

**EMBLEMS,
DIVINE & MORAL**

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Emblems, Divine & Moral by Francis Quarles

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FRANCIS QUARLES

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BY FRANCIS QUARLES.



WITH A SKETCH
OF THE
Life and Times of the Author.

LONDON: SOLD BY WILLIAM TEGG AND CO.,
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MEMOIR.

FEW men have written so much, enjoyed greater popularity in their time, and yet been more undeservedly neglected by contemporary and succeeding writers, as the pious-minded author of "Emblems, Divine and Moral." With the exception of a few biographical data, embalmed by his affectionate and "sorrowful widow" Ursula, and which she prefixed to one of his posthumous works,* little additional information respecting him has reached us.

His numerous publications—consisting principally of poetical paraphrases of the Scriptures—enable us to form a just estimate of his religious character and tenets; but otherwise they afford us no insight whatever, either into his own personal history, or that of the stirring period in which it was his lot to be cast.

He appears to have taken no decided part in that great political struggle, which divided this kingdom in the seventeenth century, and which completed his own ruin, as well as that of his sovereign, until a few months only preceding his death. His naturally studious and peaceful temper of mind was ill calculated

* "A Short Relation of the Life and Death of Mr. Francis Quarles, by Ursula Quarles, his sorrowful Widow," prefixed to his "Solomon's Recantation," entitled, "Ecclesiastes Paraphrased." 4to. Lond. 1645.

to sympathize, much less to cope, with the daring and fanatical spirits of his age. His loyalty, however, in the end, proved stronger than all the temptations of domestic security and wealth.

It was not until the arms of the rebellious Parliament had signally triumphed, first in the North, and subsequently in the West of England, and the cause of the unfortunate Charles had become, in consequence, almost utterly hopeless, that our poet abandoned his peaceful seclusion, and declared for the tottering monarchy. But if he perceived the impending danger at all, he saw it too late. His loyal declaration and efforts were alike unavailing; and although about the last individual of note who threw his talents into the scale of the king, he was among the first of those whose fortunes were completely inundated by the revolutionary tide.

His adhesion to Charles; and the humble services which he rendered with his pen to the cause of that ill-fated monarch, not only brought down upon himself the extremest hatred and vengeance of the dominant power, but likewise cost him all that popularity which he had long previously enjoyed as an author. At the same time that his property was confiscated, his name was proscribed by the Parliament, and almost immediately afterwards he ceased to be, as Phillips expresses it, "the darling of our plebeian judgments."

To this circumstance in particular (namely, his proscription by the victorious party, in consequence of a publication to which we shall presently refer) may be attributed the ungenerous contempt with which he was treated by his literary contemporaries. Most probably

they feared giving umbrage to their new republican masters by honouring his memory or noticing his works ; both, therefore, were abandoned to a precarious existence—or, rather, undeserved fate.

Upon the restoration of the monarchy in England, it might have been expected that the memory, at least, of so notable and zealous a royalist as Quarles, would not only be rescued from unmerited oblivion, but, also, be revered by the party with whom he had acted. The unscrupulous generation, however, that immediately succeeded the Commonwealth, being naturally unable to sympathize with one, whose whole life and writings constituted a standing rebuke to their practical infidelity, unhesitatingly transferred his name to the black catalogue of their common enemies, from whom he had already suffered much more than themselves. Thus, by a singular mutation of fortune, he, who *before* the Revolution had been held "in wonderful veneration among the vulgar," came to be considered *after* it, as "an old Puritanical poet."

The exact date of Francis Quarles' birth is unknown ; but, according to the parish register of Romford, in Essex, which contains several entries relating to his family, he was baptized on the 8th day of May, 1592. His widow, Ursula, informs us that her husband "was descended from an ancient family, and yet (which is rare in these last times) he was an ornament to his ancestors." The poet, too, in his quaint *Memorials*, composed upon the death of Sir Robert Quarles, in 1642, avails himself of the opportunity of expatiating as well upon the antiquity of his family as upon the virtues of his kinsman.

His father was James Quarles, of Stewards (where the future poet was born), a gentleman who was possessed of considerable landed estates in the county of Essex, and discharged for some time the combined offices of Clerk of the Green Cloth and Purveyor of the Navy to the last sovereign of the Tudor dynasty. His liberal fortune and close connexion with the government of Queen Elizabeth must have made him a person of no mean note in his time. The poet's widow, indeed, intimates that her husband (had he been so inclined) might have obtained, and doubtless through his father's influence, considerable preferment at court, but his tastes carried him in an opposite direction.

We are told that the young Quarles' education was suitable to his birth, and that he gave early promise of distinguishing himself in the various branches of polite knowledge cultivated in his age.

From "a school in the country," where it was frankly admitted "he surpassed all his equals" (*i.e.* competitors), he was transferred in due time to Christ's College, Cambridge. It is not known, however, how long he continued with his *Alma Mater*, nor what literary honours (if any) she conferred upon him. In reference to his academical course, his widow merely observes: "How he profited there (Cambridge) I am not able to judge; but am fully assured, by men of much learning and judgment, that his works in very many places do sufficiently testify more than ordinary fruits of his university studies."

It was during his residence at Cambridge that he first became acquainted (and the acquaintance soon

ripened into a friendship, which was only determined by his death) with Phineas Fletcher, the author of that singular poem, "The Purple Island." To this early friendship with the poetical anatomist, may possibly be attributed much of the eccentricity of thought and expression which characterizes the majority of his works. It is worthy of record, also—and the simple fact bespeaks the genuine amiability of his nature better than the most laboured panegyric—that all his earliest-formed attachments proved as durable as they were found.

Upon the completion of his college career, he removed to London, and entered himself of Lincoln's Inn, having determined to prosecute the study of the law, "not so much out of desire to benefit himself thereby as his friends and neighbours (showing therein his continued inclination to peace), by composing suits and differences amongst them." His widow states that he prosecuted his legal studies "for some years;" but no record exists of his professional success, unless his appointment to the office of Chronologer to the City of London may be taken as an indication of it. The duties of this office were probably similar to those which are now performed by the City Remembrancer; the position, therefore, was both honourable and lucrative. That he gave the fullest satisfaction to the Corporation employing him, may be inferred from the fact that his enemies, powerful and unscrupulous as they were, failed to lessen their respect for him; and he continued, in consequence, to hold that piece of preferment up to the last hour of his life.

Previously to his connexion with the City of London, he had been preferred to the office of cup-bearer to the unfortunate Electress Palatine, Queen of Bohemia (Elizabeth, daughter of King James the First of England). From this it has been inferred by many that his destination, like that of his father, was originally to public life. His widow, however, as we have before partially intimated, states that, "after he came to maturity, he was not desirous to put himself into the world, otherwise he might have had greater preferments than he had;" and, she continues, "he was neither so unfit for court preferment, nor so ill-behaved there, but that he might have raised his fortune thereby, if he had had any inclination that way. But his mind was chiefly set upon his devotion and study."

It was the last-mentioned pleasing features of his character that attracted the attention, and secured for him the distinguished patronage and friendship, of the learned Usher, Archbishop of Armagh, who invited him over to Ireland, and kept him immediately about his person in the capacity of his private secretary. It is not known when he was first induced to visit that unquiet country: he was forced, however, to hasten from it upon the breaking out of the terrible rebellion there in the year 1641. He was fortunate in being one of the very few English who escaped on that occasion the general massacre perpetrated by the Romanists.

In attempting to avoid, however, the troubles and dangers in Ireland, he was destined to experience much greater in his own country. As before observed, he appears to have taken no overt part in the contest