

A STUDY OF JOHN BUNYAN'S PLACE
IN THE ANCESTRY OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL

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A STUDY OF JOHN BUNYAN'S PLACE
IN THE ANCESTRY OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL

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Bachelor of Arts

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1931

Submitted to the Department of English
Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
Master of Arts

1938

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Preface

This study is not an attempt to trace the thin trail of the earliest beginnings of story telling up to the present day's complex and intricate form of the novel; it is a study rather to establish the work of John Bunyan as a significant and vital link in the ancestry of the English novel. Nor is it an attempt to prove that Pilgrim's Progress or The Life and Death of Mr. Badman was the "first" novel of English literature. This study is to establish their claim to a definite place in the ancestry of the English novel. Many critics have not recognized this position of Bunyan's. Francis Stoddard, for instance, makes this statement:

The novel in English literature was born in 1740 when appeared the Pamela of Richardson. It had predecessors rather than ancestors.¹

He goes on to say that there are only four works preceding Pamela having in them enough of the quality of the English novel to warrant their position in a list of its predecessors. The works to which he refers are Nash's The Unfortunate Traveler, Lyly's Euphues, Lodge's Rosalind, and Sidney's Arcadia. In regard to these predecessors he says:

In these works I have given all the important predecessors of the novel in English literature.²

Barrett Wendell tells of an incident,³ that could be

1. Stoddard, Evolution of the Novel, p. 28.
2. Ibid., p. 28.
3. Wendell, The Temper of the XVII Century in English Literature, p. 340.

amusing if it were not so absurd, of searching a prominent American library files of fiction for Pilgrim's Progress, and then finding it classified under the heading "Dogmatic Theology".

On the other hand, some thirty-five years ago Mr. Froude⁴ drew the attention of the general reader to the importance of Bunyan's works not only as religious treatises but also as studies of novel technique. Speaking of this same writer's conclusions, Saintsbury tells us:

Discarding prejudice and punctilio, everyone must surely see that, in diminishing measure, even The Holy War is a novel, and that Pilgrim's Progress has every one of the four requisites--plot, character, description, and dialogue--while one of these requisites--character with its accessory, manners--is further developed in The History of Mr. Badman of a fashion for which we shall look vainly in any division of European literature (except drama) before it.⁵

Although Saintsbury makes the above quoted statement in regard to Bunyan's place in the development of the novel, he does not make any attempt to develop or prove his statement. Recognizing Saintsbury as probably the outstanding authority on the English novel, I have taken these four elements of the novel as the basis of my study.

These controversial ideas of literary critics constitute a definite problem, and in the following pages I shall attempt to trace in Grace Abounding, The Holy War, Pilgrim's Progress, and The Life and Death of Mr. Badman those

4. Froude, English Men of Letters.

5. Saintsbury, The English Novel, p. 57.

characteristics, named by Mr. Saintsbury as belonging to the novel proper, that will establish John Bunyan's place in the ancestry of the English novel.

A Study of John Bunyan's Place
in the Ancestry of the English Novel

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Introduction

The age in which Bunyan wrote and his own character, which was a direct result of the milieu around him, are dominant factors in his choice of the narrative style of writing. He himself was a quiet, naive, unassuming character in spite of the exaggerated sins with which he maligned himself in his books. This same naivete led him to express himself in the charming naturalness of rustic simplicity. The audience for which he wrote, the humble peasant, could understand nothing but the most simple of concrete pictures. His own background of literature, the Bible, gave him an example (and a happy one). It was fortunate for Bunyan that his model had the perfect music, the measured cadence, the sublimity, and the eloquence that we find in Biblical prose. In the history of no other writer do we find an equal condition; namely, that one book furnished the entire education and study that was responsible for his literary output.

Puritan disapproval of the drama and the stage kept him from expressing himself in that field. Although he utilizes at times the dramatic form of dialogue, yet it always remains dialogue and never becomes drama. This dialogue technique lends itself easily to allegorical style, and the simplicity of rustic conversation came to Bunyan as a natural medium of expression. He never enters the field of drama, but Saintsbury says of him, "he could have been

- choosing his words

an admirable dramatist. . ."¹

The art of conversation had been so little developed and its effective means of constructing character so little recognized in the field of story telling, that one can account for it only by supposing that Afra Behn and other contemporaries of Bunyan were under the not unnatural mistake that conversation belonged especially to the field of the drama. At least up to the time of Bunyan it had been little used in technical dialogue form outside of the drama.

Bunyan with all his Puritan background would never have used the drama form as such to present his ideas, but it is fortunate that he did not consider dialogue as drama, for his use of dialogue with its allegorical form certainly did not prove a detriment to his character portrayal.

It is his obvious allegorical quality that has caused so many of the critics to overlook Bunyan as a novelist. The fact that he linked the subject matter of religious experience with allegory has distorted the viewpoint of a number of critics who have not paused to search beneath these obvious outside coverings. Neither subject matter nor allegorical form needs be a barrier to a student of literature interested in novel technique. Grabo tells us:

"Every novel is symbolic of life rather than literally descriptive of it, and the scale of fiction is as wide as from the fairy tale, the romance, or the allegory at one extreme to the most prosaic naturalism at the other."²

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1. Saintsbury, A Short History of English Literature, p. 114.
 2. Grabo, The Technique of the Novel.

This is merely saying in a less inspiring way what Conrad has said in his preface--which is the finest single expression of the theory of the novel which has yet been written. He maintains that just as we find a picture that amuses, shocks, repulses, or entertains us, so do we find novels, but these are not necessarily reactions to art. Art, in the truest sense of the word, is as rare in the field of the written word as it is in painting or music. We have, however, recognized standards to judge a man's work in any of these fields. Conrad gives us a standard when he says: "Art is art in its power to make you hear, to make you feel--before all, to make you see."³ He elaborates further on this idea:

"Fiction--if it at all aspires to be art--appeals to temperament... Such an appeal to be effective must be an impression conveyed through the senses; and, in fact, it cannot be made in any other way, because temperament, whether individual or collective, appeals primarily to the senses, and the artistic aim when expressing itself in written words must also make its appeal through the senses, if its high desire is to reach the secret spring of responsive emotions."⁴

It is this very concreteness, this intensity of vision, this sensuous appeal of Bunyan's writings that have been recognized time and again; yet, for some reason, these qualities have been overlooked in their relation to the fictional qualities of his works. Even Stoddard, whom I have quoted in the preface to this work as totally ignoring

3. Conrad, Preface, The Nigger of the Narcissus, p. 14.

4. Ibid: p. 13.

Pilgrim's Progress and The Life and Death of Mr. Badman in his discussion of early novels, recognizes this fact in his statement:

"One may say that all novels become novels only when each is the story of some life stirred by some emotion."⁵

Emotion, as any psychology tells us, springs from outside stimulus to the senses, therefore the only means a writer has of creating real emotions is to make us hear, to make us feel--above all to make us see. It is almost astounding that the works of an ignorant tinker should so measure up to this concept, the finest example of modern criticism of the novel technique. The modern writer with all his advantages, all his training in technique, and his numerous examples of previous writers often strives in vain to present in his works this quality of heightened sense impressions that is the life blood of Bunyan's works.

Horne, although he recognizes Bunyan only as a "guide" to future writers of the novel, gives him due credit for that concreteness of impression on the senses that Conrad said was what made fiction art. He is speaking of that central purpose in Pilgrim's Progress of creating a character that is at one with the reader--or, using again the words of Conrad--one who makes the reader "hear, feel, and above all to see" even as the character hears, feels, and sees, when he says:

"Every sentence within the book helps him to that goal or holds him from it. Not one word is introduced

5. Stoddard, Evolution of the Novel, p. 10.

to show the author's skill or wit, or to tell us one fact, however interesting, that does not bear upon the central purpose."⁶

It is interesting to note that the contemporaries and predecessors of Bunyan in the history of English fiction seemed unable to grasp this idea, and as a result we find their works lacking in the one outstanding quality that was needed to give their works that substance, that life, and that intensity that would make their emotional appeal universal. In this regard Horne further states:

"Story tellers did not immediately follow Bunyan's guidance... But the central idea was in the air. Intensity of purpose had produced unity; it would do so again, perhaps in a shape more tasteful to curious palates than an ignorant tinker's sermon."⁷

It is true we have glimpses of this power in fiction in Lyly's Euphues or Sidney's Arcadia, but in the Euphues the story is dropped at more than frequent intervals for long discussions that cause the reader to lose completely that sense contact with the characters; while in Arcadia the pastoral sweetness covers the emotional response and breaks the narrative sequence like an intermittent fog.

There must be a better mixture of these characteristics that make for art in the field of fiction, if we expect to classify any later work as a link in the evolution of the craft. Conrad states:

"It is only through complete, unswerving devotion to the perfect blending of form and substance; it

6. Horne, The Technique of the Novel, p. 92.

7. Ibid: p. 93.

is only through an unremitting never-discouraged care for the shape and the ring of sentences that an approach can be made to plasticity, to color, and that the light of magic suggestiveness may be brought to play for an evanescent instant over the commonplace surface of words: of the old, old words, worn thin, defaced by ages of careless usage."⁸

Although beyond a doubt Bunyan does not measure up in all his works to all the technical rules of the modern novel, yet careful research will prove to the student of fiction that there are characteristics in Pilgrim's Progress, Grace Abounding, Life and Death of Mr. Badman, and even in the Holy War that will meet the requirements of an exacting modern critic, and will give Bunyan his proper place among the distinguished ancestors of the novel.

8. Conrad, Preface, The Nigger of the Narcissus, p. 14.

Chapter I

Plot

Nowhere in the present theory of fiction do we have a better basis for plot than in the Aristotelian rule that every story must have "a beginning, a middle, and an end". Considering the fact that Bunyan had no knowledge of any of the classical standards of the ancients that were to dominate the later 16th and 17th century writing, and even that he had no literary model at all except the Bible, it is surprising to find a beginning to his plots that would do credit to the craftsmanship found in the opening pages of Austen's Pride and Prejudice or Hardy's Return of the Native.

That this is unconscious artistry on the part of Bunyan is doubtless, but conscious or unconscious the fact remains that it is a highly developed technique. This very unconsciousness is verified in the opening lines of "The Author's Apology for his Book" in Pilgrim's Progress.

"When at first I took my pen in hand
Thus for to write; I did not understand
That I at all should make a little book
In such a mode... and so I penn'd
it down, until it came to be
For length and breadth, the bigness which you see."

To illustrate this idea of a very definite beginning being a part of plot as Bunyan felt it, let us examine the opening situations in a few of his works. How clear cut and vivid are the opening lines of Pilgrim's Progress!

"As I walked through the wilderness of this world,
I lighted on a certain place where was a den, and
laid me down in that place to sleep; and, as I slept,
I dreamed a dream. I dreamed and, behold, I saw a

man clothed with rags, standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a book in his hand, and a great burden on his back."

The reader, interested in craft, notices at once the number of definite images that constitute a beginning of plot. Here we have the "den" or the Bedford jail in which Bunyan was twelve years a prisoner. He does not elaborate on the dream idea; instead, he disposes of it in seven terse words. The man who appears in the dream is Bunyan himself; the burden on his back his sins. Now, note the following lines for the linking of this definite setting into an immediate complication:

"I looked and saw him open the book, and read therein; and as he read, he wept and trembled; and, not being able longer to contain, he brake out with a lamentable cry, saying, 'What shall I do?'"

From the moment we see the man in rags setting out with his burden, and hear his age-old, universal question, our interest never flags until he is fairly within the portals of the celestial city. The episodes along the way never draw us from the main story; instead, they hold us to it.

Contrast this definite unity with a previous allegory and the novel element becomes even more evident. In the opening lines of Spenser's Faerie Queene, the "gentle Knight goes priking 'ore the plain", but from then on Spenser feels no obligation to hold directly to the thread of the story. Mere words cause us to lose the thread of the plot. It is not so with Bunyan. From the time Christian enters the Slough of Despond until he enters the

Celestial City we have a continuous chain of events.

The climax of the story constitutes as definite a "middle" as do the opening lines a "beginning." When Christian is imprisoned in Doubting Castle held by giant Despair, we find as concrete a climax for the turning point of the story as we find in the escape of Fleance in Macbeth. Lying beaten, weary, and sore on the stone floor of Doubting Castle, Christian turns to his companion Hopeful and remarks:

"Brother, what shall we do? The life we now live is miserable. For my part I know not whether is best to live thus, or to die out of hand. My soul chooseth strangling rather than life, and the grave is more easy for me than this dungeon. Shall we be ruled by the giant?"

As a fitting denouement we have the destruction of Ignorance, who has entered the Celestial City with the help of Vain-hope, couched in just as concrete terms as we have the "beginning" or the "middle".

"Then they took him up, and carried him through the air to the door that I saw in the side of the hill, and put him in there. Then I saw that there was a way to Hell, even from the gates of Heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction."

Nothing is so necessary for plot structure as unity, and nothing makes more for unity than this age-old structure of a "beginning, a middle, and an end". Plot structure makes for good story telling, which, after all, is the dominant purpose of narrative writing.

I have chosen Pilgrim's Progress as the work through which to trace these elements because the incidents from this story are practically universally familiar. One could

find similar structure even in the Holy War; most certainly could he find it in Grace Abounding, and perhaps even more readily than in Pilgrim's Progress in the less well-known Life and Death of Mr. Badman.

In the opening lines of The Life and Death of Mr. Badman, Mr. Wiseman gives us the definite sins of Mr. Badman, sins upon which the remainder of the plot is built. From here to the climax is an even more definite pathway, if possible, than in Pilgrim's Progress, the middle being even more climactic than that seen in Doubting Castle. An arrogant Mr. Badman pausing at the very height of fame and power remarks:

"I can be anything or nothing. I can swear, and speak against swearing. I can lie, and speak against lying. I can drink, wench, be unclean, and defraud, and not be troubled for it. I can enjoy myself, and am master of my own ways, not they of me. This I have attained with much study, care, and pains."

From this point of wealth and worldly power in the life of Mr. Badman the plot leads us to a most logical ending in the death of the rogue.

However, plot must have more than unity; the realistic presentation of life and the imaginative power are equal requisites of perfect plot.

This idea of realism is nowhere more evident in Bunyan's works than in this same story, The Life and Death of Mr. Badman. This story is presented as a dialogue between Mr. Wiseman and Mr. Attentive. Mr. Wiseman tells the story; Mr. Attentive comments upon it. It is a didactic tale, describing the career of a vulgar, middle-class, unprincipled

scoundrel. From childhood Badman showed a propensity for evil. "He was so addicted to lying that his parents could not distinguish when he was telling the truth." He stole, violated the Sabbath, drank, and cursed. His father being unable to manage him, bound him out to an apprentice. The master to whom he was apprenticed tried in vain to reform him and finally, in desperation, apprenticed him to a master whose profligate tastes were similar to Badman's. In a few years he decided that marriage was the most reasonable way out of his financial difficulties. Choosing a young orphan, who was well off and her own mistress, he went to church, pretended to be converted, and then asked her to marry him. Not that he wanted her money, but that he wanted "a companion who would go with him along the road to heaven." She married him only to find out, too late, his real character. With the aid of his wife's money, Badman became a power in the community, and at her death married a woman who was a very shrew and an exact counterpart of himself in all his sins.

From this point on the reader might expect to see providence vindicated and justice meted out to Mr. Badman for all his villainous art. An inferior artist would have done so. Bunyan, however, was aware of the fact that swift and sudden justice does not descend upon the wicked with direct and startling appropriateness, and he chose rather to make his plot real. Mr. Badman lives on--drinking, swearing, cheating--even finding a certain amount of happiness

in his ill-gotten wealth and power, even unto his death bed.

In his own sermons Bunyan had remarked that death-bed repentances were seldom of more value than "the howling of a dog" and in the words of Froude:

"Bunyan was a true artist, though he knew nothing of the rules, and was not aware that he was an artist at all. He was not to be tempted into spoiling a natural story with the melodramatic horrors of a sinner's death bed."¹

It is this deft touch that adds realism to his plots. The death of Mr. Badman, who "died like a lamb, or as men call it like a chrisom child, quietly and without fear," is a much more realistic death than it would have been had Bunyan used the conventional device of poetic justice.

Realism is achieved by just such attention to infinite detail, such unexaggerated conceptions. As one critic says:

"He had a manner, like De Foe's, of creating the illusion that we are reading realities, by little touches such as, 'I do not know', 'He did not tell me this,' or the needless introduction of particulars, irrelevant to the general plot, such as we always stumble on in life."²

There is no question but that we had glimpses of this realistic treatment in earlier narratives, for example in Malory's Morte 'd Arthur or Nash's Jack Wilton, but the point that I wish to make is that Bunyan, too, had this quality and deserves his place along with the others in English fiction.

Realistic plots that had a universal appeal were scarce in the seventeenth century. There had been studies in

1. Froude, John Bunyan, p. 109.

2. Ibid., p. 111

romance, in personalities, in episodes, but the possibilities of realistic treatment had been touched but lightly in the field of fiction. All the elements of the true novel were slowly being gathered and there is no doubt that Bunyan has added to the store.

The allegorical nature of his writing tends to obscure the elements of realism in his plots. It is easy, however, to forget that allegory and read ourselves into the episodes of his books and see those incidents as they apply to a modern world and to our own lives. This is certainly one test of realism, but there is still another test to apply to the works of Bunyan. Are his plots realistic with respect to the seventeenth century in which he lived? Or are the incidents only shadowy parables for no certain age? If this last question is answered in the affirmative, then the works of Bunyan are, indeed, merely parables not novels. But, truly, the people who live in these pages had walked the streets of London with him; the trial of Christian and Faithful in *Vanity Fair* is just such a trial as he and many another man suffered in the English courts of Charles' day.

No matter how structurally perfect or how realistic a plot may be, the story becomes dust and ashes if it is not lighted by imagination. That "willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith"³ is just as necessary in the field of fiction as Mr. Coleridge

3. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, Chap. XIV.

found it to be in poetry.

It is a fortunate fact that fiction can do what life cannot, and, as a result, imagination can lend that necessary touch to an artistically managed, unified chain of events that makes it fiction. "Great novelists not only provide us with a world of friends more real and enjoyable than the actual folk we know, but also with a world for those friends to live in, more real and far more enjoyable than the world in which we ourselves sojourn."⁴ "It is the highest miracle of genius," says Macaulay, that things which are not should be as though they were, that the imagination of one mind should become the personal recollection of another, and this miracle the tinker has wrought."⁵

In Bunyan's works this imaginative treatment leads us through thrilling escapes, fights, and adventures that entice even the youngest reader to this visionary pilgrimage. Yet as a basis for all his imaginative work, there is that use of minute detail that makes us accept his incidents without question. Christian stops for a drink on the side of the Hill Difficulty; Apollyon had "wings like a dragon and feet like a bear, and out of his belly came fire and smoke", but a real flesh and blood Christian sits down to "eat bread" after the battle; and Delectable Mountains are easily imagined when covered with green grass and flowering shrubs.

4. Saintsbury, The English Novel, p. 57.

5. Macaulay, Essay on Bunyan.

Imaginative power can make a novel grotesque, but Bunyan's reasonableness prevents this; and when Cross, for instance, says this:

"He (Bunyan) so mingled with those imaginative scenes of his own the familiar Scripture imagery and the still more familiar incidents of village life, that the illusion of reality must have been to the readers for whom he wrote well nigh perfect";⁶

it is strange that he did not give Bunyan a higher place in the field of fiction.

The statement "To write good allegory requires an imagination of unusual power"⁷ is, indeed, true; but this same power of imagination unskillfully handled was what kept the works of such writers as Nash or Behn from becoming novels in the truest sense of the word. The opening lines of Pilgrim's Progress, "I dreamed a dream", might lead us to expect this same fantastic treatment in Bunyan's works. But the striking ability to make the unreal seem real has given that last touch necessary to make his plots good ones.

When "with striking realism his imagination throws into relief the actors of this mystic tale"⁸, and the gift of vision can no longer be distinguished from reality, and when these plots of his have measured up in structure to the strict interpretation of classical rules, then I do not see how we can keep from admitting that the plot element

6. Cross, Development of the English Novel, p. 21.

7. Tuckerman, A History of English Prose Fiction, p. 106.

8. Cazamian, A History of English Literature, p. 66.

in both its simple and complex forms is present in Pilgrim's Progress, Life and Death of Mr. Badman, and, to a certain extent, in the Holy War and Grace Abounding. And how we could say otherwise than that his plots make us "to hear, to feel, and, above all, to see".

Chapter II

Character

Up to the eighteenth century, it may be said in general, writers of prose fiction were chiefly concerned with narratives of incident more or less unreal, and not with character and everyday life such as we observe all about us, where actual men and women have their joys, sorrows, and struggles. Drama had already achieved a perfection of character portrayal, but writers of fiction seemed unable to achieve it. Fiction had been mainly episodic, with the people who were taking part in these episodes only types not men. "We had ideal personages in the armor of knights rather than living human beings; we had embodiments of grace in the robes of queens and ladies fair, rather than real women."¹ Until this ability of character portrayal of real flesh and blood people should be achieved, until the characters in the pages of fiction should speak and act as did the living personages of the time, then there was little hope for the evolution of the novel.

In this second requisite of plot, character drawing, Bunyan again had no literary models except the Bible. This model, combined with the living people of the seventeenth century with whom he came in contact, served as sources for his portraits. Since his acquaintances were mainly of the

1. Stoddard, Evolution of the English Novel, p. 47.

simple, lowly, peasant class, so are the characters of his books. No mediaeval knights or ladies haunt his pages, and, as a result, we find that the words and actions of his characters are those of the simple people around him, not the forced speeches or actions of an alien age.

We can use the same rules of criticism of natural characters in fiction as we use in drama. In other words, fictional characters are real inasmuch as the things they say, the things they do, and the things said about them are real. Naturally there is a difference between impulsive and deliberate action in portraying the real character of a person, and there is a difference in a biased or an unbiased opinion of a character in his remarks concerning another character. This we must take into consideration.

In the following pages I shall attempt to show those minute details used by Bunyan in depicting the words and actions of his characters that make them approach the reality of character as portrayed in the drama, but not yet reached in fiction. Small gestures, a smile, a shrug, or a few well-chosen words do as much for a character on the printed page of fiction as they do for the actor on the stage.

A certain professor of English, as I remember, used to tell his composition classes, "Don't tell me your heroine 'smirks'; bring her on and let her smirk." It is this characteristic that I wish to illustrate in the characters created by Bunyan, to show that he had not only a solid structure of plot upon which to rest his stories, but that the characters themselves were flesh and blood people.

True character portrayal is shown best in action, and Bunyan is true to life in this respect as he is in the direct words of his characters or in his discussion of them.

The steadfastness of Christian is shown when he lost his roll that was his pass to the Celestial City and went back and "trod those steps thrice over which he needed not to have trod but once".

The scornful laugh of Atheist is much more effective than anything he could have said. The admirable nature of Hopeful shows as much in his act of holding Christian's head above the water as they cross the river of doubt, as it does in any thing he says. In the same manner we glimpse the character of Goodwill when, as Christian's steps lag and falter with weariness at the Wicket Gate, he reaches out his hand and gives him a pull. Christiania's children bound ahead, as children would, during most of the journey, but when the little group pass the lions, we find them clustered behind her. The man with the muck rake says never a word, but continues raking the small stones and sticks. His continuous downward glance, which keeps him from seeing the offering, just above his head, of a gold crown for his muck rake, impresses his character on us more than any words could do.

Christiania's dropping of a gold angel² into the hands of the kind porter; Madame Bubble's continuous fingering of money; Faithful's closing his eyes so that he might not be

2. An old English coin, bearing the figure of an angel.

bewitched by Wanton's looks; and Christian's flashing smile of triumph after he conquers the dragon Apollyon--all are examples of perfect character portrayal through action.

In regard to character portrayal by what is said about a character we have our best examples in Mr. Badman. On account of the form of the story, a relation of the action in the third person, we have to depend almost entirely upon this manner of portrayal for his character. A few well-chosen sentences and Mr. Badman appears before us as clear cut and with his character as firmly imprinted in our minds as is one of Shakespeare's actors by the close of the third act. Mr. Wiseman, being the narrator of the story gives us most of the lines. He says:

"He went to school with the devil, from his childhood to the end of his life."

"His religion hung as a cloak in his house, and was never seen on him when he went abroad."

"He took great delight in praising himself and as much in the praises that others gave him."

These lines are much more forceful than had he said he was wicked, sacrilegious, and egotistical. However, this would have been incomplete had these statements not come to life in his actions. In his wickedness he is shrewd, just as were so many of the monied class of Bunyan's day. Incidents to illustrate are: his keeping "weights to buy with, and weights to sell by"; also his custom of claiming bankruptcy and sending letters to his creditors asking them to take five shillings for a pound in payment of his debt. This he does time and again and laughs at his own shrewdness.

Bunyan adds a touch of realism of his own by adding, "I have known professors³ in my own town to do this".

Mr. Badman's sacrilegiousness is shown in his pretended conversion, his falling to sleep in church, his calling upon the Lord for aid in his illness, and his complete retraction of his promises of repentance as he improves. As Mr. Wiseman puts it, "when pain of body went, with it went pain of mind".

Bunyan allowed this sharpness and shrewdness to bring Mr. Badman financial reward because the men of his day on whom he was modeled did gain money and power in spite of their evil ways. He made him a brute because such men became brutes and, if his character were to be real, he must be portrayed so.

The fact that Bunyan can give us such a clear cut characterization of a man almost entirely through the words of another character is a compliment to his skill of character portrayal. A picture of Badman's character as shown in his attitude toward women is contained in Mr. Wiseman's words concerning Badman's conduct toward his own wife. He says: "He swore at her, treated her brutally, brought prostitutes into her house, laughed at her religion, and at length ordered her to give it up."

Character portrayal as shown by what is said about a character appears also in the Holy War. In this story

3. Members of the church were "professors" of the faith.

Carnal Sense could be anyone of the sensual noblemen of the court, and it is a realistic touch when he breaks prison and, even after Mansoul is restored to Shaddai, "lurks in the dark alleys and dark corners of the town". Just as realistic a character is Unbelief, who "was a nimble Jack; him they could never lay hold of, though they attempted to do it often". The characters of Holy War could not be classed as real, had all those of evil propensity been vanquished. Carnal Sense still lurked in corners in England and Unbelief ran rampant, and though Bunyan yet fought ardently against just such conditions, he realized this fact.

The form of Pilgrim's Progress lends itself readily to classification of bits of character portrayal. Early in the story Timorous and Mistrust relate the horrors of the Slough of Despond, and we gain more of an idea of Christian's courage from his words, "You make me afraid...but I must venture...I will yet go forward", than we could possibly hope to gain through a mere statement that he was a man of bravery.

There is almost a touch of satirical humor in the character of Talkative. Bunyan shows directly that

Words are like leaves and where they most abound
Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found.⁴

Talkative argues for pages, and then we can almost see him as, realizing he is being bested, he seeks refuge in the words, "I cannot but conclude you are some peevish man, not fit to be discoursed with, and so adieu."

4. Pope, Essay on Criticism, lines 308-10.

Hypocrisy does not come through the gate on the way to the city of Zion, but crawls over the wall of Salvation. He emphasizes his hypocritical actions by remarking that he can find some law, even if it were no more than the law of custom, to condone his act, and that he could even "prove it legal by an impartial judge". He shows more of his character when he says, "If we get in, what matter is it which way we get in?".

We can almost smell the perfume and powder and glimpse the flash of a bejeweled snuff box as an aristocratic Mr. By-ends maintains that he is "most zealous when Religion goes in his silver slippers".

The conversation of the jury at Vanity Fair shows grim humor in its satire on the English courts. The remarks of some of the individual members show so clearly their chief characteristics that one does not need their names to identify them. Mr. Blind-man says, "I see clearly that this man is a heretic"; Mr. Life-Loose, "Away with him, he would always be condemning my way"; Mr. Cruelty, "Hanging is too good for him," and immediately sets about devising more horrible punishment. Each member of the jury gives a private verdict against Faithful, and each verdict is based solely upon a personal reaction to the prisoner not a just consideration of the accusations.

Although one man's opinion of another is not necessarily a true portrait of his character, yet it undoubtedly re-

flects some light upon it. Bunyan had a discriminating eye for detail that does much to make his characters real. Instead of saying that Mr. Pliable is a coward, he says of him that "he got out of the mire on that side of the slough which was next to his own house". Realizing garrulousness as a trait to be avoided, he says of Mr. Worldly-wise, "He looked like a gentleman--but he talked much." It seems that some of his most terse statements contain some of his best bits of character, and Talkative, who "like a picture shows best at a distance, but very near is very displeasing", does not need the added paragraphs of his own speeches to stamp his character indelibly on our minds.

One of the best examples of character shown by what is said about him, comes in Bunyan's own remarks concerning Christian as he struggles through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Even the stoutest heart would have quailed at the horrors of this journey, and Christian is no exception. In the very depths of the Valley he hears ahead of him some one chanting, "Though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me." Bunyan gives to us Christian's feelings and thoughts that are human above all doubt. First, he is glad that someone else is afraid. Misery loves company, and so does fear. It is a human element that man does not want to be alone in his physical fear while those around him are apparently untouched by it. Second, he is glad God was there. In times of deepest trouble this knowledge is about

the only comfort that comes to human souls. Third, he is glad that if he hurries, he can find human companionship for the remainder of the journey. This last is the most human trait of all. Man is a gregarious creature and few there are of us who do not long for the comfort of a physical being to share our troubles with us.

Another bit of interesting character depicting is in the second part of Pilgrim's Progress. All his life Bunyan held a deep reverence for woman kind. One notices a perceptible softening in his tone in this second part of his narrative, and the incidents of the journey are suited to the delicacy of woman and the tenderness of youth. Women, in Bunyan's day, did not have the strong sense of individualism found in the woman of today, and it is noteworthy that he sends a protector, Great-heart, with them on most of the journey. Although today Mrs. Martin Johnson could kill a lion in her pathway as readily as could her male escort, it would have been most unnatural character portrayal to have Christiania to do so, hence Mr. Great-heart. Women of the time were sheltered from as many of the horrors of life as was possible, and one notes that the women cross the Slough of Despond in five lines, and Christiania crosses the River of Death in two; while Christian, in all his masculine bravery, suffered each horrible journey through a complete chapter. Bunyan seemed to feel that "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb"⁵,

5. Sterne, A Sentimental Journey

and this obvious tempering of the horrors of the journey for his feminine pilgrims is just one more example of his perfect touch in depicting characters as they were in the seventeenth century.

A discussion of his power of character drawing could not close without some reference to his use of names. There is no reason why the naming of a character to show his dominate trait should detract from his life-likeness of character.

One of our modern critics gives us what he calls a recipe for character portrayal:

"Assign to each person in your story one single trait of character and make him show it by words, actions, and thoughts."⁶

To illustrate this idea, this critic goes on to say that if the innate quality of our character is cruelty and this character walks through a garden he must knock off the heads of the flowers as he passes. Is there any reason why giving the name "Cruelty" to this character should detract from the cruelty of his act? It seems to me that it adds a touch that the name "John" or "James" would lack.

The incident is told⁷ of a modern writer who, in the actual writing of his stories, does not even give names to his characters but uses the name of the predominate traits he assigns to them--Cruelty, Honesty, Vanity, and so on. When the story is finished, he or his secretary goes through

6. Hoffman, Fundamentals of Fiction Writing, p. 173.

7. Ibid., p. 174.

the manuscript, strikes out the names of traits, and gives each character whatever name meets general requirements.

This use of character depicting names is successfully used in later novelists, for examples Fielding and Goldsmith, and certainly is not a detriment to the reader in his seeing the character of a Mr. Allworthy or Mrs. Mantrap.

Looking back over this analysis of the technique of character drawing in Bunyan's works, we find a distinct quality of life-likeness in his portrayal. In his own remarks and the remarks of his characters about each other, in the words they themselves say, and in the things they do, we must admit that his characters are such that "If we prick them, they bleed; if we tickle them, they laugh". This ability of character drawing, in addition to his plot structure, is one more proof of Bunyan's place in the ancestry of the novel.

Chapter III

Description

Not only in plot and character portrayal is Bunyan's craftsmanship shown, but also in Saintsbury's third requisite of the novel, description. Bunyan has not the "stained glass window" technique of Malory or the arresting color descriptions of Ruskin. His descriptive power holds more of the quality of an etching--only those strong identifying lines that are necessary to produce a picture are used. His whole power seems directed toward producing a picture in the reader's mind; a picture that has no confusing detail, no glaring colors, but a picture that must produce a moral lesson. We cannot put our finger upon such descriptive phrases as "a slip of an apricot moon" or "sunset soaking like wine into the hills" which are typical of the sensuous rhythm of the modern age. Rather his descriptions are so natural that they seem ordinary; nevertheless they give us the picture Bunyan wants.

The setting of the story Pilgrim's Progress is an excellent example of this description. No where could we find a more simple picture than that of a man clothed in rags, a book in his hand, a burden on his back, and his face turned from his own home. Let us see what this simple description tells us. The word "rags" tells his social and financial state as clearly as if the author had told in

detail the appearance of his home, his family, his surroundings, and his clothing piece by piece. The burden on his back is all that is needed to show the weight of his sins under which he labors, and the book in his hand tells more eloquently than any words his strong belief in the guiding power of God. Three words to present a clear cut picture--rags, burden, book--no wonder even the peasant could follow his story with the same success as the scholar.

This simplicity is the keynote to all the descriptive power of his works. Bunyan has taken his heavenly descriptions almost word for word from the Bible, and here we find that the words of the Scriptures are scarcely distinguishable from his own. For the benefit of his neighbors, Christian describes the Celestial City, and the Biblical language is notable. Heaven contains seraphims and cherubims¹; the angels wear golden crowns²; holy virgins play on golden harps³; and all clothed in garments of immortality⁴. Unquestionably Bunyan was writing only for his own age. Little did he dream that his works would come to be translated into every known language, and be sold in every known province of the world, hence his description of a literal, concrete heaven in which the people of his time believed.

1. Isa. 6: 2; I Thess. 4: 16, 17; Rev. 5: 11.

2. Rev. 4: 4.

3. Rev. 14: 1-5.

4. II Cor. 5: 2.

A similar use of Biblical description is the day of judgment as presented by the Interpreter to Christian.⁵ This descriptive passage is too lengthy to be quoted here, but even the most casual reading of the passage reveals that it abounds in concrete images, and is given with utmost simplicity. The black heavens, the sound of the trumpet, the angel in the clouds, the opening of the graves, the Book of Life in the hands of God, and the burning lake for the wicked present a picture that the humble puritan of the seventeenth century could grasp. The author's division of good and evil as the separation of wheat from chaff needs no explanation to the tillers of the land, as were these neighbors of his. The humble man of the soil demands that his tragedies be strong ones. He needs thunder, lightening, flame, and physical tortures for the damned. He has no conception of exquisite mental torture, and would not understand it. All the horrifying descriptions of Bunyan's are written in just such terms.

Several of his descriptions of such scenes have become almost classic. His description of the Valley of the Shadow of Death that is "a wilderness, a land of deserts and pits, a land of drought, and of the shadow of death" might well be copied word for word in a modern tourist guide to describe "The Devil's Playground"⁶. The horrible death of Faithful when "first they scourged him, then they

5. Pilgrim's Progress, Peerless Edition, 1892, p. 53.

6. Desolate spot in northwestern Arizona, now a national monument.

buffeted him, then they lanced his flesh with knives; after that they stoned him with stones, then pricked him with their swords, and last of all they burned him to a stake" holds all the horrible detail of a Spanish Inquisition, yet the words are simple Saxon words that any man could grasp. 'Scourge', 'knives', 'stones', 'sword', 'burn' are words that etched a clear picture on the minds of the reader, a picture that makes a wholly suitable background for the action of the story.

The pleasures of the peasant were few. The beauty of nature, the enjoyment of music, and the physical comfort of food and shelter comprised most of them. In the descriptions of his Delectable Mountains, his Palace Beautiful, and his Celestial City he presents just such simple ideas. "The pleasant mountainous country, beautified with woods, vineyards, fruits of all sorts, flowers also, with springs and fountains" are England. Typically English, too, are the hedges and the by-paths, the "meadows where the air is pleasant", the shepherd boy "who doth sing his artless song", the "country birds that, in the springtime, sing all day long in a most curious, melodious note", and "the good estates of laboring men". Bunyan had never been beyond the boundaries of his own country, and of necessity his nature descriptions must concern themselves with landscapes as he saw them around him, or with Biblical nature.

We have several examples of this later type. Here Bunyan comes nearer reaching a descriptive power that contains color or vividness than he does in his general descriptions.

For example:

"The doctrine of the gospel is like the dew and the small rain that distilleth upon the tender grass, wherewith it doth flourish, and is kept green."

"Christians are like the several flowers in a garden that have upon each of them the dew of heaven, which being shaken with the wind, they let fall their dew at each other's roots."

Here his descriptive pictures have a definite Pre-Raphaelite⁷ attitude. One gets the sense of the moral quality of the description, equally, with the sense of the beautiful. These examples are much less readily found than are more simple and less figurative descriptions.

It is a difficult task for even the best craftsman to present a composite picture of such a heterogeneous group as we find at Vanity Fair. Bunyan here uses the same touch of simplicity that we find in his less detailed descriptions. He depicts the merchandise marts with a well-chosen list of their wares, a list that is descriptive in itself--titles, kingdoms, lusts, bawds, lives, blood, bodies, souls, gold, pearls. He gives us the background for these marts by merely naming the streets--French Row, Italian Row, Spanish Row, etc. With just such concrete words he sketches for us block upon block of a pleasure mad, worldly Vanity Fair.

In the preceding chapter we spoke of the softened treatment in character in the second part of Pilgrim's Progress. This is shown also in his descriptive passages of this section. There is an almost feminine touch in some

7. A movement, in the nineteenth century, to return to realistic art that had in it the element of morality as well as beauty.

of his passages, and we find here an understanding of a woman's soul that was not often shown in the written fiction before the time of Richardson. The letter handed to Christiania "smelt after the manner of the best perfumes; also it was written in letters of gold". The descriptive parables hold nothing of the frightening aspect of the tortured and damned souls that Christian met. Here is presented the spider, who toiling diligently with her hands can dwell in a king's palace as easily as she can in a hovel, teaching the dignity of labor. Christiania is led also through the garden and is shown the flowers "diverse in stature, in quality, color, and smell", yet they remain where the gardener has set them and quarrel not one with the other". Bunyan himself seems to realize the chastened nature of these scenes, and, as they leave the garden, the Interpreter remarks, "I lead you where such things are, because you are women, and they are easy for you."

Near the close of the story Christiania is given a golden anchor as her passport into the Celestial City; her Valley of Humiliation causes her to cry, "Behold how green this valley is, also how beautified with lilies." For them he creates a charming Beulah Land, one "where the children could gather nosegays, and where also grew camphire, with spikenard, and saffron, calamus, and cinnamon, with all the trees of frankincense, myrrh, and aloes". Truly charming is the nature of a man who "beautifies with lilies" the sordid paths his feminine characters, through necessity, must tread.

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Substantial plot structure, an ability to portray character, and a descriptive power almost startling in its simplicity need only the added quality of dialogue to make good a claim for Bunyan's place in the history of English fiction.

Chapter IV

Dialogue

Literature that has plot, character portrayal, and description can still be lifeless and far from the complete structure of the novel without the addition of the necessary element of dialogue. Put adequate words into the mouth of a character, and what before was a puppet becomes a living person. In the chapter on character, although I discussed at some length the revelation of character by dialogue, and in this chapter, devoted entirely to dialogue, shall devote most of the discussion to other results of the power of conversation, yet I could not begin such a discussion without some further emphasis of that essential purpose of dialogue in fiction, character revelation. Taking no more examples than those quoted in the previous chapter, we can readily see that, with the exception of action, no other element so strongly marks a character as what he says.

A few additional examples to those used in chapter two will show this power of character revealing dialogue. Mr. Brisk is talking with Mercy concerning the fact that in all her spare moments she sews on various garments. He says:

Mr. Brisk: "And what cans't thou earn a day?"

Mercy: "I do these things not for money, but that I may be, in good works, laying up in store for myself a good foundation against the time to come, that I may lay hold on eternal life."

Mr. Brisk: "Why, prithee, what dost thou do with them?"

Mercy: "Clothe the naked."

Christian, stopping at the foot of a hill where he finds men sleeping, awakens them to warn them of their danger. The short character-revealing speeches are sufficient to identify them without their allegorical names.

Christian: "If he that is going about like a roaring lion¹ comes by, you will certainly become a prey to his teeth."

Simple: "I see no danger."

Sloth: "Yet a little more sleep."

Persumption: "Every tub must stand upon its own bottom."

We find character equally as well revealed in the words of Mr. Money-Love:

"Suppose a minister, a worthy man, possessed of but a very small benefice, has in his eye a greater, more fat a plumb by far, and has an opportunity for getting it, by altering some of his principles; for my part, I see no reason why a man may not do this."

In these revelations of character, we must consider the ease and naturalness of the language itself. Clearness as a result of simplicity is a virtue, and in the direct words of Bunyan's speakers we find that same quality that we found in his descriptions, words so simple that they are almost ordinary. The dialogue in his works, in its revelation of character, would of necessity be of this type. We find no

1. "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." I Peter, 5: 8.

character to whom a complex, intricate sentence structure, or an overwhelming vocabulary would have been natural. Bunyan's characters are peasant types, and they speak simple, peasant language.

I would not minimize one of the chief purposes of dialogue by not discussing it further in this chapter, but I feel that I have shown Bunyan's skill in this field in the examples of character-revealing speeches of Christian, Mr. Badman, Talkative, Hypocrisy, By-ends, Blind-man, Live-loose, and Cruelty in the second chapter, and in the examples of Mercy, Simple, Sloth, Presumption, and Money-love in this chapter.

The second great purpose of dialogue is to advance action. The story of The Life and Death of Mr. Badman is made up almost entirely of the direct words of Mr. Wiseman and Mr. Attentive, and provides an excellent means to test Bunyan's power to advance action by dialogue. The crises of this story make an almost perfect curve of rising and falling action. Using only the direct words of Mr. Wiseman and Mr. Attentive, we find that the career of the scoundrel Mr. Badman advances logically. These crises in his life rise in importance from lying, stealing, reading "filthy romances", wastefulness of money, marriage for money, and illicit business relations, to achievement of power, which is the height of the rising action, when Mr. Wiseman says of him, "Among men of his same mind and principles he was chief." From this point we find the falling action as readily advanced. Mr. Wiseman presents the death of Bad-

man's wife, his subsequent marriage to a vile woman, his added sins in business transactions, added vileness in morals, and serious illness and death. It is impractical to give the complete dialogue of all these crises, but two or three examples should suffice to show more clearly this power to advance action.

Mr. Wiseman: "He was so addicted to lying that his parents could not distinguish when he was telling the truth. He would invent, tell, and stand to the lies which he invented, with such an audacious face, that one might read in his very countenance the symptoms of a hard and desperate heart."

Mr. Attentive: "Surely it was not the fault of his parents. Were they not much dejected at the beginnings of their son? Did they not offer counsel and correction?..."

Mr. Wiseman: "Lying was not his only fault. He took to pilfering and stealing. He robbed his neighbour's orchards; he picked up money if he found it lying about."

Mr. Attentive: "Was he not apprehended in these crimes?"...

Mr. Wiseman: "He had come to the edge of ruin. He must repair his fortune by some means or other. The easiest way was by marriage."

Mr. Attentive: "It is a practice often followed by rogues."

In Pilgrim's Progress we also find excellent examples of action being advanced by dialogue. The first crisis in the story comes when Christian reaches the Slough of Despond. Pliable, a neighbor of his, has started on the journey with him. Not over two lines in this incident are given over to description. Bunyan depends entirely upon the dialogue of the two men to present his action. Christian's cry, "I sink,"

Pliable's frightened insistence on knowing where Christian is, and Christian's bewildered reply, "I do not know," with Pliable's final remark as he turns deserter, "You shall possess the country alone for me," are the only means we have of following this first bit of action in the story, and they are adequate. Their words show the terrible journey through the muck and mire more dramatically than a descriptive passage could have done. This same dramatic use of dialogue I shall note later in the discussion of the great scenes of his works, but in this particular incident it is worth noting, for the short, terse statements that make for dramatic situations are used to advance the action, and are immediately followed by a speech of some length by Mr. Help, in which we find none of this quality. Here the long speech is used, as it is throughout Bunyan's works, to present the moral lesson that rises from the previous scene. We find no action in these lengthy speeches, and Bunyan uses them to present his own philosophies and standards of living that grow out of action in his stories. However, we do not find that these interpolated moralizing speeches detract from the action, for they are so interwoven in plot.

Let us examine one other incident of this power to advance action by dialogue. From the conversation of Christian and Hopeful, we follow the attack by Giant Despair, their imprisonment in Doubting Castle, the punishment they endure, and their escape by means of the key promise. Add to their conversation that of Giant Despair and his wife, and one could construct the entire action of the incident without a

single added descriptive or explanatory phrase.

Dialogue often serves a purpose of presenting previous incidents which we must know for an understanding of the story. Bunyan makes use of this purpose of dialogue in a scene of the Holy War. From the conversation of Diabolus and his fallen angels we get the story of their banishment from heaven and their discovery of the town of Mansoul in the Continent of Universe. We learn that the palace² of Shaddai himself is the place desired by Diabolus, and that the walls³ of Mansoul contain five gates⁴ Eargate, Eyegate, Mouthgate, Nosegate, and Feelgate, which are the only means of entrance. The story proper begins with the attack of Diabolus, but without this previous dialogue it would be difficult to understand the incidents that follow.

The repetition of previous incidents by dialogue comes also in Pilgrim's Progress. At the Palace Beautiful Christian is engaged in conversation by three maidens, Piety, Prudence, and Charity. Piety says, "Talk with us of all things that have happened to you in your pilgrimage." Following the question and answer method, Christian reveals many trivial incidents that had happened along the way that were not told to us as we followed him in his pilgrimage. Bunyan also uses this conversation to deliver to us many moral precepts in the words of the three maidens.

2. The heart.

3. The body.

4. The five senses.

In the story Life and Death of Mr. Badman we find examples of dialogue growing out of a situation. When Mr. Wiseman relates incidents of Mr. Badman's propensity for swearing, Mr. Attentive retaliates with the story of Dorothy Mately, who was punished by God for just such a sin. In like manner many of the incidents told by Mr. Wiseman of the diabolical deeds of Mr. Badman call to mind similar incidents pertinent to the lives of the narrator and his companion, and there are many reminiscences in dialogue.

Great scenes of fiction are aided greatly by dialogue. The direct words of a speaker give us more of his emotions, his reactions, even his actions than any account in the third person can give. There are two outstanding scenes in Pilgrim's Progress that are excellent examples of this point, the scene at Vanity Fair, and Christian and Hopeful's crossing of the Valley of the Shadow of Death. These two scenes are probably the best known in the story and the most often discussed. Examining the dialogue in these incidents, we find that it is a strongly contributing cause of this greatness. On their entrance to the fair, Christian and Faithful are seized and brought before the judge. The rest of the chapter presents the trial, which is entirely in dialogue. Here the remarks of the three witnesses, Envy, Superstition, and Pickthank, with the added remarks of the jury, not only reveal character and advance action, but also present one of the most satirical indictments on the English courts that we have in literature.

A little humor arises in the dialogue when Envy begins his speech without taking the oath, and, when the omission is discovered, stops only long enough to take the oath and then takes up his speech where he was interrupted. Humor shows also in the words of the judge who says never a word during the testimony of Envy and Superstition, but when Pickthank insinuates that the men have attacked the judge himself in their remarks, the judge shouts the epithets "runagate, heretic, and traitor" at the prisoners. Faithful takes the stand in their defense, and his plea might easily be almost the same plea that Bunyan made in his own defense when arraigned before the courts of England. Each accusation of the three witnesses is answered in turn, and he closes with the fiery remark directed at the judge himself that he is "more fit for a being in hell than in this town and court, and so the Lord have mercy on my soul". These words of course mean Faithful's death. One is apt to recall at this place Bunyan's famous words at his own trial. When offered freedom if he would cease preaching, he said, "Though I were released from prison today, I would preach again tomorrow, by the help of God." I have discussed in the chapter on character the conversation of the jury whose condemnation of Christian and Faithful is the climax of this scene. Here we find again this dramatic sense, noticed before at the Slough of Despond, depicted by short sentences. No member of the jury speaks over a dozen words, yet each sentence is a dramatic surge of rising action that ends in the death of Faithful.

Looking back over the dialogue in this crisis, in the story, we find that in this one scene dialogue has revealed character, advanced action, portrayed emotion, satire, and humor, and added dramatic power. Add to this the fact that it is presented in naturalness of speech that is typical of the people Bunyan knew, and we do not wonder that this is one of the great scenes of the story.

In the denouement of the story, the crossing of the River of Death presents equal skill in dialogue. The entire trip is presented almost entirely in the direct words of Hopeful and Christian. Here short sentences give us that same sense of suppressed dramatic interest we found in the scene of the jury. The language presents action; the expressions of Christian are natural expressions of a man who, realizing he is on the last lap of a most difficult journey, is fighting doubt, fear, and terror, yet is sustained by a divine Hope. The exact words of the scene, depleted of qualifying phrases, are worth repeating.

They then addressed themselves to the water; and Christian began to sink, and crying out to his good friend Hopeful, he said,

Christian: "I sink in deep waters of the River of Death; the billows go over my head; all His waves go over me. Selah."

Hopeful: "Be of good cheer my brother; I feel the bottom and it is good."

Christian: "Ah! my friend, the sorrows of death have compassed me about; I shall not see the land that flows with milk and honey."

Hopeful: "Brother, I see the Gate and men standing by to receive us."

Christian: "It is you, it is you they wait for. You have been hopeful ever since I knew you."

Hopeful: "And so have you." . . .

Christian: "Oh, I see Him again; and He tells me, 'when thou passeth through the waters I shall be with thee'."

Thus they got over.

In this second great scene the dialogue is particularly rich in connotative words. "River of Death" means more than a flowing stream of water. It suggests darkness, monsters of the deep, coldness, and fear. "Sorrows of death" bring to mind tears, funerals, lost hope, and sad music. The two words "milk and honey" used together draw a picture of Paradise, Beulah Land, or some form of a Utopia. The "Gate" holds more than the dictionary meaning of its nominal use. Capitalized, it can signify an entrance to heaven, salvation, pearly gates, or a means of escape. This intense connotative nature of the dialogue does much to make it a vital part of Bunyan's fictional style.

In one scene we find Bunyan sadly lacking in the power of dialogue. This is in the love story of Mercy and Matthew. Like Jane Austen he seems to feel that one should close the door on the intimate conversation of love. One of Matthew's smaller brothers makes the suggestion that his brother marry, and Gaius, their host, accepts for Mercy. One almost feels that the dialogue of this scene is so detached and impersonal that it might well have been omitted from the story.

Finally, let us note the terseness of the dialogue.

Bunyan's characters never linger; once they have said what is needed to advance the story, they depart; and, in the case of most of the characters, never enter the story again. The speeches of the characters are usually very brief, and the fact that they must do their bit for the story in the short time they have to speak seems to make Bunyan determined that every word must count.

Summing up Bunyan's ability to use the medium of dialogue in his stories, we find that through dialogue he reveals character, advances action, presents previous happenings necessary to the story, and adds dramatic interest. Moreover, his dialogue is presented in a terse form that contains no excess wordage.

Plot structure, character portrayal, descriptive power, and competent use of dialogue show, on the part of Bunyan, a masterly craftsmanship that makes it impossible not to see his relationship to the evolution of the novel.

Conclusion

In the preceding pages it has not been my intention to make any claim that Bunyan was a finished novelist. The novel as a definite form of fiction was not to come for a hundred years. Before this finished product could be evolved, however, there must be those beginners in the field whose use of the technical principles of fiction would make possible such novels as Richardson or Fielding produced.

Bunyan's use of allegory should not blind people to the fact that he may claim a place in the ancestry of the novel. We find all the aspects of novel craftsmanship in his works, and one has only to make the same study of Lyly's Euphues, Sidney's Arcadia, or even the novels of Mrs. Behn, that I have made of Bunyan's works to see that he has a secure place in the history of fiction.

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