

THE ENGLISH PURITANS

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The English Puritans by John Brown

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JOHN BROWN

**THE ENGLISH
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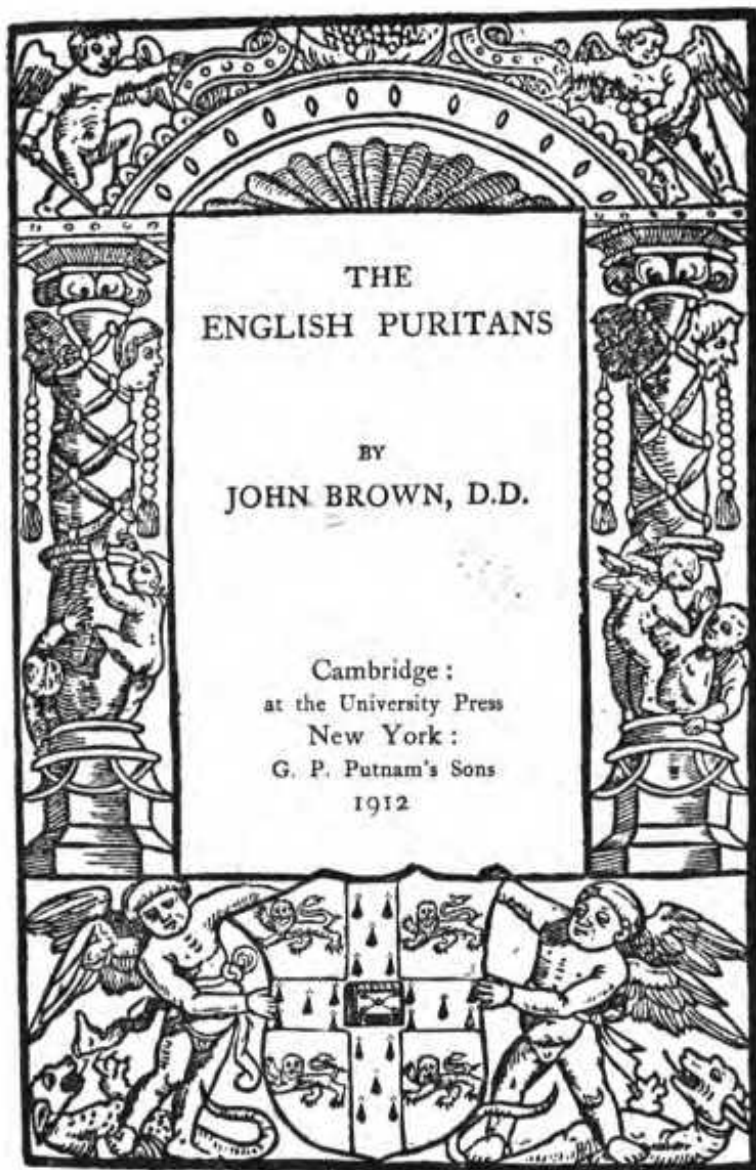
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ENGLISH PURITANS

BY
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PREFACE

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THE work here presented to the reader is intended to give, within moderate compass and in the light of recent research, the history of the rise, growth and decline of that puritan movement which, for a hundred years, so vitally affected the course of our national life. It aims at a middle course. There have been historical monographs dealing with separate portions of the movement; and there have also been connected histories of it as a whole; but the monographs were necessarily sectional and incomplete; and on the other hand the connected histories were too elaborate and therefore too lengthy for readers with only limited time at their disposal, but who yet wished to arrive at a fairly trustworthy knowledge of the subject. It is hoped this little book may to some extent meet the needs of readers of this class.

The subject is worthy of attention, for puritanism had important bearings both upon the religious life and the constitutional history of the nation. It was first of all religious in its character. The early

puritans had no political views, yet their religious opinions worked out to political results. Borgeaud has shewn that modern democracy is the child of the Reformation, not of the reformers. For in the Reformation the two levers used to break the authority of the Holy See were free enquiry and the priesthood of all believers; and these two principles contained in them the germs of the political revolution which has come to pass. For they made the community the visible centre of the Church, and the people the principal factor of social life. On these grounds the history of the English puritans deserves to be known from within and in such connected form as the necessary limitations of space will allow.

J. B.

HAMPSTEAD,

June 20, 1910.

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