THE CASTLETON PARISH LIBRARY.

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THE substantial collection of books housed in a vestry at the Church of St. Edmund, Castleton, receives mention in several of the Derbyshire county histories and guide-books. As far back as 1853 it was the subject of a (largely inaccurate) report in *Notes and Queries*; and it is referred to in a detailed account of "Old Parochial Libraries in England and Wales" which T. W. Shore contributed to the *Transactions* of the first annual meeting of the Library Association in 1879. The manner in which the library came to be bequeathed to the village by an eccentric vicar, the Rev. Frederick Farran (1747-1817), is reasonably familiar; and since nothing much can be added to what is already known about Farran's life and character, there is little point in repeating information that has been available since the days of Stephen Glover's *History and Gazetteer of the County of Derby* (1833) and Micah Hall's *New Castleton Guide* (1839).

Very little attention, however, seems to have been paid to the actual contents of the Castleton parish library; as far as can be discovered, no one has ever gone to the trouble of drawing up an inventory such as that given in Eastwood's *History of Ecclesfield* in respect of a similar collection at Bradfield. Local historians have often alluded to the Great Bible and the Breeches Bible still exhibited in a glass case on the north side of the vestry in St. Edmund's Church; but the main body of Frederick Farran's library has been more than once dismissed rather casually as so much "old fashioned theology". The purpose of this essay is to draw attention to some of the other items which make this an unusually interesting private library, and to suggest that in the general cultural history of north Derbyshire the "Vicar's Library Castleton" (to quote Farran's bookplate) is worthy of more detailed consideration than it has yet received.

That the Rev. Mr. Farran was in the habit of lending books to the villagers of Castleton is evident from the fact that some of the volumes bear the inscription "bought for the use of my parishioners". In this he may have been carrying on a tradition begun by his predecessors, for we know from the Diary of Edward Bagshawe, Vicar of Castleton 1723-1769, that such works as *The Whole Duty of Man,* the *British Magazine* and the *Christian Directory* were borrowed by friends and parishioners.[1] Farran's somewhat paternal attitude towards his flock is seen in the numerous manuscript notes written inside the books he particularly valued. One instance of this occurs in the third edition of William Law's *Practical Treatise of Christian Perfection* (1734) where Farran wrote: "To my parishioners — Read good solid practical books tending to promote *holiness of Life,* many of the *Methodist* books (the *Arminian Magazine* and many others that I have read) tend to nourish delusions, conceit, raptures, and I know not what of sinful presumption, and false confidence . . ." Lent out "at the Discretion of the Vicar" — as a brass plaque in the chancel informs us — the contents of Farran's library were added to after his death by his sister Frances Mary Hamilton and her husband George James Hamilton, with the object of making available to the people of Castleton a workable lending library of good general quality. Some accounts state that there were at one time as many as two thousand books in this collection; but a figure of eleven or twelve hundred seems a more likely one. At this time of day it is impossible to make a really reliable estimate; but the library was at any rate large enough to warrant the compilation of a fairly detailed catalogue, and it is from this that the probable size of the bookstock can be estimated. The catalogues (for the original copy was duplicated) also enable us to determine the nature of the additions made to the collection after Farran's death. How full these catalogues are it is difficult to say: and it is probable that some items may have been deliberately omitted. But we do know that during the 1820's and '30's a good number of S.P.C.K. publica-

[1] See J. Charles Cox's article in *D.A.J.,* II, January 1880.

tions were acquired, and that between 1832 and 1844 several issues of the *Penny Magazine* and the *Saturday Magazine* were in circulation. But apart from the catalogues there also exists a borrowers' book, and from this we can gain some idea of the use to which the Castleton Library was put after Farran's own time. The entry for the month of November 1857, for example, shows that on an average two or three books were taken out each week, the weekly issue of books presumably being supervised by a librarian in charge. During the year 1852 there were 152 borrowings from the library; in 1862, 73 books were taken out; in 1872 the total had dropped to four; and in 1882 only two volumes are recorded as having been issued on loan. The last entry of all occurs in February 1887, when George Wood borrowed *Sacred Biography* — though there is nothing to show that this was ever returned! By the end of the last century, it would seem, the library was falling into disuse. But if, as appears from the sources of information still available, it had an active life of sixty or seventy years, it fulfilled the purpose which Frederick Farran and his executors intended it to serve.

In his Memoir of William Wood, the Eyam poet and journalist, Peter Furness recalls that in Wood's young days (*c.* 1820) "The advent of cheap literature had not yet arrived, books were scarce, libraries a long distance from Eyam, Mechanics' Institutions did not exist . . ."[2] The same, of course, was true for the neighbouring village of Castleton. Previous to the construction of the Chinley and Sheffield railway line, Castleton was very much cut off from the outside world. Its comparative isolation is commented upon in a letter from Hartley Stuttard to the Rev. J. H. Brooksbank (included among the Brooksbank Manuscripts in the Sheffield Central Reference Library). Brooksbank had evidently written to Stuttard requesting his reminiscences of Castleton; and in the letter in question Stuttard recalls his two years as a schoolmaster there from January 1859 to February (or March) 1861. The letter is dated 1st October, 1907, and the writer says that he finds some difficulty in re-

[2] William Wood, *Tales and Traditions of the High Peak*. Bakewell, 1903.

membering life as it was in a remote Derbyshire village fifty years earlier. Yet one of the things that he could recollect was the parish library, and the use he made of it. "Winter evenings", he wrote, "would have been awfully dull for a young man just from a two years' residence in College, but fortunately there was an old but excellent library in the Vestry, although it was little appreciated or read by the Castletonians . . ." We have seen that effective interest in the library was dwindling during the 1860's and '70's; but it is curious to note from entries made on his behalf in the borrowers' book that, while he lived at Castleton, Hartley Stuttard was fully disposed to address himself to such substantial literature as Hooke's *Roman Empire,* Mapleton's *Advice* and the works of Dr. Johnson. From the records kept over the years one does not gain the impression that many of the *earlier* books were taken out on loan during the mid-nineteenth century: but things like the *Spectator,* Chambers' Encyclopedia, the works of Isaac Watts and Philip Doddridge were borrowed fairly frequently. Whether they were read with due regard to the points made in Farran's manuscript note to Law's *Practical Treatise* it is useless at this stage to enquire.

When Thomas Bateman and his father undertook their search for rare books in the old libraries of Derbyshire (reported in *The Reliquary,* Vol. I, 1860-61), they found very few examples of early Tudor printing in this area. After noticing the 1539 Bible at Castleton, they passed on to other interesting items elsewhere. Yet they ought, surely, to have made some mention of a fine example of Jacobean book-production which forms — apart from the Bibles already spoken of — the earliest volume in Frederick Farran's collection. This is Bishop Francis White's *Replie to Jesuit Fisher's Answere* . . . printed by Adam Islip in 1624, with a magnificently ornate title-page and colophon. This volume, like a copy of William Perkins's *Cases of Conscience* (1635 edition), bears extensive manuscript notes, which may or may not be in Farran's handwriting; we are assured, however — presumably by J. G. Hamilton — that "Traces of my dear Brother-in-Law's pen" may be found in the margins

of Jeremy Taylor's *Unum Necessarium* (1655). Another notable work of the same period is Lancelot Andrewes's *19 Sermons Concerning Prayer* (Cambridge, 1641); and a fair number of the noted seventeenth-century theologians — Thomas Comber, Henry Hammond, Samuel Parker, William Sherlock and Symon Patrick — are well represented. The name of Gilbert Burnet appears many times, but in two particularly interesting connections; first, in association with Stillingfleet (as part-author of a *Relation of a Conference . . .* 1676) and then as the biographer of Sir Matthew Hale (*Life and Death,* 1700). Hale's own *Contemplations Moral and Divine* (1682) is included, and is notable for the sequence of Nativity poems it contains. Practically all of the Castleton books published before 1700 are of a devotional nature; writers like Tillotson, Kettlewell, Sherlock and William Clagett are much in evidence. Yet there are one or two non-religious works, such as John Norris's *Miscellanies* (1692) and John Tyrrell's *Brief Disquisition of the Laws of Nature* (1692); perhaps the most distinguished secular item, from the point of view of typography, is John Adams's *Index Villaris* (1680), an early directory to the English countryside (though of doubtful accuracy, according to most authorities).

The greater part of the Castleton library, of course, dates from the eighteenth century. The books are not exclusively theological; but those which are can be roughly divided into three categories: doctrinal works, explanatory writings, and controversial books and pamphlets. Of the last-named class may be cited many works by the great Newtonian metaphysician, Samuel Clarke, of which a third edition (1711) of his *Being and Attributes of God* (Boyle Lectures, 1704-5) is only one item. Then there are the several defences of Clarke, and criticisms of his work such as the anonymous *Answer to Dr. Clark and Mr. Whiston* (1729). The name of Benjamin Hoadly (*Answer to Snape* and about a dozen other works) recalls the "Bangorian" controversy: and George Rye's *Treatise against the Non-Conforming Non-Jurors* (2 vols. 1720) brings to mind the climate of religious opinion which prevailed after 1688. There are many

works defending the Established Church, such as A Presbyter's *Vindication of the Church of England* in answer to Bishop Pierce (1720), and John Lewis's *Apology for the Clergy of the Church of England* (1711). Sectarian writings are very numerous, from Sherlock's *Preservation Against Popery* (1714) to Thomas Green's *Discourse on Enthusiasm* (1755). And the presence of books like Edward Wells's *Controversial Treatise Against the Dissenters* (6th ed., 1716) and the three-volume *Collection of Cases To Recover Dissenters* (3rd ed. 1718) suggests that Farran was anxious to guard his flock against the seductive attractions of non-conformity. Yet at the same time he realised that there was often much to be praised in the views of those who felt obliged to dissent. Inside John Evans' *Practical Discourse Concerning the Christian Temper* (7th ed., 1773) we find this manuscript note: "Dr. John Evans, Dissenter. A pious, learned, & loyal minister. And with Dodderidge, Watts & Home, is an honour to their church". It is indeed odd to find many volumes by the three last-named writers standing side by side with such works as William Trapp's *Preservative Against Unsettled Notions* (1730).

Those books which offer general explanations of religious and kindred topics are far too numerous to mention. They include such dissertations as James Gardiner's *Practical Exposition of our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount* (4th ed., 1720) and, at a more elementary level, William Lowth's *Directions for the Profitable Reading of the Scriptures* (5th ed., 1769): but along with these are countless sermons, treatises expounding the creeds, and elaborate glosses on sections of the Bible. The "doctrinal" interest in religion is maintained in many learned commentaries on the nature of the Sacraments, the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, the Scripture mysteries, and so on: in this connection one of the most curious of Farran's books is a study by John Scott called *The Holy Scriptural Doctrine of the Divine Trinity* (1754), to which is appended a treatise on the Newtonian philosophy. Among the later eighteenth-century volumes formal expositions of doctrine are supplemented by works on practical piety and general philosophy. The ministerial

office is the subject of many short works, among them Alexander Gerard's *The Pastoral Care* (1799): alongside these we have books like Hannah More's *Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World* (1791), Thomas Gisborne's *Principles of Moral Philosophy* (1789), and Adam Smith's *Essays on Philosophical Subjects,* a Dublin edition of 1795 together with a life of the author by Dugald Stewart. From the last three decades of the century there are also many travel books: Frederick Farran's interests were not, it would seem, confined to a narrow range of enquiry.

On the whole, general literature is not plentiful on the shelves of the Castleton library. A five-volume edition of Pope's *Homer* (1771) and a copy of Macpherson's *Ossian* (1790) almost exhaust the poets — though there are later editions of Gray and Cowper. The library seems to have admitted nothing in the way of prose fiction; the name of Samuel Richardson does appear, but it is as the printer of John Conybeare's *Sermons* (1757), not as the author of *Pamela.* Essays and miscellaneous prose works are fairly plentiful, from the popular scientific writings of William Derham (*Astro-Theology,* 1726, and *Physico-Theology,* 17th ed., 1727) to Locke on *Education* (1745) and the 1793 Edinburgh edition of *The Spectator* in eight volumes, with lives of the authors by Robert Bissett. Literary critical works include John Constable's *Reflections on Style,* printed by Lintot in 1731, Thomas Gibbons's *Rhetorick* (1767), Lord Kames's *Elements of Criticism* (1769) and Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776). These, however, are outnumbered by biographical writings, such as the *Lives of all the Lord Chancellors . . .* (1712), de Retz's *Memoirs,* Sully's *Memoirs,* Middleton's *Life of Cicero* (1741) and the *British Biography* (1780), of which only volumes 9 and 10 have survived. Apart from these, Farran possessed numerous historical works — Robertson's *History of Scotland* (1759) being about the best — and many detailed studies of chemistry and medicine (e.g. de Fourcroy's *Elements of Natural History and of Chemistry,* 4 vols., 1788, and Thomas Trotter's *View of the Nervous Temperament* (1807). But he seems to have had no interest in antiquarian subjects:

and there is nothing in his library to suggest that he paid much attention to local history.

It has been pointed out that although the Castleton library is for the most part made up of books printed in the eighteenth century, it also contains many additional volumes of a later date. After Farran's death in 1817 about seventy more books were purchased, a good many of them being reprints of older devotional works. Among these, the imprint of the publishing house of Rivington is very common, especially in the case of books by writers like Mrs. Trimmer, Bishop Heber, and J. S. Osterwald (there are also a few earlier S.P.C.K. printings). But in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, Farran or his relatives acquired some notable non-religious books, some of them with excellent illustrations. First among these, perhaps, should be mentioned Thomas Martin's *Circle of the Mechanical Arts* (1818) which is embellished with magnificent engravings: similar in scope — though less ambitious in execution — is George Gregory's *Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* (1807). Marshall's *Gardening* (1805) and Walter Nicol's *Villa Garden Directory* (1814) may be noted along with several books of travel, particularly in post-Revolutionary France, and personal *memoranda*. But to go on listing the Farran collection would be tedious; so in conclusion we may perhaps call attention to two particular aspects of this library: first, its considerable quantity of "local printings", and secondly, a few of its more unusual items.

Among Farran's books are several very good examples of work by well-known seventeenth- and eighteenth-century printers, such as Royston, Dunton, Tonson, Dodsley and Thomas Davies. But there are also a dozen or more volumes printed in British towns other than London. These include Stephen Addington's *Practical Treatise on Afflictions* (Market Harborough, 1779): Francis Hutcheson's *Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy* (Glasgow, 1753): Richard Hay's *Happiness and Rights* (York, 1792): William Gilpin's *Sermons* (Leamington, 1799): Puffendorf's *Laws of Nature and Nations* (Oxford, 1710): Robinson's *16 Discourses* . . . (Cambridge, 1786 — an early example of what later came to

be known as "cottage lectures"): Elizabeth Smith's *Fragments* (Bath, 1810): Rotheram's *Essay on Faith* (Newcastle, 1772): Alexander Duncan's *Devout Communicant* (Berwick-on-Tweed, 1792): John Fawcett's *Advice to Youth* (Halifax, 1799): George Croft's *Short Commentary* (Birmingham, 1797); Job Orton's *Discourses* (Shrewsbury, 1776): and Philip Mornay's *Discourses on Life and Death* (Exeter, 1717). The last-named, incidentally, is one of many translations, chiefly from French authors of the mid-eighteenth century. The most notable foreign book, perhaps, is Bossuet's *Discours sur L'Histoire Universelle,* printed in Amsterdam in 1738.

From such a miscellaneous collection as the Castleton parish library, it is difficult to select a small number of items for particular comment. Yet apart from those volumes already discussed we may draw attention to six titles which are of rather special interest. Three of them shall be merely named; they are Sir Thomas Bernard's *Spurinna, or The Comforts of Old Age* (1816), being dialogues in the Platonic manner on a subject treated in one or two of Farran's other books (e.g. the Marchioness de Lambert's *Essays in Friendship and Old Age,* and Peers' *Companion for the Aged*); an undated folio edition of Foxe's *Martyrs* with lavish illustrations (probably early nineteenth century); and Edward Welchman's *39 Articles in Latin* (6th edition, 1738), a piece of very bold and unusual typographical design. Of more general interest is a work like Mrs. Margaret Bryan's quarto *Compendious System of Astronomy in Concise and Familiar Lectures* (2nd ed., 1799). This is a very detailed attempt to make astronomy intelligible to young people, Mrs. Bryan being the proprietress of boarding-schools at Blackheath and Margate and the author of other educational works in mathematics and chemistry. Her *Compendious System* contains many ingenious tables, problems and informative engravings, and a frontal illustration showing the authoress with her two daughters: Robert Watt's *Bibliotheca Britannica* lists this volume as costing twenty-seven shillings and sixpence in 1824. Another fascinating volume of much the same date is John Millar's *Observations Concerning the Distinction*

of Ranks in Society (2nd ed., 1773). This treatise by a Professor of Law at Glasgow was celebrated enough in its day to be translated into French and German. It drew the following manuscript note from Frederick Farran: "professor Millar was the son of the Minister of Hamilton, in the county of Lanark, where a Person of the Name of — 'Owen' — is now attempting to subvert the ordinary regulations of Religion & society by a plan of his own, and appears to be at variance with the presbytary (*sic*) of the County in which he has established himself — professor Millar's opinions do not coincide with those of Mr. Owen respecting community of property — &c. &c —". This is followed by a further commendation of Professor Millar (it recalls, strangely enough, an earlier work on the same subject, William Nichols's *Duty of Inferiours Towards Their Superiours* (1701)). But on the score of annotation, the most interesting volume in the whole collection is probably *The Pulpit and Family Bible. Containing, The Sacred Text of the Old and New Testament at large, and the Psalms in Metre used in the Church of Scotland* . . . printed in Edinburgh in 1766. It bears a gilt stamp, "Harriet Farran to the Parish of Castleton", the bookplate indicating that it was formerly Frederick Farran's property. Marginalia appear with the direction in Volume I: "for selected parts of Bible proper for poor and ignorant to read see Watts's Bible". Farran then goes on to list his favourite commentators, namely Patrick, Hammond, Orton, Wells, Whitby, Doddridge, etc., and continues this into the second volume. The Gospels are heavily scored, and at the end (under the date 1802) is drawn up a table of "models", or passages suitable for lessons, sermon texts and so on: there are also many suggested alternative translations. This Bible was evidently a much prized volume in the Farran family; it received a great deal of use: and one notices that the *printed* glosses draw heavily on many of the authors whose works are found in the Castleton library itself.

The library at Castleton Church was not the only one of its kind in this part of the country; other similar collections of books were, until recently, in existence at Bradfield and at Norton, on the outskirts of Sheffield.

But Frederick Farran's library is surely unique in that despite the serious losses it has sustained by misappropriation and actual destruction, it still remains in reasonably good order. It would be a mistake to give the impression that all the books are in fine condition, for many of them stand in need of repair: nevertheless a high percentage of Farran's original library could still be put to use. This is not to say that the contents of the vestry would, under modern conditions, be of much service as a *lending* library. All the same, there may be some point in placing on record the fact that the Castleton collection contains a fair number of printed books of which no other copies are known outside the three or four main libraries of Great Britain.