his conversation, unless he happened to be suffering from one of his occasional fits of depression, was still more so. Its freshness, raciness and eccentric whim no pen could describe. There is a kind of humour the delight of which is that while you smile at the pictures it draws, you smile quite as much or more to

> think that there is a mind so whimsical, crotchetty, and odd as to draw them. This was the humour of Borrow." [469a]

He was seventy years of age when, one March day during a bitterly-cold east wind, he stripped and plunged into one of the Fen Ponds in Richmond Park, which was covered with ice, and dived and swam under the water for a time, reappearing some distance from the spot where he had entered the water. [469b]

The remaining years of Borrow's life were spent in Suffolk. He would frequently go to Norwich, however; for the old city seemed to draw him irresistibly from his hermitage. He would take a lodging there, and spend much of his time occupying a certain chair in the Norfolk Hotel in St Giles. There were so many old associations with Norwich that made it appear home to him. He was possessed of sentiment in plenty, it had caused his old mother to wish that "dear George would not have such fancies about *the old house*" in Willow Lane.

Later, Dr and Mrs MacOubrey removed to Oulton (about 1878), and Borrow's life became less dismal and lonely; but he was nearing his end. Sometimes there would be a flash of that old unconquerable spirit. His stepdaughter relates how,

> "on the 21st of November [1878], the place [the farm] having been going to decay for fourteen months, Mr Palmer [the tenant] called to demand that Mr Borrow should put it in repair; otherwise he would do it

> himself and send in the bills, saying, 'I don't care for the old farm or you either,' and several other insulting things; whereupon Mr Borrow remarked very calmly, 'Sir, you came in by that door, you can go out by it'—and so it ended." [470a]

It was on an occasion such as this that Borrow yearned for a son to knock the rascal down. He was an infirm man, his body feeling the wear and tear of the strenuous open-air life he had led. In 1879, according to Mrs MacOubrey, he was "unable to walk as far as the white gate," the boundary of his estate. He was obviously breaking-up very rapidly. The surroundings appear to have reflected the gloomy nature of the master of the estate. The house was dilapidated, "with everything about it more or less untidy," [470b] although at this period his income amounted to upwards of five hundred pounds a year.

> "During his latter years," writes Mr W. A. Dutt, "his tall, erect, somewhat mysterious figure was often seen in the early hours of summer mornings or late at night on the lonely pathways that wind in and out from the banks of Oulton Broad . . . the village children used to hush their voices and draw aside at his approach. They looked upon him with fear and awe. . . . In his heart, Borrow was fond of the little ones, though it amused him to watch the impression his strange personality made upon them. Older people he seldom spoke to when out

> on his solitary rambles; but sometimes he would flash out such a glance from beneath his broad-brimmed hat and shaggy eyebrows as would make timid country folk hasten on their way filled with vague thoughts and fears of the evil eye." [470c]

Even to the last the old sensitiveness occasionally flashed out, as on the occasion of a visit from the Vicar of Lowestoft, who drove over with an acquaintance of Borrow's to make the hermit's acquaintance. The visitor was so incautious as to ask the age of his host, when, with Johnsonian emphasis, came the reply: "Sir, I tell my age to no man!" This occurred some time during the year 1880. Immediately his discomfited guest had departed, Borrow withdrew to the summer-house, where he drew up the following apothegm on "People's Age": —

> "Never talk to people about their age. Call a boy a boy, and he will fly into a passion and say, 'Not quite so much of a boy either; I'm a young man.' Tell an elderly person that he's not so young as he was, and you will make him hate you for life. Compliment a man of eighty-five on the venerableness of his appearance, and he will shriek out: 'No more venerable than yourself,' and will perhaps hit you with his crutch."

On 1st December 1880 Borrow sent for his solicitor from Lowestoft, and made his will, by which he

bequeathed all his property, real and personal, to his stepdaughter Henrietta, devising that it should be held in trust for her by his friend Elizabeth Harvey. It was evidently Borrow's intention so to tie up the bequest that Dr MacOubrey could not in any way touch his wife's estate.

The end came suddenly. On the morning of 26th July 1881 Dr and Mrs MacOubrey drove into Lowestoft, leaving Borrow alone in the house. When they returned he was dead. Throughout his life Borrow had been a solitary, and it seems fitting that he should die alone. It has been urged against his stepdaughter that she disregarded Borrow's appeals not to be left alone in the house, as he felt himself to be dying. He may have made similar requests on other occasions; still, whatever the facts, it was strange to leave so old and so infirm a man quite unattended.

On 4th August the body was brought to London, and buried beside that of Mrs George Borrow in Brompton Cemetery. On the stone, which is what is known as a saddle-back, is inscribed:

IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE OF

GEORGE HENRY BORROW, ESQ.,

WHO DIED JULY 26TH, 1881 (AT HIS RESIDENCE "OULTON COTTAGE, SUFFOLK")

IN HIS 79TH YEAR.

(AUTHOR OF THE BIBLE IN SPAIN, LAVENGRO—AND OTHER WORKS.)

"IN HOPE OF A GLORIOUS RESURRECTION."

A fruitless effort was made by the late J. J. Colman

of Carrow to purchase the whole of Borrow's manuscripts, library, and papers for the Carrow Abbey Library; but the price asked, a thousand pounds, was considered too high, and they passed into the possession of another. Eventually they found their way into the reverent hands of the man who subsequently made Borrow his hero, and who devoted years of his life to the writing of his biography—Dr W. J. Knapp.

It was Borrow's fate, a tragic fate for a man so proud, to outlive the period of his fame. Not only were his books forgotten, but the world anticipated his death by some seven or eight years. His was a curiously complex nature, one that seems specially to have been conceived by Providence to arouse enmity among the many, and to awaken in the hearts of the few a sterling, unwavering friendship. It is impossible to reconcile the accounts of those who hated him with those whose love and respect he engaged.

He was in sympathy with vagrants and vagabonds—a taste that was perhaps emphasised by the months he spent in preparing *Celebrated Trials*. If those months of hack work taught him sympathy with pariahs, it also taught him to write strong, nervous English.

He was one of the most remarkable characters of his century—whimsical, eccentric, lovable, inexplicable; possessed of an odd, dry humour that sometimes failed him when most he needed it. He lived and died a stranger to the class to which he belonged, and was the intimate friend and associate of that dark and mysterious personage, Mr Petulengro. He hated his social equals, and admired Tamerlane and Jerry Abershaw. It has been said [473] that he was

born three centuries too late, and that he belonged to the age when men dropped mysteriously down the river in ships, later to return with strange stories and great treasure from the Spanish Main. Mr Watts-Dunton has said:—

> "When Borrow was talking to people in his own class of life there was always in his bearing a kind of shy, defiant egotism. What Carlyle called the 'armed neutrality' of social intercourse oppressed him. He felt himself to be in the enemy's camp. In his eyes there was always a kind of watchfulness, as if he were taking stock of his interlocutor and weighing him against himself. He seemed to be observing what effect his words were having, and this attitude repelled people at first. But the moment he approached a gypsy on the heath, or a poor Jew in Houndsditch, or a homeless wanderer by the wayside, he became another man. He threw off the burden of restraint. The feeling of the 'armed neutrality' was left behind, and he seemed to be at last enjoying the only social intercourse that could give him pleasure. This it was that enabled him to make friends so entirely with the gypsies. Notwithstanding what is called 'Romany guile' (which is the growth of ages of oppression), the basis of the Romany character is a joyous

> frankness. Once let the isolating wall which shuts off the Romany from the 'Gorgio' be broken through, and the communicativeness of the Romany temperament begins to show itself. The gypsies are extremely close observers; they were very quick to notice how different was Borrow's bearing towards themselves from his bearing towards people of his own race, and Borrow used to say that 'old Mrs Herne and Leonora were the only gypsies who suspected and disliked him.'" [474a]

This convincing character sketch seems to show the real Borrow. It accounts even for that high-piping, artificial voice (a gypsy trait) that he assumed when speaking with those who were not his intimate friends, and which any sudden interest in the conversation would cause him to abandon in favour of his own deep, rich tones. Mr F. J. Bowring, himself no friend of Borrow's for very obvious reasons, has described this artificial intonation as something between a beggar's whine and the high-pitched voice of a gypsy—in sort, a falsetto. He tells how, on one occasion, when in conversation with Borrow, he happened to mention to him something of particular interest concerning the gypsies, Borrow became immensely interested, immediately dropped the falsetto and spoke in his natural voice, which Mr Bowring describes as deep and manly.

Even his friends were led sometimes into criticisms that appear unsympathetic. [474b] He was, Dr Hake has said, "essentially hypochondriacal. Society he loved and hated alike: he loved it that he might be

pointed out and talked of; he hated it because he was not the prince that he felt himself in its midst." [474c] It is the son who shows the better understanding, although there is no doubt about Dr Hake's loyalty to Borrow. There is a faithful presentation of a man such as Borrow really seems to have been, in the following words:—

> "Few men have ever made so deep an impression on me as George Borrow. His tall, broad figure, his stately bearing, his fine brown eyes, so bright yet soft, his thick white hair, his oval beardless face, his loud rich voice and bold heroic air were such as to impress the most indifferent lookers-on. Added to this there was something not easily forgotten in the manner in which he would unexpectedly come to our gates, singing some gypsy song, and as suddenly depart." [475a]

If Borrow wrote that he was ashamed of being an Englishman and referred to their "pinched and mortified expressions," if he found the virtues of the Saxons "uncouth and ungracious," he never permitted others to make disparaging remarks about his country or his countrymen. [475b] He was typically English in this: agree with his strictures, add a word or two of dispraise of the English, and there appeared a terrifying figure of a patriot; "not only an Englishman but an East Englishman," which in Borrow's vocabulary meant the finest of the breed. He might with more truth have said a Cornishman. "I could not command myself when I heard my own glorious land traduced in this

unmerited manner," [475c] he once exclaimed. He permitted to himself, and to himself only, a certain latitude in such matters.

That Borrow exaggerated is beyond all question, but it must not be called deliberate. He desired to give impressions of scenes and people, and he was inclined to emphasize certain features. Isopel Berners he wished it to be known was a queenly creature, and he described her as taller than himself (he was 6 feet 2 inches without his shoes). Exaggeration is colour, not form. A disbelief in his having encountered the convict son of the old apple-woman near Salisbury does not imply that the old woman herself is a fiction. Borrow insisted upon Norfolk as his county, "where the people eat the best dumplings in the world, and speak the purest English." He even spoke with a strong, if imperfect, East Anglian accent. As a matter of fact his father was Cornish and his mother of Huguenot stock. It would be absurd to argue from this obvious exaggeration of the actual facts that Borrow was a myth.

Then he has been taken to task for not being a philologist as well as a linguist. He may have used the word philologist somewhat loosely on occasion. "Think what the reader would have lost," says one eminent but by no means prejudiced critic [476] with real sympathy and insight, "had Borrow waited to verify his etymologies." In all probability Nature will never produce a Humboldt-Le Sage combination of intellect. Language was to Borrow merely the key that permitted him access to the chamber of men's minds. It must be confessed that sometimes he invaded the sacred precincts of philology. His chapter on the Basque language in *The Bible in Spain*

has been described as “utterly frantic,” and German philologists, speechless in their astonishment, have expressed themselves upon his conclusions in marks of exclamation! He was not qualified to discourse upon the science of language.

He was a staunch member of the Church of England, because he believed there was in it more religion than in any other Church; but this did not hinder him from consorting with the godless children of the tents, or contributing towards the upkeep of Nonconformist-schools. The gypsies honoured and trusted him because, crooked themselves, they appreciated straightness and clean living in another. They had never known him use a bad word or do a bad thing. He was, on occasion, arrogant, overbearing, ungracious, in short all the unattractive things that a proud and masterful man can be; but his friendship was as strong as the man himself; his charity above the narrow prejudices of sect. When he threw his tremendous power into any enterprise or undertaking, it was with the determination that it should succeed, if work and self-sacrifice could make it. “The wisest course,” he thought, was, “ . . . to blend the whole of the philosophy of the tombstone with a portion of the philosophy of the publican and something more, to enjoy one’s pint and pipe and other innocent pleasures, and to think every now and then of death and judgment.” [477]

Borrow loved mystery for its own sake, and none were ever able quite to penetrate into the inner fastness of his personality. Those who came nearest to it were probably Hasfeldt and Ford, whose persistent good-humour was an armour against a reserve that chilled most men. Of all Borrow’s friends it is probable that none understood him so

well as Hasfeldt. He recognised the strength of character of the white-haired man who sang when he was happy, and he refused to be affected by his gloomy moods. "Write and tell me," he requests, "if you have not fallen in love with some nun or Gypsy in Spain, or have met with some other romantic adventure worthy of a roaming knight." On another occasion (June 1845) he boasts with some justification, "Heaven be praised, I can comprehend you as a reality, while many regard you as an imaginary, fantastic being. But they who portray you have not eaten bread and salt with you."

Borrow's contemporary recognition was a chance; he was writing for another generation, and some of the friends that he left behind have loyally striven to erect to him the only monument an artist desires—the proclaiming of his works.

Nature it appeared had framed Borrow in a moment of magnificence, and, lest he should be enticed away from her, had instilled into his soul a hatred of all things artificial and at variance with her august decrees. He was shy and suspicious with the men and women who regulated their lives by the narrow standards of civilisation and decorum; but with the children of the tents and the vagrants of the wayside he was a single-minded man, eager to learn the lore of the open air. He recognised in these vagabonds the true sons and daughters of "the Great Mother who mixes all our bloods."

THE END

LIST OF BORROW'S WORKS

1825

Celebrated Trials, and Remarkable Cases of Criminal Jurisprudence, from the Earliest Records to the Year 1825. Six volumes, with plates. London.

Faustus: *His Life, Death, and Descent into Hell.* Translated from the German [of F. M. von Klinger]. W. Simpkin and R. Marshall, London.

1826

Romantic Ballads. Translated from the Danish: and Miscellaneous Pieces. S. Wilkin, Norwich.

1835

Targum: *or, Metrical Translations from Thirty Languages and Dialects*. St Petersburgh. Reprinted later by Jarrold & Sons, Norwich.

The Talisman. From the Russian of Alexander Pushkin. With *Other Pieces*. St Petersburg.

1841

The Zincali; *or, An Account of the Gypsies of Spain.* With an Original Collection of their Songs and Poetry, and a Copious Dictionary of their Language. Two volumes. John Murray, London.

1842

The Bible in Spain; *or*, *the Journeys*, *Adventures*, *and Imprisonments of an Englishman in an Attempt to Circulate the Scriptures in the Peninsula*. Three volumes. John Murray, London.

Lavengro: The Scholar—The Gypsy—The Priest. Three volumes. John Murray, London.

The Romany Rye: *a Sequel to Lavengro*. Two volumes. John Murray, London.

The Sleeping Bard; *or*, *Visions of the World*, *Death*, *and Hell*. By Elis Wyn. Translated from the Cambrian British. John Murray, London.

1862

Wild Wales: *Its People*, *Language*, *and Scenery*. Three volumes. John Murray, London.

Romano Lavo-Lil: *Word-Book of Romany*; *or*, *English Gypsy Language*. With Many Pieces in Gypsy, Illustrative of the Way of Speaking and Thinking of the English Gypsies; with Specimens of Their Poetry, and an Account of Certain Gypsyries or Places Inhabited by Them, and of Various Things Relating to Gypsy Life in England. John Murray, London.

1884

The Turkish Jester; *or*, *the Pleasantries of Cogia Nasr Eddin Effendi*. Translated from the Turkish. Jarrold & Sons, Norwich.

1892

The Death of Balder. Translated from the Danish of

Evald. Jarrold & Sons, Norwich.

From the foregoing list has been omitted the mysterious *Life and Adventures of Joseph Sell, the Great Traveller*, and those works that Borrow edited or translated for the British and Foreign Bible Society.

FOOTNOTES

[3] Afterwards General Morshead and friend of the Duke of York. Captain Morshead, himself a Cornishman, is credited with doing everything in his power to dissuade Thomas Borrow from enlisting, but without result.

[4a] *Lavengro*, page 2. References to Borrow's works throughout this volume are to the Standard Edition, published by John Murray.

[4b] Ann, the third of eight children born to Samuel Perfrement and Mary his wife, 23rd January 1772.

[4c] Locally, the name is pronounced "*Par*frement." This is quite in accordance with the Norfolk dialect, which changes "e" into "a." Thus "Ernest" becomes "Arnest"; "Earlham," "Arlham"; "Erpingham," "Arpingham," and so on. In Norfolk there are grave peculiarities of pronunciation, which have caused many a stranger to wish that he had never enquired his way, so puzzling are the replies hurled at him in an incomprehensible vernacular.

[5] Married the Rev. Wm. Holland, rector of Walmer and afterwards rector of Brasted, Kent.

[6a] *Lavengro*, page 5.

[6b] *Lavengro*, page 5.

[7a] George in honour of the King, it is said, and Henry after his father's eldest brother.

[7b] *Lavengro*, page 6.

[7c] *Lavengro*, page 6.

[7d] *Lavengro*, page 6.

[7e] *Lavengro*, page 7.

[7f] *Lavengro*, page 7.

[9a] *Lavengro*, page 16.

[9b] The widow of Sir John Fenn, editor of the *Paston Letters*.

[9c] *Lavengro*, page 15.

[10a] *Lavengro*, pages 398–9.

[10b] "Many years have not passed over my head, yet during those which I can call to remembrance, how many things have I seen flourish, pass away, and become forgotten, except by myself, who, in spite of all my endeavours, never can forget anything."—*Lavengro*, page 166.

[10c] *Lavengro*, page 16.

[11a] *Lavengro*, pages 19–20.

[11b] *Lavengro*, page 22.

[12a] The gypsies "have a double nomenclature,

each tribe or family having a public and private name, one by which they are known to the Gentiles, and another to themselves alone . . . There are only two names of trades which have been adopted by English gypsies as proper names, Cooper and Smith: these names are expressed in the English gypsy dialect by *Vardo-mescro* and *Petulengro* (*Romano Lavo-Lil*, page 185). Thus the Smiths are known among themselves as the Petulengros. Petul, a horse shoe, and engro a "masculine affix used in the formation of figurative names." Thus Boshomengro (a fiddler) comes from Bosh a fiddle, Cooromengro (a soldier, a pugilist) from Coor = to fight.

[12b] The Rev. Wentworth Webster heard narrated at a provincial Bible Society's meeting that when Borrow first called at Earl Street "he said that he had been stolen by gypsies in his boyhood, had passed several years with them, but had been recognised at a fair in Norfolk and brought home to his family by his uncle." There is, however, nothing to confirm this story.

[13a] *Lavengro*, page 164.

[13b] The prisoners occupied much of their time in straw-plait making; but the quality of their work was so much superior to that of the English that it was forbidden, and consequently destroyed when found.

[13c] *Lavengro*, page 45.

[14] David Haggart, born 24th June 1801, was an instinctive criminal, who, at Leith Races, in 1813, enlisted, whilst drunk, as a drummer in the West Norfolks. Eventually he obtained his discharge and continued on his career of crime and prison-breaking, among other things murdering a policeman

and a gaoler, until, on 18th July 1821, he was hanged at Edinburgh.

[15a] *Lavengro*, page 138.

[15b] John Crome (1768–1821), landscape painter. Apprenticed 1783 as sign-painter; introduced into Norwich the art of graining; founded the Norwich School of Painting; first exhibited at the Royal Academy 1806.

[17] Borrow was always a magnificent horseman. "Vaya! how you ride! It is dangerous to be in your way!" said the Archbishop of Toledo to him years later. In *The Bible in Spain* he wrote that he had "been accustomed from . . . childhood to ride without a saddle." The Rev. Wentworth Webster states that in Madrid "he used to ride with a Russian skin for a saddle and *without stirrups*."

[20] Letter from "A School-fellow of *Lavengro*" in *The Britannia*, 26th April 1851.

[21a] "It is probable, that had I been launched about this time into some agreeable career, that of arms, for example, for which, being the son of a soldier, I had, as was natural, a sort of penchant, I might have thought nothing more of the acquisition of tongues of any kind; but, having nothing to do, I followed the only course suited to my genius which appeared open to me."—*Lavengro*, page 89.

[21b] The Rev. Thomas D'Eterville, M.A., "Poor Old Detterville," as the Grammar School boys called him, of Caen University, who arrived at Norwich in 1793. He acquired a small fortune by teaching languages. There were rumours that he was engaged in the contraband trade, an occupation more likely to bring

fortune than teaching languages.

[21c] Letter from "A School-fellow of *Lavengro*" in *The Britannia*, 26th April 1851.

[22] It was here, in 1827, that he saw the world's greatest trotter, Marshland Shales, and in common with other lovers of horses lifted his hat to salute "the wondrous horse, the fast trotter, the best in mother England." In *Lavengro* Borrow antedated this event by some nine years.

[23] Manuscript autobiographical notes supplied by Borrow to Mr John Longe, 1862.

[24] *Lavengro*, page 134.

[25a] This account is taken from a letter by "A Schoolfellow of *Lavengro*" in *The Britannia*, 26th April 1851.

[25b] In a letter to Borrow, dated 15th October 1862, John Longe, J.P., of Spixworth Park, Norwich, in acknowledging some biographical particulars that Borrow had sent him for inclusion in Burton's *Antiquities of the Royal School of Norwich*, wrote:—

> "You have omitted an important and characteristic anecdote of your early days (fifteen years of age). When at school you, with Theodosius and Francis W. Purland, *absented* yourself from home and school and took up your abode in a certain 'Robber's Cave' at Acle, where you *resided* three days, and once more returned to your homes."

[26] According to the original manuscript of

Lavengro, it appears that Roger Kerrison, a Norwich friend of Borrow's, strongly advised the law as "an excellent profession . . . for those who never intend to follow it."—*Life of George Borrow*, by Dr Knapp, i., 66.

[27a] The Rev. Wm. Drake of Mundesley, in a letter which appeared in *The Eastern Daily Press*, 22nd September 1892:—

> " . . . I was at the Norwich Grammar School nine years, from 1820 to 1829, and during that time (probably in 1824 and 1825) George Borrow was lodging in the Upper Close . . . The house was a low old-fashioned building with a garden in front of it, and the fact of Borrow's residence there is fixed in my memory because I had spent the first five or six years of my own life in the same house, from 1811 to 1816 or 1817. My father occupied it in virtue of his being a minor canon in Norwich Cathedral. I remember Borrow very distinctly, because he was fond of chatting with the boys, who used to gather round the railings of his garden, and occasionally he would ask one or two of them to have tea with him. I have a faint recollection that he gave us some of our first notions of chess, but I am not sure of this. I . . . remember him a tall, spare, dark-complexioned man, usually dressed in black. In person he was not

> unlike another Norwich man, who obtained in those days a very different notoriety from that which now belongs to Borrow's name. I mean John Thurtell, who murdered Mr Weare."

[27b] *Wild Wales*, page 3.

[28a] *Wild Wales*, page 157.

[28b] Forty years later Borrow wrote of these days:—"'How much more happy, innocent, and holy I was in the days of my boyhood when I translated Iolo's ode than I am at the present time!' Then covering my face with my hands I wept like a child."—*Wild Wales*, page 448.

[30a] There is no doubt that Borrow became possessed of a copy of *Kiæmpe Viser*, first collected by Anders Vedel, which may or may not have been given to him, with a handshake from the old farmer and a kiss from his wife, in recognition of the attention he had shown the pair in his official capacity. He refers to the volume repeatedly in *Lavengro*, and narrates how it was presented by some shipwrecked Danish mariners to the old couple in acknowledgment of their humanity and hospitality. It is, however, most likely that he was in error when he stated that "in less than a month" he was able "to read the book."—*Lavengro*, pages 140–4.

[30b] *Wild Wales*, page 2.

[30c] *Wild Wales*, page 374.

[30d] *Wild Wales*, page 9. There is an interesting letter written to Borrow by the old lawyer's son on the appearance of *Lavengro*, in which he says: "With

tearful eyes, yet smiling lips, I have read and re-read your faithful portrait of my dear old father. I cannot mistake him—the creaking shoes, the florid face, the polished pate—all serve as marks of recognition to his youngest son!"

[31a] *Wild Wales*, page 374.

[31b] During the five years that he was articled to Simpson & Rackham, Borrow, according to Dr Knapp, studied Welsh, Danish, German, Hebrew, Arabic, Gaelic, and Armenian. He already had a knowledge of Latin, Greek, Irish, French, Italian, and Spanish.

[31c] *Lavengro*, page 235.

[32a] Benjamin Robert Haydon (1786–1846), the historical painter.

[32b] *Lavengro*, page 166.

[33a] William Taylor (1765–1836) was an admirer of German literature and a defender of the French Revolution. He is credited with having first inspired his friend Southey with a liking for poetry. He travelled much abroad, met Goethe, attended the National Assembly debates in 1790, translated from the German and contributed to a number of English periodicals.

[33b] Harriet Martineau's *Autobiography*, 1877.

[33c] Harriet Martineau's *Autobiography*, 1877.

[33d] Letter from "A School-fellow of *Lavengro*" in The Britannia, 26th April 1851.

[34a] *Memoir of Wm. Taylor*, by J. W. Robberds.

[34b] *Memoir of Wm. Taylor*, by J. W. Robberds.

[34c] Letter from "A School-fellow of *Lavengro*" in The Britannia, 26th April 1851.

[35a] The Rev. Whitwell Elwin, in a letter, 17th February 1887.

[35b] Harriet Martineau's *Autobiography*, 1877.

[35c] *Lavengro*, page 355.

[36a] John Bowring, F.R.S. (1792–1872), began life in trade, went to the Peninsula for Milford & Co., army contractors, in 1811, set up for himself as a merchant, travelled and acquired a number of languages. He was ambitious, energetic and shrewd. He became editor of *The Westminster Review* in 1824, and LL.D., Grönigen, in 1829. He was sent by the Government upon a commercial mission to Belgium, 1833; to Egypt; Syria and Turkey, 1837–8; M.P. for Clyde burghs, 1835–7, and for Bolton, 1841; was instrumental in obtaining the issue of the florin as a first step toward a decimal system of currency; Consul of Canton, 1847; plenipotentiary to China; governor, commander-in-chief, and vice-admiral of Hong Kong, 1854; knighted 1854; established diplomatic and commercial relations with Siam, 1855. He published a number of volumes of translations from various languages. He died full of years and honours in 1872.

[36b] *The Romany Rye*, page 368, *et seq.*

[38] *Lavengro*, pages 177–8.

[39] *Lavengro*, pages 179–80. Captain Borrow was in his sixty-sixth year at his death; b. December 1758, d. 28th February 1824. He was buried in St

Giles churchyard, Norwich, on 4th March 1824.

[40a] *The Romany Rye*, page 302.

[40b] In his will Captain Borrow bequeathed to George his watch and "the small Portrait," and to John "the large Portrait" of himself; his mother to hold and enjoy them during her lifetime. Should Mrs Borrow die or marry again, elaborate provision was made for the proper distribution of the property between the two sons.

[41] In particular Borrow believed in Ab Gwilym "the greatest poetical genius that has appeared in Europe since the revival of literature" (*Wild Wales*, page 6). "The great poet of Nature, the contemporary of Chaucer, but worth half-a-dozen of the accomplished word-master, the ingenious versifier of Norman and Italian Tales." (*Wild Wales*, page xxviii.).

[42a] Lines to Six-Foot-Three. *Romantic Ballads*. Norwich 1826.

[42b] Sir Richard Phillips (1767–1840) before becoming a publisher was a schoolmaster, hosier, stationer, bookseller, and vendor of patent medicines at Leicester, where he also founded a newspaper. In 1795 he came to London, was sheriff in 1807, and received his knighthood a year later.

[43] It has been urged against Borrow's accuracy that Sir Richard Phillips had retired to Brighton in 1823, vide *The Dictionary of National Biography*. In the January number (1824) of *The Monthly Magazine* appeared the following paragraph: "The Editor [Sir Richard Phillips], having retired from his commercial engagements and removed from his late house of

business in New Bridge Street, communications should be addressed to the appointed Publishers [Messrs Whittakers]; but personal interviews of Correspondents and interested persons may be obtained at his private residence in Tavistock Square." This proves conclusively that Sir Richard was to be seen in London in the early part of 1824.

[44a] *Celebrated Trials and Remarkable Cases of Criminal Jurisprudence from the Earliest Records to the Year* 1825, 6 vols., with plates. London, 1825.

[44b] *Proximate Causes of the Material Phenomena of the Universe*. By Sir Richard Phillips. London, 1821.

[45a] Dr Knapp identified the editor as "William Gifford, editor of *The Quarterly Review* from 1809 to September 1824." (Life of George Borrow, i. 93.) The late Sir Leslie Stephen, however, cast very serious doubt upon this identification, himself concluding that the editor of *The Universal Review* was John Carey (1756–1826), whose name was actually associated with an edition of Quintilian published in 1822. Carey was a known contributor to two of Sir Richard Phillips' magazines.

[45b] *The Monthly Magazine*, July 1824.

[46a] It appeared in six volumes.

[46b] The work when completed contained accounts of over 400 trials.

[46c] It appeared on 19th March following.

[46d] *Lavengro*, page 210.

[47] The picture was duly painted in the Heroic manner, the artist lending to the ex-mayor, for some reason or other, his own unheroically short legs.

Haydon received his fee of a hundred guineas, and the picture now hangs in St Andrew's Hall, Norwich.

[48a] Letter from Roger Kerrison to John Borrow, 28th May 1824.

[48b] *Memoirs, C. G. Leland* 1893.

[49a] Borrow himself gave the sum as "eighteen-pence a page." The books themselves apparently did not become the property of the reviewer.—*The Romany Rye*, page 324.

[49b] Borrow says that he demanded lives of people who had never lived, and cancelled others that Borrow had prepared with great care, because be considered them as "drugs."—*Lavengro*, pages 245–6.

[50a] "'Sir,' said he, 'you know nothing of German; I have shown your translation of the first chapter of my Philosophy to several Germans: it is utterly unintelligible to them.' 'Did they see the Philosophy?' I replied. 'They did, sir, but they did not profess to understand English.' 'No more do I,' I replied, 'if the Philosophy be English.'"—*Lavengro*, page 254.

[50b] A German edition of the work appeared in Stuttgart in 1826.

[52a] This sentence is quoted in *The Gypsies of Spain* as a heading to the section "On Robber Language," page 335.

[52b] *Lavengro*, pages 216–7.

[52c] *Lavengro*, page 271.

[53a] *Faustus*: *His Life, Death and Descent into Hell*. Translated from the German. London: W. Simpkin

and R. Marshall, 1825, pages xxii., 251. Coloured Plate.

[53b] A letter from Borrow to the publishers, which Dr Knapp quotes, and dates 15th September 1825, but without giving his reasons, was written from Norwich, and runs:

> Dear Sir,—
>
> As your bill will become payable in a few days, I am willing to take thirty copies of *Faustus* instead of the money. The book has been *burnt* in both the libraries here, and, as it has been talked about, I may, perhaps, be able to dispose of some in the course of a year or so.—Yours, G. BORROW.

[55a] *Lavengro*, page 310.

[55b] *The Romany Rye*, Appendix, page 303.

[57] Probably it was only a portion of the whole amount of £50 that Borrow drew after the completion of the work. One thing is assured, that Sir Richard Phillips was too astute a man to pay the whole amount before the completion of the work.

[58] Dr Knapp's *Life of George Borrow*, i., page 141.

[60] Dr Knapp gives the date as the 22nd; but Mr John Sampson makes the date the 24th, which seems more likely to be correct.

[61a] *The Athenæum*, 25th March 1899.

[61b] *Lavengro*, page 362.

[62a] *Lavengro*, page 362.

[62b] *Lavengro*, page 374.

[63a] *Lavengro*, pages 431–2.

[64a] *Lavengro*, page 451.

[64b] Mr Watts-Dunton in a review of Dr Knapp's *Life of Borrow* says that she "was really an East-Anglian road-girl of the finest type, known to the Boswells, and remembered not many years ago."—*Athenæum*, 25th March 1899.

[66a] Mr Petulengro is made to say the "Flying Tinker."

[66b] Dr Knapp sees in the account of Murtagh's story of his travels Barrow's own adventures during 1826–7, but there is no evidence in support of this theory. Another contention of Dr Knapp's is more likely correct, viz., that the story of Finn MacCoul was that told him by Cronan the Cornish guide during the excursion to Land's End.

[67a] It will be remembered that in *The Romany Rye* Borrow takes his horse to the Swan Inn at Stafford, meets his postilion friend and is introduced by him to the landlord, with the result that he arranges to act as "general superintendent of the yard," and keep the hay and corn account. In return he and his horse are to be fed and lodged. Here Borrow encounters Francis Ardry, on his way to see the dog and lion fight at Warwick, and the man in black.

[67b] *The Gypsies of Spain*, page 360.

[68] Introduction to *The Romany Rye* in The Little Library, Methuen & Co., Ltd.

[69a] *The Romany Rye*, page 162.

[69b] *The Romany Rye*, page 162.

[69c] *The Romany Rye*, page 50.

[69d] "Let but the will of a human being be turned to any particular object, and it is ten to one that sooner or later he achieves it."—*Lavengro*, page 16.

[73] They appeared as *Romantic Ballads, translated from the Danish, and Miscellaneous Pieces*, by George Borrow. Norwich. S. Wilkin, 1826. Included in the volume were translations from the *Kiæmpe Viser* and from Oehlenschlæger.

[74] *Correspondence and Table-Talk of B. R. Haydon*. London, 1876. The position of the letter in the *Haydon Journal* is between November 1825 and January 1826; but it is more likely that it was written some months later. Unfortunately, Borrow's portrait cannot be traced in any of Haydon's pictures.

[75a] *Lavengro*, page 9.

[75b] There was a tradition that Borrow became a foreign correspondent for the *Morning Herald*, and it was in this capacity that he travelled on the Continent in 1826–7; but Dr Knapp clearly showed that such a theory was untenable.

[75c] *The Gypsies of Spain*, page 11.

[75d] *The Bible in Spain*, page 219.

[75e] Letter to his mother, August 1833.

[75f] *The Bible in Spain*, page 172.

[75g] *The Gypsies of Spain*, page 31.

[76a] *The Bible in Spain*, page 703.

[76b] *The Bible in Spain*, page 67.

[76c] *The Gypsies of Spain*, page 19.

[76d] *Excursions Along the Shores of the Mediterranean*, by Lt.-Col. E. H. D. E. Napier. London, 1842.

[76e] *The Gypsies of Spain*, pages 10–11.

[76f] *Patteran*, or *Patrin*; a gypsy method of indicating by means of grass, leaves, or a mark in the dust to those behind the direction taken by the main body.

[76g] *The Gypsies of Spain*, page 31.

[77a] If he went abroad, he certainly did so without obtaining a passport from the Foreign Office. The only passports issued to him between the years 1825–1840 were:

> 27th July 1833, to St Petersburg;
>
> 2nd November 1836 and 20th December 1838, to Spain,

as far as the F. O. Registers show.

[77b] Dr Knapp takes Borrow's statement, made 29th March 1839, "I have been three times imprisoned and once on the point of being shot," as indicating that he was imprisoned at Pamplona in 1826. The imprisonments were September 1837, Finisterre; May 1838, Madrid; and another unknown. The occasion on which he was nearly shot, which may be assumed to be connected with one of the imprisonments (otherwise he was more

than “once nearly shot”), was at Finisterre, when he, with his guide, was seized as a Carlist spy “by the fishermen of the place, who determined at first on shooting us.” (Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 15th September 1837.)

[78] The incident is given in *Lavengro* under date of 1818, when Marshland Shales was fifteen years old. It was not, however, until 1827 that he appeared at the Norwich Horse Fair and was put up for auction. “Such a horse as this we shall never see again; a pity that he is so old,” was the opinion of those who lifted their hats as a token of respect.

[79] This and subsequent letters from Borrow to Sir John Bowring not specially acknowledged have been courteously placed at the writer’s disposal by Mr Wilfred J. Bowring, Sir John Bowring’s grandson.

[81] In *The Monthly Review*, March 1830, there appeared among the literary announcements a paragraph to the same effect.

[83] From the original draft of his letter of 20th May to Dr Bowring, omitted from the letter itself.

[86a] Mr Thomas Seccombe in *Bookman*, February 1902.

[86b] It is only fair to add that Mr Seccombe wrote without having seen the correspondence quoted from above. His words have been given as representing the opinion held by most people regarding the Borrow-Bowring dispute. It has been said that Bowring sought to suck Borrow’s brains; it would appear, however, that Borrow strove rather to make every possible use that he could of Bowring.

[87a] Preface to *The Sleeping Bard*, 1860.

[87b] *Ibid.*

[88a] *The Bible in Spain*, page 201.

[88b] Dr Knapp gives the date as during the early days of September, but without mentioning his authority.

[90] *The Romany Rye*, page 362.

[91a] *Lavengro*, page 403.

[91b] *Lavengro*, page 446.

[92] Vicar of Pakefield, in Norfolk, 1814–1830; Lowestoft, 1830–63. He married a sister of J. J. Gurney of Earlham Hall.

[93a] Dr Knapp was in error when he credited J. J. Gurney with the introduction. In a letter to the Rev. J. Jowett, 10th Feb. 1833, Borrow wrote, "I must obtain a letter from him [Rev. F. Cunningham] to Joseph Gurney."

[93b] T. Pell Platt, formerly the Hon. Librarian of the Society; W. Greenfield, its lately deceased Editorial Superintendent.

[94a] S. V. Lipovzoff (1773–1841) had studied Chinese and Manchu at the National College of Pekin, and had lived in China for 20 years; belonged to the Russian Foreign Office (Asiatic section); head of Board of Censors for books in Eastern languages printed in Russia: Corresponding member of Academy of Sciences for department of Oriental Literature and Antiquities. "A gentleman in the service of the Russian Department of Foreign Affairs, who has spent the greater part of an industrious life in Peking and the East."—J. P. H[asfeldt] in the *Athenæum*, 5th March 1836.

[94b] Asmus, Simondsen & Co., Sarepta House.

[95] Borrow's report upon Puerot's translation, 23rd September 5th October, 1835.

[96a] *The Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, vol. i., July 1888 to October 1899. In the MS. autobiographical note he wrote later for Mr John Longe, Borrow stated that he walked from London to Norwich in November 1825. He may have performed the journey twice.

[96b] Letter from Borrow to the Rev. Francis Cunningham, to whom he wrote on his return home, *circa* January, acquainting him with what had transpired in London, assuring him that "I am returned with a firm determination to exert all my energies to attain the desired end [the learning of Manchu]; and I hope, Sir, that I shall have the benefit of your prayers for my speedy success, for the language is one of those which abound with difficulties against which human skill and labour, without the special favour of God, are as blunt hatchets against the oak; and though I shall almost weary Him with my own prayers, I wish not to place much confidence in them, being at present very far from a state of grace and regeneration, having a hard and stony heart, replete with worldy passions, vain wishes, and all kinds of ungodliness; so that it would be no wonder if God to prayers addressed from my lips were to turn away His head in wrath."

[97] Borrow always writes Mandchow, but, for the sake of uniformity his spelling is corrected throughout.

[98] Letter to Rev. Francis Cunningham, *circa* January 1833.

[99a] Dr Knapp ascribes the translation to Dr Pazos Kanki, who undertook it at the instance of the Bishop of Puebla, but gives no authority. Dr Kanki was a native of La Paz, Peru, and translated St Luke into his native dialect Aimará. He had no more connection with Mexico than “stout Cortez” with “a peak in Darien.”

[99b] *Life of George Borrow*, by Dr Knapp, i., page 157.

[100a] Letter to Rev. J. Jowett, 18th March 1833.

[100b] Letter to Rev. J. Jowett, 18th March 1833.

[100c] Letter to Rev J. Jowett, 18th March 1833.

[101] Caroline Fox wrote in her *Memories of Old Friends* (1882): “Andrew Brandram gave us at breakfast many personal recollections of curious people. J. J. Gurney recommended George Borrow to their Committee [!]; so he stalked up to London, and they gave him a hymn to translate into the Manchu language, and the same to one of their own people to translate also. When compared they proved to be very different. When put before their reader, he had the candour to say that Borrow’s was much the better of the two. On this they sent him to St Petersburg, got it printed [!] and then gave him business in Portugal, which he took the liberty greatly to extend, and to do such good as occurred to his mind in a highly executive manner [22nd August 1844].”

[102] Mr Lipovzoff’s unfortunate name was a great stumbling-block. Borrow spelt it many ways, varying from Lipoffsky to Lipofsoff. It has been thought advisable to adopt Mr Lipovzoff’s *own* spelling of his

name, in order to preserve some uniformity.

[104] Minutes of the Editorial Sub-Committee, 29th July 1833.

[105] Harriet Martineau's *Autobiography*.

[106] Letter to his mother, 30th July 1833.

[107a] Letter to Rev. J. Jowett, 4th August 1833.

[107b] Letter to Rev. J. Jowett, 4th August 1833.

[108a] Borrow is always puzzling when concerned with dates. He writes to his mother telling her that he left on the 7th, and later gives the date, in a letter to Mr Jowett, as 24th July, O.S. (5th August). The 7th seems to be the correct date.

[108b] Letter to his mother.

[109] "If I had my choice of all the cities of the world to live in, I would choose Saint Petersburg."—*Wild Wales*, page 665.

[110] Letter to Rev. J. Jowett, undated: received 26th September 1833.

[111] In a letter dated 3rd/15th August, the Prince wrote to Mr Venning at Norwich, "On returning thence, your son came to introduce to me the Englishman who has come over here about the translation of the Manchu Bible, and who brought with him your letter."—*Memorials of John Venning*, 1862.

[112a] Best known for his Grammar, written in German.

[112b] Nephew of J. C Adelung, the philologist.

[113] Letter to Rev. J. Jowett, undated, but received 26th September 1833.

[114a] Letter to Rev. J. Jowett, 20th January/1st February 1834.

[114b] Letter to Rev. J. Jowett, 20th January/1st February 1834.

[114c] Letter to Rev. J. Jowett, 20th January/1st February 1834.

[115a] Letter to Rev. J. Jowett, 20th January/1st February 1834.

[115b] Letter to Rev. J. Jowett, 20th January/1st February 1834. Probably this means the New Testament only, as there was no intention of printing the Old Testament at that date.

[116] In a letter to his mother, dated 1st/13th Feb., Borrow writes: “The Bible Society depended upon Dr Schmidt and the Russian translator Lipovzoff to manage this business [the obtaining of the official sanction], but neither the one nor the other would give himself the least trouble about the matter, or give me the slightest advice how to proceed.”

[117] Letter to Rev. J. Jowett, 4th/16th February 1834.

[118a] Letter to the Rev. J. Jowett, 20th Jan./1st Feb. 1834.

[118b] Letter to the Rev. J. Jowett, 20th Jan./1st Feb. 1834.

[118c] Letter to the Rev. F. Cunningham, 17th/29th Nov. 1834.

[119] 1st/13th May 1834.

[121a] This spelling is adopted throughout for uniformity. Borrow writes Chiachta.

[121b] Letter to the Rev. J. Jowett, 4th/16th February 1834.

[121c] Letter to the Rev. J. Jowett, 4th/16th February 1834.

[121d] Letter to the Rev. J. Jowett, 4th/16th February 1834.

[123a] Letter to the Rev. J. Jowett, 15th/23rd April 1834.

[123b] In a letter dated 1st/13th May 1834.

[123c] A suburb of Norwich.

[126a] Mrs Borrow eventually received from Allday Kerrison £50, 11s. 1d., the amount realised from the sale of John's effects.

[126b] This was partly on account of the Bible Society for storage purposes. In the minutes of the Sub-Committee, 18th August 1834, there is a record of an advice having been received from Borrow that he had drawn "for 400 Roubles for one year's rent in advance for a suitable place of deposit for the Society's paper, etc., part of which had been received."

[126c] Letter to John P. Hasfeldt from Madrid, 29th April 1837.

[129] In the minutes of the Sub-Committee, 18th August (N.S.) 1834, there is a note of Borrow having drawn 210 roubles "to pay for certain articles

required to complete the Society's fount of Manchu type."

[132a] "My letters to my private friends have always been written during gleams of sunshine, and traced in the characters of hope."

[132b] "You may easily judge of the state of book-binding here by the fact that for every volume, great or small, printed in Russia, there is a duty of 30 copecks, or threepence, to be paid to the Russian Government, if the said volume be exported unbound."

[135a] John Hasfeldt.

[135b] Letter to Mr J. Tarn, Treasurer of the Bible Society, 15th/27th December 1834.

[136] Letter to the Rev. Joseph Jowett, 3rd/15th May 1835.

[138a] Letter from Borrow to the Rev. J. Jowett, 20th Feb./4th March 1834. In his Report on Puerot's translation, received on 23rd Sep. 1835, Borrow writes: "To translate literally, or even closely, according to the common acceptation of the term, into the Manchu language is of all impossibilities the greatest; partly from the grammatical structure of the language, and partly from the abundance of its idioms." The lack of "some of those conjunctions generally considered as indispensable" was one of the chief difficulties.

[138b] Letter, 31st Dec. 1834.

[139a] Letter, 31st Dec. 1834.

[139b] Letter, 20th Feb./4th Mar. 1835.

[139c] Letter, 20th Feb./4th Mar. 1835.

[139d] Letter to the Rev. J. Jowett, 3rd/15th May 1835.

[139e] *Ibid.*

[140] Letter to the Rev. J. Jowett, 3rd/15th May 1835.

[141a] Letter to Mr J. Tarn.

[141b] None of these translations ever appeared, owing to the refusal of the Russian Government to grant permission. John Hasfeldt wrote to Borrow, June 1837, apropos of the project: "You know the Russian priesthood cannot suffer foreigners to mix themselves up in the affairs of the Orthodox Church. The same would have happened to the New Testament itself. You may certainly print in the Manchu-Tartar or what the d-l you choose, only not in Russian, for that the long-bearded he-goats do not like."

[142a] Letter to Rev. F. Cunningham, 27th/29th Nov. 1834.

[142b] The principal interest in Targum lies in the number of languages and dialects from which the poems are translated; for it must be confessed that Borrow's verse translations have no very great claim to attention on account of their literary merit. The "Thirty Languages" were, in reality, thirty-five, viz.: —

Ancient British.	Gaelic.	Portuguese.
" Danish.	German.	Provençal
" Irish.	Greek.	Romany.

“ Norse.	Hebrew.	Russian.
Anglo-Saxon.	Irish.	Spanish.
Arabic.	Italian.	Suabian.
Cambrian British.	Latin.	Swedish.
Chinese.	Malo-Russian.	Tartar.
Danish.	Manchu.	Tibetan.
Dutch.	Modern Greek.	Turkish.
Finnish.	Persian.	Welsh.
French.	Polish.	

[143a] A copy was presented by John Hasfeldt to Pushkin, who expressed in a note to Borrow his gratification at receiving the book, and his regret at not having met the translator.

[143b] These two volumes were printed in one and published at a later date by Messrs Jarrold & Son, London & Norwich.

[143c] 5th March 1836.

[143d] From a letter to Borrow from Dr Gordon Hake.

[143e] Borrow’s Report to the Committee of the Bible Society, received 23rd September 1835.

[144a] Borrow’s Report to the Committee of the Bible Society, received 23rd September 1835.

[144b] *Ibid.*

[145a] *Kak my tut kamasa.*

[145b] Borrow's Report to the Committee of the Bible Society, received 23rd September 1835. He gives an account of the episode in *The Gypsies of Spain*, page 6.

[146a] The Thirty-First Annual Report.

[146b] *Athenæum*, 5th March 1836.

[147] Borrow's Report to the Committee of the Bible Society, received 23rd September 1835.

[148] 18th/30th June 1834.

[149] 27th October 1835.

[150a] His salary was paid continuously, and included the period of rest between the Russian and Peninsula expeditions.

[150b] Letter to Rev. J. Jowett, 26th October 1835.

[150c] In a letter dated 27th October 1835.

[151] Minutes of the General Committee of the Bible Society, 2nd Nov. 1835.

[153] In his first letter from Spain, addressed to Rev. J. Jowett (30th Nov. 1835), Borrow tells of this incident in practically the same words as it appears in *The Bible in Spain*, pages 1–3.

[154a] *The Bible in Spain*, pages 73–4.

[154b] Letter to the Rev. J. Jowett, 30th Nov. 1835.

[155a] Dr Knapp states that upon this expedition he was accompanied by Captain John Rowland Heyland of the 35th Regiment of Foot, whose acquaintance he had made on the voyage out.—*Life of George Borrow*, i., page 234.

[155b] Letter to Rev. J. Jowett, 30th Nov. 1835.

[155c] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 15th Dec. 1835.

[159a] Letter to Dr Bowring, 26th December 1835.

[159b] *The Bible in Spain*, page 67.

[159c] Dated 8th and 10th January 1836, giving an account of his journey to Evora.

[160a] *The Bible in Spain*, page 78.

[160b] *The Bible in Spain*, pages 77–8.

[161a] *The Bible in Spain*, page 87.

[161b] *The Bible in Spain*, page 88.

[162a] *The Bible in Spain*, page 99.

[162b] *Lavengro*, page 191.

[162c] *The Bible in Spain*, pages 97–8.

[162d] Not 5th Jan., as given in *The Bible in Spain*.

[162e] *The Bible in Spain*, page 103.

[164a] *The Bible in Spain*, Preface, page vi.

[164b] *The Gypsies of Spain*, page 179.

[164c] "Throughout my life the Gypsy race has always had a peculiar interest for me. Indeed I can remember no period when the mere mention of the name Gypsy did not awaken within me feelings hard to be described. I cannot account for this—I merely state it as a fact."—*The Gypsies of Spain*, page 1.

[165a] *The Gypsies of Spain*, pages 184–5.

[165b] *The Gypsies of Spain*, page 186.

[166a] *The Bible in Spain*, page 109.

[166b] Dr Knapp states that the wedding described in *The Gypsies of Spain* took place during these three days.—*Life of George Borrow*, by Dr Knapp, i., page 242.

[167a] *The Bible in Spain*, page 162.

[167b] "I am not partial to Madrid, its climate, or anything it can offer, if I except its unequalled gallery of pictures."—Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 22nd March 1836.

[167c] 24th February 1836.

[167d] Letter to his mother, 24th February 1836.

[168a] Letter to his mother, 24th February 1836

[168b] *Ibid.*

[168c] *Ibid.*

[168d] *Ibid.*

[169] *The Bible in Spain*, page 173.

[170a] Born 1790, commissariat contractor in 1808 during the French invasion, he was of great assistance to his country. In 1823 he fled from the despotism of Ferdinand VII.; he returned twelve years later as Minister of Finance under Toreno. He resigned in 1837, was again in power in 1841, and died in 1853.

[170b] George William Villiers, afterwards 4th Earl of Clarendon, born 12th Jan. 1800; created G.C.B., 19th Oct. 1837; succeeded his uncle as Earl of Clarendon, 1838; K.G., 1849. He twice refused a Marquisate, also the Governor-generalship of India.

He refused the Order of the Black Eagle (Prussia) and the Legion of Honour. Lord Privy Seal, 1839–41; Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1840–1, 1864–5; Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, 1847–52. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1853–8, 1865–6, 1868–9. Died 27th June 1870.

[171] *The Bible in Spain*, page 165.

[173a] Extracts accompanying letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 22nd March 1836.

[173b] *Ibid.*

[173c] *Ibid.*

[174] Letter of 22nd March 1837.

[175a] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 22nd May 1836.

[175b] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 22nd May 1836.

[175c] Letter dated 6th April 1836.

[175d] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 20th April 1836.

[175e] *Ibid.*

[176a] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 20th April 1836.

[176b] *Ibid.* Borrow's destitution was entirely accidental, and immediately that his letter was received at Earl Street the sum of twenty-five pounds was forwarded to him.

[177] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 20th April 1836.

[178a] Letter of 9th May 1836.

[178b] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 30th June 1836.

[178c] *Ibid.*

[178d] *Ibid.*

[179a] The Duke's secretary who had shown so profound a respect for the decrees of the Council of Trent.

[179b] Late of the Royal Navy, who for sheer love of the work distributed the Scriptures in Spain, and who later was to come into grave conflict with Borrow.

[180] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 30th June 1836.

[181a] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 7th July 1836.

[181b] *Ibid.*

[181c] *Ibid.*

[181d] *Ibid.*

[182a] Dr Usoz was a Spaniard of noble birth, a pupil of Mezzofanti, and one of the editors of *El Español*. He occupied the chair of Hebrew at Valladolid. He was deeply interested in the work of the Bible Society, and was fully convinced that in nothing but the reading of the Bible could the liberty in Spain be found.

[182b] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 25th December 1837.

[182c] La Granja was a royal palace some miles out of Madrid, to which the Queen Regent had withdrawn. On the night of 12th August, two sergeants had forced their way into the Queen Regent's presence, and successfully demanded that she should restore the Constitution of 1812. This incident was called the Revolution of La Granja.

[183a] *The Bible in Spain*, pages 197–206.

[183b] 30th July 1836.

[183c] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 10th August 1836.

[184] 17th October 1836.

[185a] *The Bible in Spain*, pages 209–11.

[185b] *Ibid.*, page 211.

[186] The Rev. Wentworth Webster in *The Journal of Gypsy Lore Society*, vol. i., July 1888–Oct. 1889.

[187] Letter from Rev. A. Brandram, 6th Jan. 1837.

[188] Isidor Just Severin, Baron Taylor (1789–1879), was a naturalised Frenchman and a great traveller. In 1821 he, with Charles Nodier, wrote the play *Bertram*, which was produced with great success at Paris in 1821. Later he was made Commissaire du Théâtre Français, and authorised the production of *Hernani* and *Le Mariage de Figaro*. Later he became Inspecteur-Général des Beaux Arts (1838). When seen by Borrow in Seville he was collecting Spanish pictures for Louis-Philippe.

[189] *The Bible in Spain*, page 221.

[190a] *The Bible in Spain*, page 237.

[190b] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 26th Dec. 1836.

[191a] In letter to the Rev. A. Brandram (26th Dec. 1836), Borrow gives the quantity of brandy as two bottles. This letter was written within a few hours of the act and is more likely to be accurate.

[191b] *The Bible in Spain*, page 254.

[191c] Borrow's letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 14th Jan. 1837.

[191d] He was authorised to purchase 600 reams at 60 *reals* per ream, whereas he paid only 45 *reals* a ream for a paper "better," he wrote, "than I could have purchased at 70."

[192a] Author of *La Historia de las Córtes de España durante el Siglo XIX*. (1885) and other works of a political character. He was also proprietor and editor of *El Español*. Isturitz had intended raising Borrégo to the position of minister of finance when his government suddenly terminated.

[192b] General report prepared by Borrow in the Autumn of 1838 for the General Committee of the Bible Society detailing his labours in Spain. This was subsequently withdrawn, probably on account of its somewhat aggressive tone. In the course of this work the document will be referred to as *General Report, Withdrawn*.

[192c] To Rev. A. Brandram, 14th Jan. 1837.

[193] To Rev. A. Brandram, 14th Jan. 1837.

[194a] 27th January 1837.

[194b] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 27th Feb. 1837.

[195a] Letter from Rev. A. Brandram to Borrow, 22nd March 1837.

[195b] Letter from Borrow to Rev. A. Brandram, 25th Dec. 1837.

[195c] Letter from Borrow to Rev. A. Brandram, 27th February 1837.

[195d] Rev. Wentworth Webster in *The Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, vol. i., July 1888–October 1889.

[196a] *General Report* withdrawn.

[196b] *General Report*, withdrawn.

[196c] Borrow to Richard Ford. *Letters of Richard Ford* 1797–1858. Ed. R. E. Prothero. Murray, 1905.

[197a] Letter from Borrow to Rev. A. Brandram, 7th June 1837.

[197b] *Ibid.*

[197c] *Ibid.*

[198] Letter from Borrow to the Rev. A. Brandram, 27th February 1837.

[199] As the method adopted was practically the same in every town he visited, no further reference need be made to the fact, and in the brief survey of the journeys that Borrow himself has described so graphically, only incidents that tend to throw light upon his character or disposition, and such as he has not recorded himself, will be dealt with.

[200a] Via Pitiegua, Pedroso, Medina del Campo,

Dueñas Palencia.

“I suffered dreadfully during this journey,” Borrow wrote, “as did likewise my man and horses, for the heat was the fiercest which I have ever known, and resembled the breath of the simoon or the air from an oven’s mouth.”—Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 5th July 1837.

[200b] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 5th July 1837.

[201] *The Bible in Spain*, pages 352–4.

[202] *The Bible in Spain*, page 364.

[203a] This is the story particularly referred to by Richard Ford in report upon the MS. of *The Bible in Spain*.

[203b] In the Report to the General Committee of the Bible Society on Past and Future Operations in Spain, November 1838.

[204a] *The Bible in Spain*, page 409.

[204b] In *The Bible in Spain* Borrow says he was arrested on suspicion of being the Pretender himself; but in a letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 15th September 1837, he says that he and his guide were seized as Carlist spies, and makes no mention of Don Carlos.

[205a] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 15th September 1837.

[205b] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 29th September 1837.

[205c] By way of Ferrol, Novales, Santa María, Coisa d’Ouro, Viviero, Foz, Rivadéo, Castro Pól, Naváia, Luarca, the Caneiro, Las Bellotas, Soto Luiño,

Muros, Avilés and Gijon.

[205d] To the Rev. A. Brandram, 29th Sept. 1837. The story also appears in *The Bible in Spain*, pages 479–480.

[206] Borrow's original idea in printing only the New Testament was that in Spain and Portugal he deemed it better not to publish the whole Bible, at least not "until the inhabitants become christianised," because the Old Testament "is so infinitely entertaining to the carnal man," and he feared that in consequence the New Testament would be little read. Later he saw his mistake, and was constantly asking for Bibles, for which there was a big demand.

[207] To Rev. A. Brandram, 29th September 1837.

[208] George Dawson Flinter, an Irishman in the service of Queen Isabella II., who fought for his adopted Queen with courage and distinction, and eventually committed suicide as a protest against the monstrously unjust conspiracy to bring about his ruin, September 1838.

[209a] By way of Ontanéda, Oña, Búrgos, Vallodolid, Guadarrama.

[209b] *General Report*, withdrawn.

[209c] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 1st November 1837.

[210] *The Bible in Spain*, page 507.

[211] He was created G.C.B. 19th Oct. 1837.

[212a] Letter from Borrow to the Rev. A. Brandram, 20th Nov. 1837.

[212b] To the Rev. A. Brandram, 20th Nov. 1837.

[213a] *History of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, W. Canton.

[213b] Letter from Borrow to Rev. A. Brandram, 30th March 1838.

[214a] Mr Brandram wrote to Graydon (12th April 1838): "Mr Rule being at Madrid and having conferred with Mr Borrow and Sir George Villiers, it appears to have struck them all three that a visit on your part to Cadiz and Seville could not at present be advantageous to our cause."

[214b] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 20th November 1837.

[214c] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 28th November 1837. The comment on the badness of the London edition had reference to the translation, which Borrow had condemned with great vigour; he subsequently admitted that he had been too sweeping in his disapproval.

[215a] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 28th November 1837.

[215b] Sir George Villiers to Viscount Palmerston, 5th May 1838.

[215c] *Ibid.*

[216a] *The Gypsies of Spain*, page 241.

[216b] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 25th Dec. 1837.

[216c] These Bibles fetched, the large edition (Borrow wrote "I would give my right hand for a thousand of them") 17s. each, and the smaller 7s.

each, whereas the New Testaments fetched about half-a crown.

[216d] Letter dated 16th Jan. 1838.

[217a] In *The Bible in Spain* he says “the greater part,” in *The Gypsies of Spain* he says “the whole.”

[217b] *The Gypsies of Spain*, page 275.

[218a] *The Gypsies of Spain*, page 280.

[218b] *Ibid.*

[218c] *Ibid.*, page 282.

[219a] On 25th December 1837.

[219b] It is strange that Borrow should insist that he had Sir George Villiers’ approval; for Sir George himself has clearly stated that he strongly opposed the opening of the *Despacho*.

[220] 15th January 1838.

[221a] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 30th March 1838.

[221b] In *The Gypsies of Spain* Borrow gives the number as 500 (page 281); but the Resolution, confirmed 20th March 1837, authorised the printing of 250 copies only. In all probability the figures given by Borrow are correct, as in a letter to Mr Brandram, dated 18th July 1839, he gives his unsold stock of books at Madrid as:—

Of Testaments	962
Of Gospels in the Gypsy Tongue	286
Of ditto in Basque	394

[222a] Original Report, withdrawn.

[222b] *The Gypsies of Spain*, pages 280–1.

[224a] Letter from Borrow to Rev. A. Brandram, 17th March 1838.

[224b] *The History of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, by W. Canton.

[225] Mr Canton writes in *The History of the British and Foreign Bible Society*: "His [Graydon's] opportunity was indeed unprecedented; and had he but more accurately appreciated the unstable political conditions of the country, the susceptibilities, suspicious and precarious tenure of ministers and placemen, the temper of the priesthood, their sensitive attachment to certain tenets of their faith, and their enormous influence over the civil power, there is reason to believe that he might have brought his mission to a happier and more permanent issue."

[226] [11th] May 1838.

[227a] Letter from George Borrow to Rev. A. Brandram [11th] May 1838.

[227b] 23rd April 1838.

[227c] The Marin episode is amazing. The object of distributing the Scriptures was to enlighten men's minds and bring about conversion, and a priest was a distinct capture, more valuable by far than a peasant, and likely to influence others; yet when they had got him no one appears to have known exactly what to do, and all were anxious to get rid of him again.

[228a] *The Bible in Spain*, page 536.

[228b] *Ibid.*

[229a] Original Report, withdrawn.

[229b] Original Report, withdrawn.

[231] Sometimes this personage is referred to in official papers as the "Political Chief," a too literal translation of *Gefé Politico*. In all cases it has been altered to Civil Governor to preserve uniformity. Many of the official translations of Foreign Office papers can only be described as grotesque.

[232a] This is the official translation among the Foreign Office papers at the Record Office.

[232b] *The Bible in Spain*, page 539.

[233] There is an error in the dating of this letter. It should be 1st May.

[234a] In a letter to Count Ofalia, Sir George Villiers states that "George Borrow, fearing violence, prudently abstained from going to his ordinary place of abode."

[234b] Borrow pays a magnificent and well-deserved tribute to this queen among landladies. (*The Bible in Spain*, pages 256–7.) She was always his friend and frequently his counsellor, thinking nothing of the risk she ran in standing by him during periods of danger. She refused all inducements to betray him to his enemies, and, thoroughly deserved the eulogy that Borrow pronounced upon her.

[234c] It was subsequently stated that the arrest was ordered because Borrow had refused to recognise the Civil Governor's authority and made use "of offensive expressions" towards his person. The Civil Governor had no authority over British subjects, and

Borrow was right in his refusal to acknowledge his jurisdiction.

[235] *The Bible in Spain*, page 547.

[238a] Dispatch from Sir George Villiers to Viscount Palmerston, 5th May.

[238b] *Ibid.*

[239a] Despatch from Sir George Villiers to Viscount Palmerston, 12th May 1838.

[239b] *Ibid.*

[240a] Despatch from Sir George Villiers to Viscount Palmerston.

[240b] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 17th May 1838.

[241a] Despatch from Sir George Villiers to Viscount Palmerston, 5th May 1838.

[241b] In a letter to the Rev. A. Brandram, 17th May 1838.

[242a] The Official Translation among the Foreign Office Papers at the Record Office.

[242b] Mr William Mark's (the British Consul at Malaga) Official account of the occurrence, 16th May 1838.

[243a] Mr William Mark's (the British Consul at Malaga) Official account of the occurrence, 16th May 1838.

[243b] *Ibid.*

[243c] Despatch to Viscount Palmerston, 12th May 1838.

[243d] *Ibid.*

[244a] Despatch to Viscount Palmerston, 12th May 1838.

[244b] *Ibid.*

[244c] Sir George Villiers' Despatch to Viscount Palmerston, 12th May 1838.

[246a] The Official Translation among the Foreign Office Papers at the Record Office.

[246b] *The Bible in Spain*, page 578.

[247a] *The Gypsies of Spain*, page 241.

[247b] *The Bible in Spain*, page 579.

[249] *History of the British and Foreign Bible Society*. By W. Canton.

[252] On [11th] May 1838.

[253] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 17th May 1838.

[254a] Letter from Borrow to Rev. A. Brandram, 25th May 1838.

[255a] The Official Translation among the Foreign Office Papers at the Record Office.

[255b] Sir George Villiers to Count Ofalia, 25th May 1838.

[255c] Letter to Mr A. Brandram, 25th May 1838.

[256a] At the time of writing Borrow had not seen any of these tracts himself; but Sir George Villiers, who had, expressed the opinion that "one or two of them were outrages not only to common sense but to decency."—Borrow to the Rev. A. Brandram, 25th

June 1838.

[256b] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 14th June 1838.

[257a] Letter from Borrow to Rev. A. Brandram, 14th June 1838.

[257b] *Ibid.*

[259] The quotations from Lieut. Graydon's tracts were not sent by Borrow to Mr Brandram until some weeks later. They ran:—A True History of the Dolorous Virgin to whom the Rebellious and Fanatical Don Carlos Has Committed His Cause and the Ignorance which It Displays.

EXTRACTS.

Page 17. You will readily see in all those grandiose epithets showered upon Mary, the work of the enemy of God, which tending essentially towards idolatry has managed, under the cloak of Christianity, to introduce idolatry, and endeavours to divert to a creature, and even to the image of that creature, the adoration which is due to God alone. Without doubt it is with this very object that on all sides we see erected statues of Mary, adorned with a crown, and bearing in her arms a child of tender years, as though to accustom the populace intimately to the idea of Mary's superiority over Jesus.

Page 30. This, then, is our conclusion. In recognising and sanctioning this cult, the Church of Rome constitutes itself an idolatrous Church, and every member of it who is incapable of detecting the truth behind the monstrous accumulation of impieties with which they veil it, is proclaimed by the Church as condemned to perdition. The guiding light of this Church, which they are not ashamed to

smother or to procure the smothering of, by which nevertheless they hold their authority, to be plain, the word of God, should at least teach them, if they set any value on the Spirit of Christ, that their Papal Bulls would be better directed to the cleansing of the Roman Church from all its iniquities than to the promulgation of such unjust prohibitions. Yet in struggling against better things, this Church is protecting and hallowing in all directions an innumerable collection of superstitions and false cults, and it is clear that by this means it is abased and labelled as one of the principal agents of Anti-Christ.

[262] *The History of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, by W. Canton.

[265a] This letter reached Borrow when his "foot was in the stirrup," as he phrased it, ready to set out for the Sagra of Toledo. He felt that it could only have originated with "the enemy of mankind for the purpose of perplexing my already harrassed and agitated mind"; but he continues, "merely exclaiming 'Satan, I defy thee,' I hurried to the Sagra. . . . But it is hard to wrestle with the great enemy." *General Report*, withdrawn.

[265b] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 14th July 1838.

[265c] Mr Brandram informed Borrow that the General Committee wished him to visit England if he could do so without injury to the cause (29th June).

[266] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 14th July 1838.

[269a] *The Bible in Spain*, page 602.

[269b] *Ibid.*, page 606.

[269c] *Ibid.*, page 606.

[270a] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 27th July 1838.

[270b] This would have been impossible. If his age were seventy-four, he would of necessity have been four years old in 1838.

[271a] By Mr A. G. Jayne in "Footprints of George Borrow," in *The Bible in the World*, July 1908.

[271b] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 17th July 1838.

[273a] This letter, in which there was a hint of desperation, disturbed the officials at Earl Street a great deal. Mr Brandram wrote (28th July) that he was convinced that the Committee would "still feel that if you are to continue to act with them *they must see you*, and I will only add that it is *utterly foreign to their wishes* that you should *expose yourself in the daring manner you are now doing*. I lose not a post in conveying this impression to you."

[273b] The Translation of this communication runs: —"Madrid, 7th July 1838—I have the honour to inform your Excellency that according to official advices received in the first Secretary of State's Office, it appears that in Malaga, Murcia, Valladolid, and Santiago, copies of the New Testament of Padre Scio, without notes, have been exposed for sale, which have been deposited with the political chiefs of the said provinces, or in the hands of such persons as the chiefs have entrusted with them in Deposit; it being necessary further to observe that the parties giving them up have uniformly stated that they belonged to Mr Borrow, and that they were commissioned by him to sell and dispose of them.

"Under these circumstances, Her Majesty's

Government have deemed it expedient that I should address your Excellency, in order that the above may be intimated to the beforementioned Mr Borrow, so that he may take care that the copies in question, as well as those which have been seized in this City, and which are packed up in cases or parcels marked and sealed, may be sent out of the Kingdom of Spain, agreeably to the Royal order with which your Excellency is already acquainted, and through the medium of the respective authorities who will be able to vouch for their Exportation. To this Mr Borrow will submit in the required form, and with the understanding that he formally binds himself thereto, they will remain in the meantime in the respective depots."

[275] *General Report*, withdrawn.

[277a] Borrow's letter to the Rev. A. Brandram, 1st Sept. 1838.

[277b] To Lord William Hervey, Chargé d'Affaires at Madrid (23rd Aug. 1838).

[278] To Rev. G. Browne, one of the Secretaries of the Bible Society, 29th Aug. 1838.

[279a] To Rev. A. Brandram, 19th September 1838.

[279b] *The Bible in Spain*, page 621.

[279c] Letter to Dr Usoz, 22nd Feb. 1839.

[279d] *Ibid.*

[279e] *Ibid.*

[280] The Report has here been largely drawn upon and has been referred to as "Original Report, withdrawn."

[282] *History of the British and Foreign Bible Society*.

[284] On the publication of *The Bible in Spain* the Prophetess became famous. Thirty-six years later Dr Knapp found her still soliciting alms, and she acknowledged that she owed her celebrity to the *Inglés rubio*, the blonde Englishman.

[285a] *The Bible in Spain*, page 627.

[285b] To Rev. A. Brandram, 25th Jan. 1839.

[286] On 6th Feb. 1839.

[288a] Letter to Mr W. Hitchin of the Bible Society, 9th March 1839.

[288b] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 26th March 1839.

[290] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 10th April 1839.

[293] Letter to the Rev. A. Brandram, 2nd May 1839.

[294a] *Excursions Along the Shores of the Mediterranean*, by Lt.-Col. E. Napier, 46th Regt. Colburn, 1842, 2 vols.

[294b] *Ibid.*

[295] *Excursions Along the Shores of the Mediterranean*, by Lt.-Col. E. Napier, 46th Regt. Colburn, 1842, 2 vols.

[297] A reference to Charles Robert Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer*, 4 vols., 1820. This book was republished in 3 vols. in 1892, an almost unparalleled instance of the reissue of a practically forgotten book in a form closely resembling that of the original. Melmoth the Wanderer was referred to

in the most enthusiastic terms by Balzac, Thackeray and Baudelaire among others.

[298] *The Bible in Spain*, page 663.

[299] Maria Diaz had written on 24th May: "Calzado has been here to see if I would sell him the lamps that belong to the shop [the *Despacho*]. He is willing to give four dollars for them, and he says they cost five, so if you want me to sell them to him, you must let me know. It seems he is going to set up a beer-shop." It is not on record whether or no the lamps from the Bible Society's *Despacho* eventually illuminated a beer-shop.

[300] Letter from Borrow to the Rev. A. Brandram, 28th June 1839.

[301] 28th June.

[302] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 18th July 1839.

[307a] Letter from Borrow to Rev. A. Brandram, 29th Sept. 1839.

[307b] *Ibid.*

[307c] Mr John M. Brackenbury, in writing to Mr Brandram, made it quite clear that he had no doubt that the "inhibition was assuredly accelerated, if not absolutely occasioned, by the indiscretion of some of those who entered Spain for the avowed object of circulating the Scriptures, and of others who, not being Agents of the British and Foreign Bible Society, were nevertheless considered to be connected with it, as they distributed your editions of the Old and New Testaments. Our objects were defeated and your interests injured, therefore, when the Spanish Government required the departure from this

country of those who, by other acts and deeds wholly distinct from the distribution of Bibles and Testaments, had been infracting the Laws, Civil and Ecclesiastical."

[307d] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 29th Sept. 1839.

[308a] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 29th Sept. 1839.

[308b] *Ibid.*

[309] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 25th Nov. 1839.

[310] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 25th Nov. 1839.

[313] From the Public Record Office.

[315] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 25th Nov. 1839.

[316] Rev. Wentworth Webster in *The Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*.

[317] The phrasing of the official translation has everywhere been followed.

[319] The Official Translation among the Foreign Office Papers at the Record Office.

[320] 28th Dec. 1839.

[321] Henrietta played "remarkably well on the guitar—not the trumpery German thing so-called—but the real Spanish guitar."—*Wild Wales*, page 6.

[322] *Wild Wales*, page 6.

[323a] Letter to Rev. A. Brandram, 18th March 1840.

[323b] *Ibid.*

[328a] *The Romany Rye*, page 312.

[328b] *Ibid.*, page 313.

[328c] *Wild Wales*, page 289.

[329a] *Lavengro*, page 261.

[329b] *The Romany Rye*, page 22.

[329c] *The Journals of Caroline Fox*.

[330a] *The Letters of Richard Ford* 1797–1858.—Edited, R. E. Prothero, M.V.O., 1905.

[330b] *Ibid.*

[331a] *The Gypsies of Spain*, page xiv.

[331b] E[lizabeth] H[arvey] in *The Eastern Daily Press*, 1st Oct. 1892.

[331c] *The Gypsies of Spain*, page 238.

[332a] E[lizabeth] H[arvey] in *The Eastern Daily Press*, 1st Oct. 1892.

[332b] *Ibid.*

[332c] *Ibid.*

[332d] *Ibid.*

[333a] E[lizabeth] H[arvey] in *The Eastern Daily Press*, 1st Oct. 1892.

[333b] *Ibid.*

[333c] *The Bible in Spain*, page 41.

[334a] E[lizabeth] H[arvey] in *The Eastern Daily Press*, 1st Oct. 1892.

[334b] In *The Eastern Daily Press*, 1st Oct. 1892. She also tells how “at the Exhibition in 1851, whither we

went with his step-daughter, he spoke to the different foreigners in their own languages, until his daughter saw some of them whispering together and looking as if they thought he was ‘uncanny,’ and she became alarmed, and drew him away.”

[334c] *Ibid.*

[334d] *The Gypsies of Spain*, page vii.

[335a] *A Publisher and His Friends*. Samuel Smiles.

[335b] Richard Ford, 1796–1858. Critic and author. Spent several years in touring about Spain on horseback. Published in 1845, *Hand-Book for Travellers in Spain*. Contributed to the *Edinburgh*, *Quarterly*, and *Westminster* Reviews from 1837.

[335c] *The Letters of Richard Ford*, 1797–1858. Ed. R. E. Prothero, M.V.O., 1905.

[336a] Dr. Knapp points out that the title is inaccurate, there being no such word as “Zincali.” It should be “Zincalé.”

[336b] *The Letters of Richard Ford*, 1797–1858. Ed. R. E. Prothero, M.V.O., 1905.

[337a] *The Gypsies of Spain*, page 1. As the current edition of *The Zincali* has been retitled *The Gypsies of Spain*, reference is made to it throughout this work under that title and to the latest edition.

[337b] *The Gypsies of Spain*, page 32.

[338a] *The Gypsies of Spain*, page 81.

[338b] *Ibid.*, page 186.

[338c] *Ibid.*, page 283.

[339] *The Gypsies of Spain*, page 274.

[340a] Introduction to *Lavengro*. The Little Library, Methuen, 2 vols., 1, xxiii.-xxiv. C. G. Leland expressed himself to the same effect.

[340b] *Academy*, 13th July 1874.

[340c] *Wild Wales*, page 186.

[340d] *The Bible in Spain*, page 64.

[341] *Lavengro*, page 81.

[343] Ford to John Murray. *The Letters of Richard Ford*, 1797–1858. Ed. R. E. Prothero, M.V.O., 1905.

[344] Ford to John Murray. *The Letters of Richard Ford*, 1797–1858. Ed. R. E. Prothero, M.V.O., 1905.

[347] Dr Knapp's *Life of George Borrow*.

[349] *The Letters of Richard Ford*, 1797–1858. Edited, R. E. Prothero, M.V.O., 1905.

[352] *Times*, 12th April 1843, Hansard's summary reads: "It might have been said, to Mr Borrow with respect to Spain, that it would be impossible to distribute the Bible in that country in consequence of the danger of offending the prejudices which prevail there; yet he, a private individual, by showing some zeal in what he believed to be right, succeeded in triumphing over many obstacles."

[353] This is obviously the letter that Borrow paraphrases at the end of Chapter XLII. of *The Bible in Spain*.

[354] In the Appendix to *The Romany Rye* Borrow wrote, "Having the proper pride of a gentleman and a scholar, he did not, in the year '43, choose to

permit himself to be exhibited and made a zany of in London." Page 355.

[355a] Letters to John Murray, 27th Jan. and 13th March, 1843.

[355b] Letters to John Murray, 27th Jan. and 13th March, 1843.

[355c] Borrow wrote later on that he was "a sincere member of the old-fashioned Church of England, in which he believes there is more religion, and consequently less cant, than in any other Church in the world" (*The Romany Rye*, page 346). On another occasion he gave the following reason for his adherence to it: "Because I believe it is the best religion to get to heaven by" (*Wild Wales*, page 520).

[356] No trace can be found among the Bible Society Records of any such translation.

[357] This portrait has sometimes been ascribed to Thomas Phillips, R.A., in error.

[360a] *Memories of Old Friends* (1835–1871). London 1882.

[360b] *Memories of Eighty Years*, page 164.

[360c] E[lizabeth] H[arvey] in *The Eastern Daily Press*, 1st Oct. 1892.

[360d] E[lizabeth] H[arvey] in *The Eastern Daily Express*, 1st Oct. 1892.

[361] *Journals and Correspondence of Lady Eastlake*, ed. by C. E. Smith, 1895.

[362a] *The Romany Rye*, page 344.

[362b] Dr Knapp's *Life of George Borrow*, ii. 44.

[362c] *Hungary in* 1851. By Charles L. Brace.

[363] Mrs Borrow to John Murray, 4th June 1844.

[364] *Memoirs*, C. G. Leland, 1893.

[365a] Both these MSS. were acquired by the Trustees of the British Museum in 1892 by purchase. The *Gypsy Vocabulary* runs to fifty-four Folios and the *Bohemian Grammar* to seventeen Folios.

[365b] 24th April 1841.

[365c] Dr Knapp's *Life of George Borrow*, ii. page 5.

[367] As late even as 13th March 1851, Dr Hake wrote to Mrs Borrow: "He [Borrow] had better carry on his biography in three more volumes."

[372] Mr A. Egmont Hake in *Athenæum*, 13th Aug. 1881.

[374] There is something inexplicable about these dates. On 6th November Borrow agrees to alter a passage that in the 14th of the previous July he refers to as already amended.

[375] *Vestiges of Borrow*: *Some Personal Reminiscences*, *The Globe*, 21st July 1896.

[376a] Mr A. Egmont Hake in *Athenæum*, 13th Aug. 1881.

[376b] *The Gypsies of Spain*, page 287.

[376c] "His sympathies were confined to the gypsies. Where he came they followed. Where he settled, there they pitched their greasy and horribly smelling camps. It pleased him to be called their King. He was their Bard also, and wrote songs for them in that language of theirs which he professed to

consider not only the first, but the finest of the human modes of speech. He liked to stretch himself large and loose-limbed before the wood fires of their encampment and watch their graceful movements among the tents" (*Vestiges of Borrow*: *Some Personal Reminiscences*, *Globe*, 21st July 1896).

[376d] This was said in the presence of Mr F. G. Bowring, son of Dr Bowring.

[378a] Mr F. J. Bowring writes: "I was myself present at Borrow's last call, when he came to take tea *as usual*, and not a word of the kind [as given in the Appendix], was delivered."

[378b] There is no record of any correspondence with Borrow among the Museum Archives. Dr F. G. Kenyon, C.B., to whom I am indebted for this information, suggests that the communications may have been verbal.

[379] *Memoirs of Eighty Years*. By Dr Gordon Hake, 1892.

[380a] *Annals of the Harford Family*. Privately printed, 1909. Mr Theodore Watts-Dunton, in the *Athenæum*, 25th March 1899, has been successful in giving a convincing picture of Borrow: "As to his countenance," he writes, "'noble' is the only word that can be used to describe it. The silvery whiteness of the thick crop of hair seemed to add in a remarkable way to the beauty of the hairless face, but also it gave a strangeness to it, and this strangeness was intensified by a certain incongruity between the features (perfect Roman-Greek in type), and the Scandinavian complexion, luminous and sometimes rosy as an English girl's. An increased intensity was lent by the fair skin to the dark lustre

of the eyes. What struck the observer, therefore, was not the beauty but the strangeness of the man's appearance."

[380b] *Memoirs of Eighty Years*. By Dr Gordon Hake, 1892.

[381a] E[lizabeth] H[arvey] in *The Eastern Daily Press*, 1st Oct. 1892.

[381b] The story is narrated by Dr Augustus Jessopp in the *Athenæum*, 8th July 1893.

[381c] *Wild Wales*, page 487.

[381d] *Wild Wales*, page 36 et seq.

[382] *Memoirs of Eighty Years*. By Dr Gordon Hake, 1892.

[383a] *Memoirs of Eighty Years*. By Dr Gordon Hake, 1892.

[383b] *Memoirs of Eighty Years*. By Dr Gordon Hake, 1892.

[384a] *George Borrow in East Anglia*. W. A. Dutt.

[384b] *Memoirs of Eighty Years*. By Dr Gordon Hake, 1892.

[385a] *William Bodham Donne and His Friends*. By Catherine B. Johnson.

[385b] William Whewell (1794–1866), Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, 1848–66; Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University, 1843–56; secured in 1847 the election of the Prince Consort as Chancellor; enlarged the buildings of Trinity College and founded professorship and scholarships for international law. Published and edited many works

on natural and mathematical science, philosophy, theology and sermons.

[386] Mr John Murray in *Good Words*.

[390] To John Murray; the letter is in Mrs Borrow's hand but drafted by Borrow himself, 29th Jan. 1855.

[391a] 16th April 1845.

[391b] See post.

[393a] *The Romany Rye*, page 338.

[393b] *Life of Frances Power Cable*, by herself.

[393c] Borrow goes on to an anti-climax when he states that he "believes him [Scott] to have been by far the greatest [poet], with perhaps the exception of Mickiewicz, who only wrote for unfortunate Poland, that Europe has given birth to during the last hundred years."

[393d] *The Romany Rye*, pages 344–5.

[393e] *Romano Lavo-Lil*, page 274.

[393f] *The Romany Rye*, page 134.

[394a] Letter from Borrow to Dr Usoz, 22nd Feb. 1839.

[394b] *Macmillan's Magazine*, vol. 45.

[396] "Notes upon George Borrow" prefaced to an edition of *Lavengro*. Ward, Lock & Co.

[398] Mr W. Elvin in the *Athenæum*, 6th Aug. 1881.

[399a] John Wilson Croker (1780–1857): Politician and Essayist; friend of Canning and Peel. At one time Temporary Chief Secretary for Ireland and later

Secretary of the Admiralty. Supposed to have been the original of Rigby in Disraeli's *Coningsby*.

[399b] Mr Theodore Watts-Dunton, "Notes upon George Borrow" prefaced to an edition of *Lavengro*. Ward, Lock & Co.

[400a] The Rt. Hon. Augustine Birrell in *Obiter Dicta*, and Series, 1887.

[400b] Francis Hindes Groome in *Bookman*, May 1899.

[404a] "Swimming is a noble exercise, but it certainly does not tend to mortify either the flesh or the spirit."—*The Bible in Spain*, page 688.

[404b] Mr John Murray in *Good Words*.

[404c] In *The Eastern Daily Press*, 1st October 1892.

[405] Borrow's reference is to the county motto, "One and All."

[407a] *The Life of George Borrow*, by Dr Knapp, ii., 79–80.

[407b] *George Borrow*, by R. A. J. Walling.

[407c] *George Borrow*, by R. A. J. Walling.

[408] *George Borrow*, by R. A. J. Walling.

[409] *The Life of George Borrow*, by Dr Knapp.

[411] This is rather awkwardly phrased, as Mrs Borrow was alive at that date.

[412a] The first reference to the famous Appendix is contained in a letter to John Murray (11th Nov. 1853) in which Borrow writes: "In answer to your

inquiries about the fourth volume of *Lavengro*, I beg leave to say that I am occasionally occupied upon it. I shall probably add some notes."

[412b] *The Life of George Borrow*, by Dr Knapp.

[413] *The Life of George Borrow*, by Dr Knapp.

[415a] *Wild Wales*, page 6.

[415b] There appears to have been a slight cast in his (Borrow's) left eye. The Queen of the Nokkums remarked that, like Will Faa, he had "a skellying look with the left eye" (*Romano Lavo-Lil*, page 267). Mr F. H. Bowring, who frequently met him, states that he "had a slight cast in the eye."

[416] E[lizabeth] H[arvey] in *The Eastern Daily Press*, 1st Oct. 1892.

[417a] Ellen Jones actually wrote—

Ellen Jones
yn pithyn pell
i gronow owen

[417b] *Wild Wales*, pages 227–8.

[418a] This was the mason of whom Borrow enquired the way, and who "stood for a moment or two, as if transfixed, a trowel motionless in one of his hands, and a brick in the other," who on recovering himself replied in "tolerable Spanish."—*Wild Wales*, page 225.

[418b] *Wild Wales*, page 5.

[418c] These particulars have been courteously supplied by Mr George Porter of Denbigh, who interviewed Mrs Thomas on 27th Dec. 1910.

Borrow's accuracy in *Wild Wales* was photograph. The Norwich jeweller Rossi mentioned in *Wild Wales* (page 159 *et seq.*) was a friend of Borrow's with whom he frequently spent an evening: conversing in Italian, "being anxious to perfect himself in that language." I quote from a letter from his son Mr Theodore Rossi. "There was an entire absence of pretence about him and we liked him very much—he always seemed desirous of learning."

[419a] This story is told by Mr F. J. Bowring, son of Sir John Bowring. He heard it from Mrs Roberts, the landlady of the inn.

[419b] *Wild Wales*, page 274.

[419c] *Wild Wales*, page 130.

[419d] *Wild Wales*, page 130.

[420a] *Wild Wales*, page 150.

[420b] These carvels were written by such young people as thought themselves "endowed with the poetic gift, to compose carols some time before Christmas, and to recite them in the parish churches. Those pieces which were approved of by the clergy were subsequently chanted by their authors through their immediate neighbourhoods." (Introduction to *Bayr Jairgey*, Borrow's projected book on the Isle of Man.)

[422] Painted by H. W. Phillips in 1843.

[423a] *Vestiges of Borrow*: *Some Personal Reminiscences*. *The Globe*, 21st July 1896.

[423b] The Anglo-Saxon scholar (1795–1857), who though paralysed during the whole of her life visited Rome, Athens and other places. She was the first

woman elected a member of the British Association.

[423c] To judge from Borrow's opinion of O'Connell previously quoted, "notoriety" would have been a more appropriate word in his case.

[424] Given to the Rev. A. W. Upcher and related by him in *The Athenæum*, 22nd July 1893.

[425a] *Lavengro*, page 361.

[425b] *The Romany Rye*, page 309.

[425c] *Wild Wales*, page 285.

[425d] *The Eastern Daily Press*, 1st Oct. 1892.

[427] Garcin de Tassy. Note sur les Rubâ'ïyât de 'Omar Khaïyam, which appeared in the *Journal Asiatique*.

[428a] *Letters and Literary Remains of Edward FitzGerald*, 1889.

[428b] *Songs of Europe, or Metrical Translations from All the European Languages, With Brief Prefatory Remarks on Each Language and its Literature*. 2 vols. (Advertised as "Ready for the Press" at the end of *The Romany Rye*. See page 438.)

[429] Rev. Whitwell Elwin, editor of *The Quarterly Review*. See *post*, p. 431.

[431] Elwin could not very well have known Borrow all his, Borrow's life, as Dr Knapp states, for he was fifteen years younger, being born 26th Feb. 1816.

[432a] *Some XVIII. Century Men of Letters*. Ed. Warwick Elwin, 1902.

[432b] *Some XVIII. Century Men of Letters*. Ed.

Warwick Elwin, 1902.

[433] *Some XVIII. Century Men of Letters*. Ed. Warwick Elwin, 1902.

[435] Entitled *Roving Life in England*. March 1857.

[436] Elwin had already testified, also in *The Quarterly Review*, to the accuracy of Borrow's portrait of B. R. Haydon in *Lavengro*, as confirmed by documentary evidence, and this after first reading the account as "a comic exaggeration."

[437a] *Letters and Literary Remains of Edward FitzGerald*, 1889.

[437b] Mr A. Egmont Hake in *Athenæum*, 13th Aug. 1881.

[438] Works by the Author of *The Bible in Spain*, ready for the Press.

In Two Volumes, Celtic Bards, Chiefs, and Kings.—In Two Volumes, Wild Wales, Its People, Language, and Scenery.—In Two Volumes, Songs of Europe; or, Metrical Translations From all the European Languages. With brief Prefatory Remarks on each Language and its Literature.—In Two Volumes, Koempe Viser; Songs about Giants and Heroes. With Romantic and Historical Ballads, Translated from the Ancient Danish. With an Introduction and Copious Notes.—In One Volume, The Turkish Jester; or, The Pleasantries of Cogia Nasr Eddin Efendi. Translated from the Turkish. With an Introduction.—In Two Volumes, Penquite and Pentyre; or, The Head of the Forest and the Headland. A Book on Cornwall.—In One Volume, Russian Popular Tales, With an Introduction and Notes. Contents:—The Story of Emelian the Fool; The Story of the Frog and the

Hero; The Story of the Golden Mountain; The Story of the Seven Sevenlings; The Story of the Eryslan; The Story of the Old Man and his Son, the Crane; The Story of the Daughter of the Stroey; The Story of Klim; The Story of Prince Vikor; The Story of Prince Peter; The Story of Yvashka with the Bear's Ear.—In One Volume, The Sleeping Bard; or, Visions of the World, Death, & Hell. By Master Elis Wyn. Translated from the Cambrian British.—In Two Volumes (Unfinished), Northern-Skalds, Kings, and Earls.—The Death of Balder; A Heroic Play. Translated from the Danish of Evald.—In One Volume, Bayr Jairgey and Glion Doo: The Red Path and the Black Valley. Wanderings in Quest of Manx Literature.

[439] "She was a lady of striking figure and very graceful manners, perhaps more serious than vivacious."—Mr A. Egmont Hake in *The Athenæum*, 13th August 1881.

[440a] She bequeathed to her son by will "all and every thing" of which she died possessed, charging him with the delivery of any gift to any other person she might desire.

[440b] *Wild Wales*, page 548.

[442] These particulars have been kindly supplied by Mr D. B. Hill of Mattishall, Norfolk.

[445a] Mr. A. Egmont Hake in *The Athenæum*, 13th Aug. 1881.

[445b] *The Life of Frances Power Cobbe*, by Herself, 1894.

[446] *The Life of Frances Power Cobbe*, by Herself, 1894.

[447a] "In Defence of Borrow," prefixed to *The Romany Rye*. Ward, Locke & Co.

[447b] *Vestiges of Borrow*; *Some Personal Reminiscences*. *The Globe*, 21st July 1896.

[448] *The Athenæum*, 13th August 1881.

[449a] Mr A. Egmont Hake in *Macmillan's Magazine*, November 1881.

[449b] Mr A. Egmont Hake in *The Athenæum*, 13th August 1881.

[449c] *Memoirs of Eighty Years*, by Dr Gordon Hake, 1892.

[450] *The Athenæum*, 10th September 1881.

[451a] *The Athenæum*, 10th September 1881.

[451b] *The Athenæum*, 13th August 1881.

[453] "Sherry drinkers, . . . I often heard him say in a tone of positive loathing, he *despised*. He had a habit of speaking in a measured syllabic manner, if he wished to express dislike or contempt, which was certainly very effective. He would say: 'If you want to have the Sherry *tang*, get Madeira (that's a gentleman's wine), and throw into it two or three pairs of old boots, and you'll get the taste of the pig skins they carry the Sherry about in."—Rev. J. R. P. Berkeley's *Recollections*. *The Life of George Borrow*, by Dr Knapp.

[456] *Life of Frances Power Cobbe*, by Herself, 1894.

[459a] *The Geologist*, 1797–1875.

[459b] *The Life of Frances Power Cobbe*, by Herself, 1894.

[460a] *Charles Godfrey Leland*, by E. R. Pennell, 1908

[460b] *Memoirs*, by C. G. Leland, 1893.

[461a] In her biography of Leland, Mrs Pennell states that an American woman, a Mrs Lewis ("Estelle") introduced Leland to Borrow at the British Museum and that they talked Gypsy. "I hear he expressed himself as greatly pleased with me," was Leland's comment. The correspondence clearly shows that Leland called on Borrow.

[461b] *Memoirs* of C. G. Leland, 1893.

[461c] *Memoirs* of C. G. Leland, 1893.

[462a] Leland's annoyance with Borrow did not prevent him paying to his memory the following tribute:—

"What I admire in Borrow to such a degree that before it his faults or failings seem very trifling, is his absolutely vigorous, marvellously varied originality, based on direct familiarity with Nature, but guided and cultured by the study of natural, simple writers, such as Defoe and Smollett. I think that the 'interest' in, or rather sympathy for gypsies, in his case as in mine, came not from their being curious or dramatic beings, but because they are so much a part of free life, of out-of-doors Nature; so associated with sheltered nooks among rocks and trees, the hedgerow and birds, river-sides, and wild roads. Borrow's heart was large and true as regarded English rural life; there was a place in it for everything which was of the open air and freshly beautiful."—*Memoirs* of C. G. Leland, 1893.

[462b] *Romano Lavo-Lil*. Word-Book of the Romany,

or English Gypsy Language. With Specimens of Gypsy Poetry, and an Account of Certain Gypsyries or Places Inhabited by Them, and of Various Things Relating to Gypsy Life in England.

[462c] "There were not two educated men in England who possessed the slightest knowledge of Romany."—F. H. Groome in *Academy*,—13th June 1874.

[463a] F. H. Groome in *Academy*, 13th June 1874.

[463b] *Ibid.*

[464] *The Athenæum*, 17th March 1888.

[466a] *The Bookman*, February 1893.

[466b] *The Athenæum*, 10th Sept. 1881.

[467] *William Bodham Donne and His Friends*. Edited by Catherine B. Johnson, 1905.

[469a] Mr T. Watts-Dunton, in *The Athenæum*, 3rd Sept. 1881.

[469b] Mr A. Egmont Hake, in *The Athenæum*, 13th Aug. 1881.

[470a] *The Life of George Borrow*, by Dr Knapp.

[470b] *East Anglia*, by J. Ewing Ritchie, 1883.

[470c] *George Borrow in East Anglia*.

[473] W. E. Henley.

[474a] *The Athenæum*, 25th March 1899.

[474b] Many attacks have been made upon Borrow's memory: one well-known man of letters and divine has gone to lengths that can only be described as

unpardonable. It is undesirable to do more than deplore the lapse that no doubt the writer himself has already deeply regretted.

[474c] *Memoirs of Eighty Years*, 1892.

[475a] Mr A. Egmont Hake in *The Athenæum*, 13th August 1881.

[475b] In *The Bible in Spain*. "Next to the love of God, the love of country is the best preventative of crime." (Page 53.)

[475c] *The Bible in Spain*, page 97.

[476] Mr Thomas Seccombe in *The Bookman*, Feb. 1892.

[477] *Wild Wales*, page 628.

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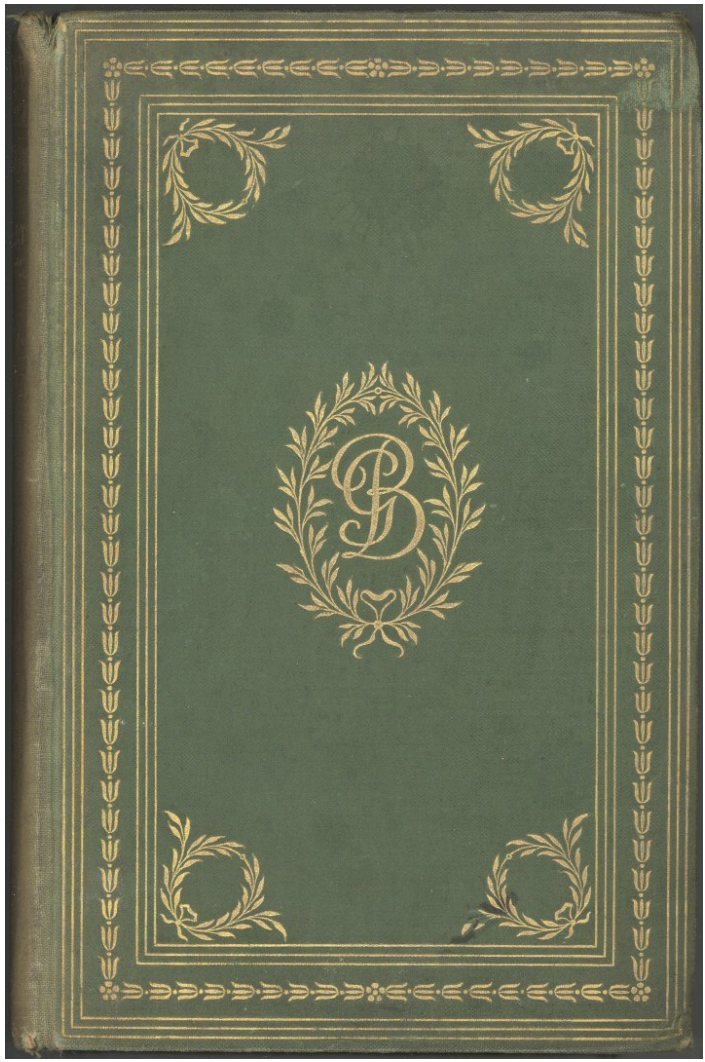
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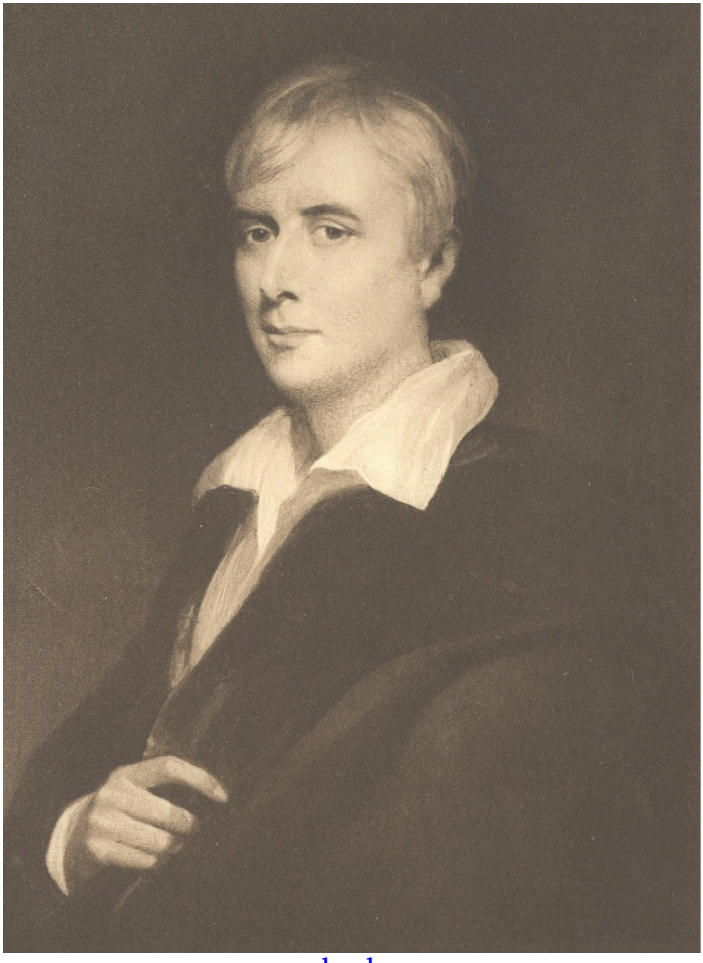
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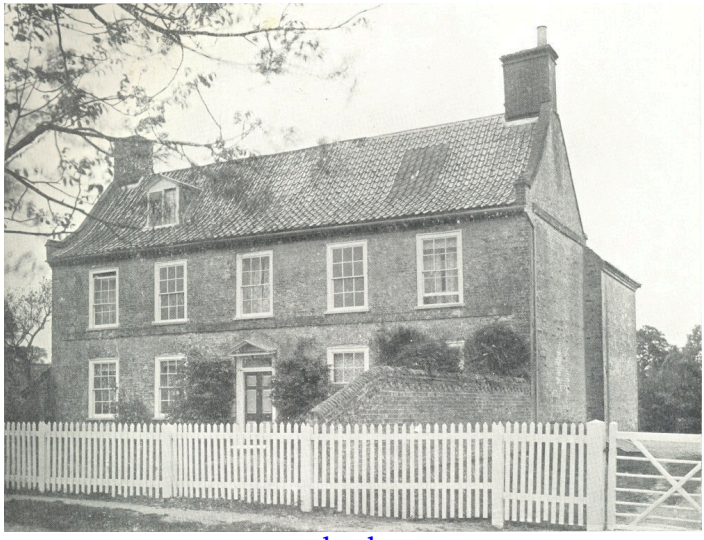
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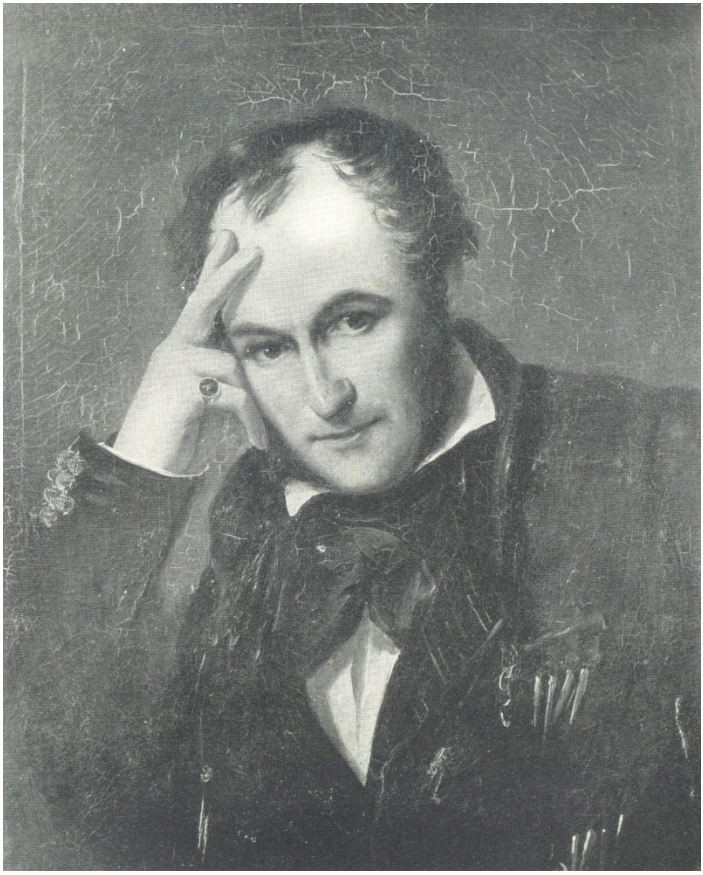
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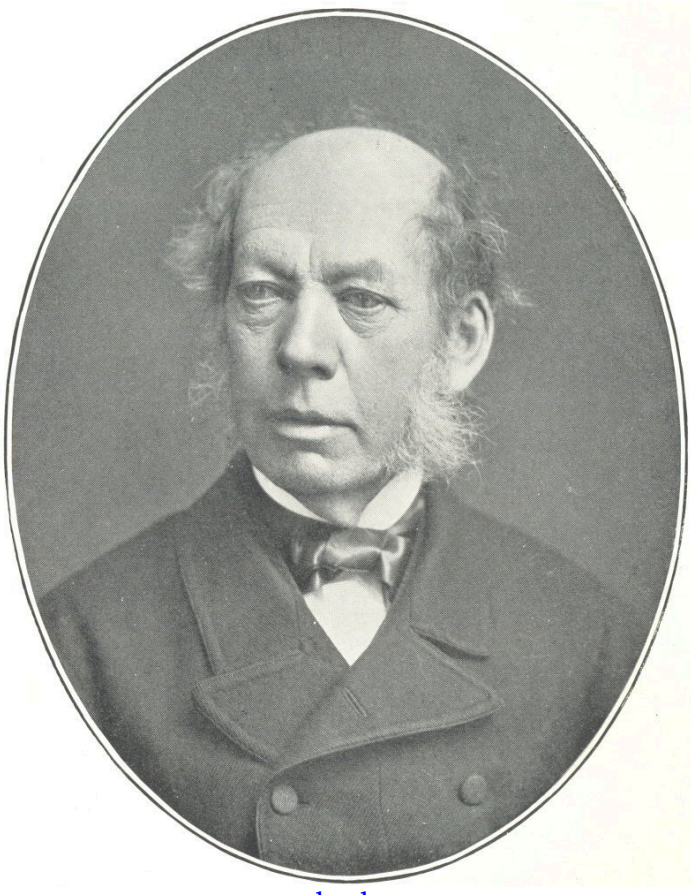
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