

OUTLINE OF UNCLE CHRISTOPHER
 RAWDON'S LIFE, FROM A PAMPHLET
 WRITTEN BY THE REV. J. H. THOM
 AND MR. I. P. G. SMITH.

Christopher Rawdon was born at Halifax, 13th April, 1780. His father, C. R., was the sixth of the name in direct succession of a family that had lived at Bilbrough, near York, for many generations. He had settled at Halifax as a merchant and manufacturer of woollens, and being gifted with remarkable energy and force of character, he formed large schemes, and in the course of a few years established himself at Underbank, in the romantic and at that time secluded valley of Todmorden, where he erected mills on an extensive scale. Christopher, his son, was sent at the age of seven to a school at Orvin, a retired village near Bienne, in Switzerland. There he remained for three years, acquiring a facility in speaking French, which he retained through life. On his return he was placed with Mr. Catlow, who had a school of great repute at Mansfield. Business at that period took his father from time to time to Portugal, and on one occasion, while waiting wind-bound at Falmouth, the waiter told him there was a foreign gentleman also waiting for weather to

Bilbrough

sail North. This turned out to be a Sen. Corrie de Paiva, from Lisbon. The two spent the evening together, and conversing on the advantages of giving children early in life a knowledge of foreign languages, Mr. Rawdon mentioned the custom in Switzerland for parents in the German and French cantons to exchange children. The idea greatly pleased Sen. de Piava, so that he suggested an exchange of sons from Halifax and Lisbon. Mr. Rawdon hesitated, but in the early morning, Sen. de Paiva being able to leave, he went to Mr. Rawdon's bedroom, and urged him to decide, so that Mr. Rawdon wrote:—
 “Dear Wife,—Deliver to the bearer thy first-born.—CHRISTOPHER RAWDON.”

And in due time this small document was presented to Mrs. Rawdon, who knew her husband's decision of character too well to hesitate a moment, though this was the first intimation she had of the arrangement at Falmouth. A servant was despatched to Astley, the country home of his grandfather, and the boy was handed over to Senr. de Paiva, who took him to Lisbon, and kept him as one of his own children for a year, after which Christopher was again under Mr. Catlow's care. The grandfather must have been very peculiar, for I have heard Aunt Rawdon tell many stories about him. One that he took a bet of £100 that he would go from Halifax to London and only spend a shilling, and the story ran that he won his bet by buying an ass in milk, spending his shilling on bread, riding the ass by day,

sleeping in the fields, and selling his ass at his journey's end.

Uncle Christopher Rawdon and his brother James entered their father's extensive business, and worked in the mills as hard as any of the paid hands, the hours of attendance being the same for the young masters. It was at this period that the brothers began, at mealtimes and when the work of the day was over, to cultivate the musical talents that distinguished the family, the exercise of which afforded delight to the latest stage of life and made the brothers' hospitable houses, the resort of professionals and amateurs at a time when the taste for music was little developed in Liverpool, and a scientific knowledge of it was rare indeed. At the age of 27 Mr. Rawdon went to Portugal for the business of purchasing wool in the interior, and was the first to open an establishment for the washing of wool; hitherto it had always been shipped to England with all its impurities. He was much esteemed and respected at Extremoz, and lived there for many years, 13 in all, only paying short visits to England. He entered into the life of the people, and was extremely popular. So much was he esteemed that the banditti who infested the roads between Lisbon and the frontier, allowed his mules, which were often known to carry large sums of money, to pass unharmed. The French invasion of the Peninsular often gave him exciting times, and on one occasion when sailing to England his ship was attacked

by a French privateer. The captain was seriously ill, and Mr. Rawdon took the command, and after a smart action the Frenchman was beaten off. When captured the next day by an English frigate, it was found she had lost 38 of her men. On another occasion he was in a gale off Gibraltar, and great fear was felt of collision with other ships lying near. Mr. Rawdon suggested hanging bags of wool all round their ship, which was done, and she is said to have escaped safely. In October, 1821, he married Charlotte, the daughter of Rawdon Briggs, at Halifax, gave up Portugal, let the mills at Underbank, and with his brother James took up the business in Liverpool of general merchants, Christopher occupying Elm House, which his father had built. Both brothers took the liveliest interest in all questions affecting the improvement of the people and the growth of political and religious freedom. In the struggle for the repeal of the Corn Laws, both took an active part, and contributed largely to the League. Christopher was a magistrate and Town Councillor.

He was emphatically a Christian gentleman, and a favourite saying of his was, "No man can be a gentleman unless actuated by the Christian maxim, 'Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you.'" And this principle he carried out in all his life. The last years of his life were literally devoted to the establishment of "The Ministers' Stipend Augmentation Fund." Deep seated was his detestation of priestly influ-

ence; he held in strong respect and reverence the legitimate functions of a minister of religion. The legal decision in the Hewley case, in which orthodox Dissenters successfully attempted to exclude their fellow Dissenters from an open Trust, he regarded a direct branch from the bitter root of religious intolerance as embodied in Creeds and in Establishment, and it became one of the cravings of his heart to do something to repair the injustice and stop the mischief that might ensue. In 1853 he made known his proposal by issuing a prospectus referring specially to the loss by its former beneficiaries, of the Hewley Fund. He proposed to replace this Fund (which had been a bequest by a single individual) on a scale suitable to the united efforts of an entire religious body, to raise the sum of £50,000 to be vested in Trustees under conditions securing the revenue mainly for the augmentation of inadequate stipends. Only those who have, like myself, heard Mr. Thom and my aunt, Mrs. Rawdon, tell of all this case, have any idea of the tact, the patience, the perseverance, the desire to give everyone their full honour, the courtesy and dignity he brought to this task. He started with the hope of 20 subscribers of £1,000 each, he and his brother James being each a donor of that sum. Other early names were J. P. Heywood, George Holt, the Misses Yates, and Richard Yates, Richard Lumb of Halifax, C. H. Dawson and his two sisters each a thousand, and others I knew in my girlhood. A Mr. Hibbert left a

large sum, which largely caused the removal of Manchester New College to London to be connected with University College and the London University, and Mr. Rawdon felt this as a noble example, making him still more anxious for his own scheme. In 1856 he had the happiness to see Deed of Constitution of the Fund executed, but Mr. James Rawdon had died in '55. His widow and Mr. C. R. both gave a second thousand. "Mr. Christopher Rawdon" (wrote Mr. Thom) "belonged to a class of men whose characters were formed under trials of fire and contumely, of which the younger men of this generation know comparatively nothing. They laboured, and we have entered into their labours, they are fast passing from us; but the savour of their spirits is the richest inheritance we have. We must show ourselves worthy to take up their mantle by holding in living love and honour those of them who are still with us, to give us the guidance of their wisdom, the support of their tried fidelity, and by guarding with tender reverence the memory and example of those who with us as of yesterday now speak but from the grave. . . ."

A monument was erected to Mr. Rawdon's memory, which I well remember at Renshaw Street (Liverpool) Chapel, and on the opposite wall one to Henry Roscoe.

I have written out this little sketch of Mr. Rawdon partly from memory of talks with Auntie Rawdon and partly from the pamphlet I name,

which was lent me for a few days by Cousin Tilly Hardy, wife of General Hardy. She was the only daughter of Rawdon Briggs of Halifax, and favourite niece of Aunt C. Rawdon, who was sister to her father.

I felt I should like my children to know something of their father's uncle, and that my son Christopher should value the name we were especially asked to give him.

The three brothers—Christopher, James, and Joshua—were all somewhat eccentric. It is said they were all rather gourmands. They liked to go to market for their fish, and carry it home, and on one occasion James was met by a friend, who said cod should be boiled in a silver-lined saucepan. Shortly after he was seen with fish in one hand and saucepan in the other. Being fond of guava jelly or cheese; it is said a ton! was ordered by mistake of clerk. Mr. and Mrs. James disputed if they should have a haunch of venison or a venison pasty, and as they could not settle the question, they had a haunch of venison at one end of the table and pasty at the other. These and many other anecdotes I had from Aunt Rawdon.