

Moncure D. Conway.

MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY, M.A., B.D. of Divinity College, Harvard University, U.S.A., was born in Fredericksburg, Stafford county, Virginia, United States of America, where his father, Walker Peyton Conway, a country gentleman, enjoyed great consideration and esteem. Mr. Conway traces his descent to Wales, from which country the Conways originally came. It is an interesting study in itself, how, during a century, frequent intermarriage with the chief families of Stafford county, whose names were Daniel and Moncure, brought about the present triple name of Moncure Daniel Conway. The Moncures were Scotch, and the Daniels were English, so that the present Conway has a splendid union of blood—English, Scotch, and Welsh. At the first blush Conway's future career seemed mapped out for him. He found himself surrounded with powerful friends, all eager to do him service. The path of politics lay open before him, but, unfortunately, his father was a large slaveowner, and here was a formidable barrier to his political career. Mr. Conway pays tribute to his father's high qualities, and humanity to his slaves in his "Testimonies Concerning Slavery." "Few," says he, "are the really peaceful days that I remember as having smiled on my old Virginian home, the outbreaks of the negroes among themselves, the disobediences which the necessary discipline can never suffer to be overlooked, the terrors of devoted parents at the opportunities for the display of evil tempers, and the inception of every kind of vice among their sons, I remember as the demons haunting those days. I have often heard my parents say that the care of slaves had made them prematurely old."

The means of education were represented by the Classical and Mathematical Academy at Fredricksburg, wherein Conway was carried beyond the rudiments of his education, and afterwards he made good progress at this institution. He was subsequently entered as undergraduate at Dickinson College, Pennsylvania, where he graduated in 1849. In 1850 he was sent to Warrenton, Virginia, and here commenced the study of law. About this time he was in intimate relations with his cousin, John Moncure Daniel, editor of the *Richmond Examiner*, who influenced his mind to the extent of making Mr. Conway begin his youthful career as a defender of slavery. Shortly afterwards he

produced his first essay, on "Free Schools in Virginia," which was circulated among the lower classes, and also was read and examined by members of the State Convention. Mr. T. Morrison Davidson, in his work "Eminent Radicals out of Parliament," speaking of this first work of Conway's, says: "I have read this plan for *free schools* to educate the 'mean whites,' and can only wonder that a lad of eighteen should have had the ability or patience to produce so masterly an appeal." It might have been thought that this pamphlet would have been well received. This was not at all the case. Mr. Conway was attacked by the newspapers as only American newspapers can attack. It was said that his pamphlet aimed a blow at the very existence of Southern society. But he was not at all disheartened. Confident that "right was might," he continued in his good endeavours to better the condition of the low Southerners. In order to do this he threw up the law and took up the Gospel. He became a Methodist preacher, and was appointed by the Baltimore Methodist Conference, an "itinerant" in charge of twelve congregations in Maryland. During his duties he often visited a congregation of Hicksite Quakers, who were totally unpolluted by slavery. Seeing the prosperous state of things which existed under the benign rule of this liberal sect, the happy homes, the well cultivated fields, the smiling, clean, tidy children, Mr. Conway was much struck with it. At first he was bewildered, but an old Quaker whose acquaintance he had made, so brought him round to his views of things, that Mr. Conway at last began to look forward to Negro Emancipation as the greatest possible good that could befall the Southerners.

"Again," says Mr. Conway, "I visited the old Quaker patriarch, and told him with what delight I had found that the interior of Sandy Spring was even more attractive than its exterior. 'Now friend, can thee account for this evident superiority of the Friends' neighbourhood over the rest of this country of thy own state?' 'Well,' I ventured, 'doubtless you have certain habits of thrift and industry which others have not.' 'Perhaps it is so,' said the old man gravely, after which followed a long silence, which, I felt, belonged to him, and was for him to break. Then he turned his eyes—at once luminous and keen—full upon me, and said, 'But there is *one* habit of our people to which, thee will find should thee search it, is to be traced all the improved condition of our lands, and our homes, that is the habit of *taking care that*

our labourers get just wages for their work. No slave has touched any sod in any field of Sandy Spring.'"

We have now transformed Mr. Conway from a slave owner to an eager abolitionist whose whole energies were set on emancipation. In 1852, he went to Harvard University, where the theology is Unitarian, and graduated here as B.D., in 1854. During this time he had the advantage of the kind advice and friendship of such men as Emerson, Sumner, and Phillips. After this he returned home for a short time, but there the country was too hot for him. An Abolitionist was there regarded as an enemy to the state and everything good. Mr. Conway was warned to leave Virginia, or he might expect some rough treatment, and so he was obliged to leave, and in 1854 he was appointed minister of the Unitarian Church in Washington. He was, however, soon dismissed on account of an anti-slavery sermon which he preached on the occasion of the outrage on Sumner, by Preston Brooks. This sermon was even too liberal for one of the most anti-slavery congregations then in America. The year 1856 saw him engaged as pastor to the Cincinnati Unitarians; and here he wrote his first work, "Tracts for To-day," in 1858. When the Civil War broke out, Mr. Conway left his ministry in Cincinnati and devoted himself to the work of lecturing through the Northern States in favour of using immediate emancipation as the bloodless and adequate weapon to suppress the rebellion. He contended that the South could not fight if their slaves were proclaimed free. These ideas were published (1861) in a work which had a vast circulation entitled "The Rejected Stone," and in (1862) "The Golden Hour," a powerful plea for emancipation. President Lincoln was much impressed by "The Rejected Stone," which it is said confirmed him in his abolitionist principles.

He became the editor of the *Boston Commonwealth*, in 1863, a high class anti-slavery journal. Mr. Conway's father and brothers had become Secessionists; when the Federal soldiers marched through Mr. Conway's home in Virginia, he hurried to the neighbourhood to assist the slaves of his father's household which had escaped to reach the free North-west. In narrating this story in one of his works Mr. Conway says: "Far into the night we sat together, and they listened with glistening eyes as I told them of the religion to which I meant to take them where never should they 'feel oppression, never hear of war again.'" At Baltimore Railway Station Mr. Conway and his refugees

had a narrow escape. The station was attacked by the mob, and the railway official refused to allow the negroes to travel at any price. Mr. Conway showed his order vouching that the slaves were his father's. "Why, sir," said the astonished agent, "you could sell them for fifty thousand dollars in Baltimore." "Possibly," replied Mr. Conway, whereupon (moved probably by supposing that I was making a greater sacrifice than was the case) the young man's face was unsheathed. "By God, you shall have every car on the road if you want it, and take the negroes where you please." Then having sold me the tickets, he gave his ticket-selling to a subordinate, and went out to secure us a car to ourselves, and from that moment, though the imprecations of the mob went on, our way was made smooth."

In 1863 Mr. Conway came to England in order to secure our sluggish sympathy for Abolition. He was actively engaged in this when the Southern came to grief. He was at this time appointed pastor to South Place Chapel, and under his able management and teaching this chapel has become the rendezvous for advanced thinkers and politicians. In 1875 he visited America, on a lecturing tour, and was welcomed by his family with open arms. While in America he was offered the pastorate of Theodore Parker's old church in Boston, but he preferred to return to England, to battle for us against religious bigotry, and social cant which have for so long a time held their reign in England.

The great effort of Mr. Conway's life is his work on "Demonology and Devil Lore," published in 1879. It comprises two volumes, in all nearly 1,000 pages; the text is enriched with numerous illustrations and plates; and the most harsh critics of the work have said that it displays deep learning, much study, and research.

Mr. Conway examines all the minor devils, imps, demons of hunger, demons of thirst, demons of heat, demons of cold, of water, of fire, of earth, of air, of disease, of death, and of the thousand and one other ills which afflict humanity. He describes the dragon, the decline of demons, the dotard deities, and then treats of the exaggerations of tradition.

In the second volume Mr. Conway gives us some very interesting information about the Bible, notably a remarkable legend found in the Eastern Church, which is shown in various mediæval designs in Russia. Satan is drawn in an early sixteenth century picture, belonging to Count

Marof, offering Noah's wife a bunch of *klmel* (hops), in order to brew *kvas*, and so make Noah drunk. The story was that Noah kept his spouse in the dark about the deluge, well knowing that she could not keep the secret. In the old versions of the Bible, Satan always addresses Noah's wife as Eve, and on this Mr. Conway founds a theory. It was, in fact, a second edition of the attack on the divine plan begun in Eden, and revived in the temptation of Sara. Satan taught this new Eve how to make *kvas*, and also *vodka* (brandy), and after rousing her jealousy about Noah's long absences, he made her replace the beer by the stronger brandy. When Noah was well in his cups, she asked him why he stayed out so late. Noah revealed the deluge secret, and Eve told it to Satan. The tempter then made her dislike Noah, and persuaded her to be dilatory when entering the ark. When all the animals had gone in, and all the rest of the family, Eve said, "I have forgotten my pots and pans," and went back to fetch them; but on her return she said, "I have forgotten my spoons and forks," and was of course obliged to return for them. This was Satan's plan to make Noah curse, and he had just slipped under Eve's skirt, when he heard the second Adam cry to his wife, "Accursed one come in!" Jehovah himself had no power to prevent the carrying out of the patriarch's curse, and thus Satan was enabled to enter the ark and save himself from being drowned, bringing mischief into the world again.

It is needless to extol this work; it is best described in the words of Mr. Davidson both for historical research and subtle psychological analysis, "as a masterpiece in the difficult domain of comparative mythology."

Mr. Conway has also produced a work entitled, "The Sacred Anthology," a book of ethnical scriptures, which comprises the most striking passages, allegories, and parables from the sacred books of Oriental races, "The Earthward Pilgrimage," and more lately a little volume entitled "A Necklace of Stories." This latter work should be in every thinking child's hand; it is capitally written, and well illustrated, and is an entirely new fairy book. A new work—a monograph on "The Wandering Jew"—has just been announced. Mr. Conway is London special correspondent of the *Cincinnati Commercial*, his reputation in America is universal, and in England he ranks high among our famous preachers and philosophers,

while the influence and popularity of his truly remarkable writing are daily on the increase.

Joseph F. B. Firth, M.P.

JOSEPH FIRTH, born near Huddersfield in the year 1842, is the descendant of one of the original Members of the Society of Friends, and is the senior representative of a family which has been settled in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and has owned land there since the time of Queen Elizabeth. He was educated at schools connected with the Society of Friends, and ultimately graduated LL.B. at London University. Choosing the law as a profession, he was called at the Middle Temple in June, 1866, and is now in active practice at the Common Law Bar.

Taking an interest in politics from his youth, Mr. Firth has been led to give special attention to the government of London. He undertook some years ago to write a series of articles on the subject, but the work swelled into a book of more than 800 pages. From the inquiries he instituted, he discovered the magnitude of the sums that were annually diverted from the objects for which they were originally given. The parochial charities of what is known as the "City," alone realise more than £100,000 a year, while the number of really poor people within its boundaries is constantly decreasing. The total population at the time of the last census was less than 30,000, an immense majority of whom were in a position to give charity rather than to need it. The subject of the municipal reform of the City of London has been brought before the House of Commons at least fifteen times within the past forty years, but little progress has been made. Mr. Firth's work, "Municipal London, or London Government as it is, and London Government as it ought to be," has done much to bring to light the manifold abuses to which the rich charities of the metropolis have been subjected.

His agitation on the subject was conducted in conjunction with Mr. James Beal, and in addition to pointing out the wrongs that had been inflicted by the misappropriation of public funds and endowments for charitable purposes, he