

THE CLEMENTS.

THE name of Gregory Clement is connected with one of the most important events of English history; with one of those convulsions of a nation that destroy its ancient landmarks and erect new structures upon their ruins; with one of those eras, the prominence and importance of which make new starting points for the religion, the morals, the habits and the politics of a people; with one of the incidents, the causes of which, the means applied and the ends accomplished, have been a theme for historians, and a subject for moralists, ever since the causes, the means and the end, have had an existence.

He was born when the seeds were being sown that produced oppression, bloodshed and revolution. His early life was spent among the contests for power and the lawful resistance of the people. His manhood brought him into contact with those who knew no limit to royal authority, as well as with those who dared to threaten and accomplish their overthrow. His opinions and his character made him prominent among the men who were foremost in placing the government upon a new basis; among those who sat in judgment upon the conduct of their king, and signed the warrant which brought that king to an ignominious death.

The reign of Charles I. as Sovereign of England, from 1625 to 1649, is crowded with the deeds of a people advancing step by step in civil and religious liberty. It is a period in which the vague and ill-defined outlines of the rights of citizens were

coming into contact with the kingly prerogative, and when the latent privileges of the subject, so long abridged, began to show signs of vitality and to bring forth some fruit. In like degree also, the abuse of power became more palpable, and bolder in the accomplishment of its purposes, culminating at last in the overthrow of the government, the execution of the king and the exile of the royal family.

Then followed the Commonwealth, which brought to the surface the extravagance of religious fanaticism and the folly of political bigots, combined with visionary and speculative systems of government, each failing in its turn, and rejected by the people.

The trial of the king brought his judges into notice, who, upon the return of his son to the throne, became the especial objects of punishment. The arrest of Gregory Clement is related in this narrative. It took place about the same time as those of his associates. Then followed the trials of the regicides, the history of which has been faithfully given by Mr. Cobbett in his "State Trials." Portions of these have been herein copied, and may not prove uninteresting to the reader. These trials began at Hick's Hall, Old Bailey, in the county of Middlesex, October 9th, 1660. Twenty-nine persons were indicted by the grand jury; as each was brought to the bar, he was charged. In the case of Gregory Clement, the language was as follows:

Clerk.—"Gregory Clement hold up your hand. How sayest thou? Art thou guilty of the treason whereof thou standest indicted, and for which thou art now arraigned?—or not guilty?"

Clement.—"My Lord, I cannot excuse myself in many particulars; but, as to my indictment as there it is, I plead not guilty."

Clerk.—"How will you be tried?"

Clement.—"By God and the Country."

Clerk.—"God send you a good deliverance."

At this stage of the proceedings much altercation took place between some of the prisoners and the court, in regard to the form and substance of the various charges laid, which occasioned considerable delay and confusion. On the third day

Thomas Harrison, Adrian Scroop, John Carew, John Jones, Gregory Clement and Thomas Scot were brought into court for the purpose of being tried together; but, on account of the trouble in regard to the challenging of jurors, the court determined to try them separately. Near the close of the fourth day's proceedings, Gregory Clement was again brought to the bar, and, being called, retracted his plea of not guilty. Sir Orlando Bridgman, Lord Chief Baron and president of the court, then asked him, as follows:

Lord Chief Baron.—"If you do confess your offence, your petition will be read."

Clement.—"I do, my Lord."

Lord Chief Baron.—"If you do confess (that you may understand it), you must, when you are called (and when the jury are to be charged), you must say, if you will have it go by way of confession, that you may waive your former plea and confess the fact."

Clerk.—"Gregory Clement, you have been indicted of high treason, for compassing and imagining the death of his late Majesty, and you have pleaded not guilty: are you content to waive your plea, and confess it?"

Clement.—"I do confess myself to be guilty, my Lord!"

Clerk.—"Set him aside."

Many of the prisoners followed this example, seeing, as they did, that there was no escape under the ruling of the court and the prejudice of the people. At the close of the several trials, each person convicted received the following sentence:

"That you be led back to the place from whence you came, and from thence to be drawn upon a hurdle to the place of execution; and there you shall be hanged by the neck, and, being alive, shall be cut down and ————, your entrails to be taken out of your body, and (you living) the same to be burnt before your eyes; and your head to be cut off, your body to be divided into four quarters, and head and quarters to be disposed of at the pleasure of the King's Majesty—and the Lord have mercy on your soul."

Barbarous as this sentence may appear, yet it was literally carried out; and many revolting scenes occurred at Charing

Cross, where these sentences were executed, October 17. The next day after being sentenced, Gregory Clement and Thomas Scot were taken on the same sled to the scaffold, disemboweled and quartered in the presence of an immense throng of spectators.

Of the subject of this sketch, it is recorded that "he was very silent both in the time of his imprisonment at Newgate and at the time of his execution at Charing Cross; only it is said that he expressed his trouble (to some of his friends in prison) for yielding so far the importunities of his relations as to plead guilty to the indictment; and, though he spoke little at the place of execution, yet, so far as could be judged by some discerning persons that were near him, he departed this life in peace."

Another historian of the times says, "these victims were hanged, and, before life was extinct, were cut down, and their bowels taken out and burned in their presence. It is said of General Harrison, that, while cutting open his body, he rose up and struck the executioner on the ear."

When Col. Jones, the last victim of that day, was brought to the scaffold, the hangman was so horrified with what was passing around him, that he fell fainting to the ground; while his son, as his assistant, carried out the sentence of the law. Revolting as it was, it reflected the tone of public sentiment at the time, which can only be offered as an explanation, and not as an apology, for such administration of justice.

Ludlow, in his narrative of these dreadful events, says of Gregory Clement: "He was chosen a member of Parliament about the year 1646, and discharged that trust with great diligence; always joining with those who were most affectionate to the commonwealth, though he never was possessed of any place of profit under them. Being appointed one of the commissioners for the trial of the king, he durst not refuse his assistance in that service. He had no good elocution, but his apprehension and judgment were not to be despised. He declared before his death, that nothing troubled him so much as his pleading guilty at the time of his trial to satisfy the importunity of his relations; by which he had rendered himself unworthy to die in so glorious a cause."

Stiles, in his *Lives of the Regicides*, says: "He was a citizen of London—a merchant, and a trader with Spain. He returned to Parliament in 1646. He sat in the trial of Charles I., on January 8, 22, 23 and 29, 1648. He was expelled from Parliament for some misdemeanor, and did not return until after Cromwell's death. He secreted himself in a house near Gray's Inn, and was detected by better eatables being carried there than generally went into such humble habitations, and, upon search being made, he was discovered and arrested May 26, 1660." There was much difficulty in identifying him, until a blind man, who happened to hear him speak, and then said: "That is Gregory Clement: I know his voice."

The Rev. Mark Noble, in his *Lives of the Regicides*, Vol. I, page 145, says of Gregory Clement: "It is probable he was a cadet of a knightly family in Kent, and that Major William Clement in the London militia was his son."

Immediately after the Restoration, those in authority set about the trial and punishment of the judges of the king's father, using the greatest vigilance to prevent their escape from England. A strange feature is that so few seemed to anticipate the certain consequence of remaining within the realm, and fell an easy prey to their enemies. The shadows of coming events could not have been mistaken, and the wonder is that all such as participated in the trial of the king, did not flee from their country and avoid what was sure to follow. Much to the credit of Charles II, but six of those who sat in the trial were executed, while the others were placed in the various prisons of the country, and soon passed into obscurity. The estate of Gregory Clement being confiscated, his family was scattered, and one of his sons, James, and his wife Jane, emigrated to Long Island in the year 1670. The family is extensive in England, and can be traced from before the tenth century down through the various political and religious changes that have occurred in the nation since that time. The wife of William Penn was one of the branches of the family; the Historical Society of Pennsylvania has collected and published some interesting correspondence between the widow of that great man and Simon Clement, her uncle.

James could not have been blessed with much of this world's goods at his first coming, for, in the valuation of estates in Flushing in 1675, where he then lived, he is rated with four acres of land, three cows, two young cattle, and two pigs.¹ The inference is that he was a member of the religious Society of Friends, which inference is strengthened by his subsequent conduct. At the time of the erection of the Friends' meeting house at the place last named, (1695), James Clement prepared the deed for the lot upon which the house was to be built, and recorded the same; for which service he received eleven shillings and four pence. He also did some work about the building, and received in payment a small pittance; all of which appears among the papers of the society still in existence. In 1702, he was one of the grand jury of Queens' county, that was directed, in the charge of the court, to find bills of indictment against Samuel Bownas, an eminent Quaker preacher and one known to all readers of the history of that sect. This the grand jury refused to do; and the refusal led to much bitter controversy between the judge and that body. Friend Bownas was then in prison, and so remained for nearly a year, as the judge hoped that the next jury empaneled would listen to his charge with more respect, and obey his commands.² He fell into a like mistake the second time, and ultimately released his prisoner and abandoned the prosecution. This proceeding was characteristic of Lord Cornbury towards this class of citizens throughout both provinces, and frequently led to trouble between that officer and the people, especially in West New Jersey.

During the year 1676, and while John Fenwick was a prisoner in the fort at New York, Jacob Clement became one of the witnesses to several deeds executed by Fenwick to purchasers in Salem county, N. J.³ This person was probably a brother of James, as it was two years before his son of that name was born. He may have been a resident of that city and have remained there, but his descendants are not known in these latitudes.

James Clement was somewhat of a public man in the affairs of the county wherein he lived, and, so far as can be discovered,

¹ Doc. His. of N. Y., Vol. 2, p 263.

² Thompson's History of Long Island.

³ Salem Records, No. 1.

discharged his duties acceptably. His second wife was Sarah, a daughter of Benjamin and Elizabeth Field. He died in 1724, leaving a will, his wife dying the same year. The names of his children, and the time of their births were as follows: James, born 1670, who married Sarah Hinchman; Sarah, born 1672, who married William Hall, of Salem county, N. J. (second wife); Thomas, born 1674; John, born 1676; Jacob, born 1678, who married Ann Harrison, daughter of Samuel; Joseph, born 1681; Mercy, born 1683, who married Joseph Bates; Samuel, born 1685, and Nathan, born 1687.⁴ The only persons of the family that can be traced to Gloucester county, were Jacob, Thomas, John, Sarah and Mercy, who emigrated from Long Island with the families of Samuel Harrison, John Hinchman and some others, about the year 1700. In a sketch of the history of the Presbyterian Church of West Jersey, made by the Rev. Allen H. Brown, he states that John Clement was employed in 1716, by the Presbytery of Philadelphia, to preach at Gloucester and Pilesgrove; this person was, in all probability, the son of James. If so, he had laid aside his Quakerism and had entered a new field of religious duties, the antipodes of that which he had left. His labors extended over a large territory, which is now occupied by his own and other denominations,—showing by their activity that the religious sentiment of our people has kept pace with their material advancement.

Jacob and Thomas purchased lots at Gloucester and resided there for several years.⁵ Jacob was a shoemaker, and plied his calling in the old fashioned style, going to the dwellings of most his employers to do the work for the family. This was called "cat-whipping," and, like the harvests of our forefathers, generally ended in a hard-cider frolic, accompanied with an all night's dance. These times, like the pleasant traditions that surrounded them, have passed away, and, by reason of modern innovations, may never be renewed.

William Hall, who married Sarah, came to Salem county in 1677. His first wife was Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Pyle. She died in 1699, leaving three daughters. The children of

⁴ Lib. DD, 449.

⁵ Lib. Q, 182.

Sarah were William, born 1701; Clement, born 1706, and Nathaniel, born 1709. From these sons have come some of the most respectable families in West Jersey, at one time holding extensive tracts of real estate. Branches, direct and collateral, may be found in every state in the Union, still retaining the elements of wealth and respectability.

From Jacob, John and Thomas Clement, therefore, must the family name be traced in West New Jersey; which has also spread far beyond the limits of this part of the State since the first coming. In this immediate neighborhood, the children of Jacob and Ann Clement represent the family, from whom have come the direct and collateral branches thereof. They were Samuel, who married Rebecca Collins, daughter of Joseph and Catharine; Thomas, who married Mary Tily; Jacob, who married Elizabeth Tily, daughters of Nathaniel, a cooper, and resident of Gloucester; Ann, who married Joseph Harrison; Sarah and Mary.

In the year 1735, Joseph and Catherine Collins executed a deed to Samuel and Rebecca Clement, for a large tract of land at Haddonfield, extending from the main street southwardly to a line running from Cooper's creek westerly, a line at this day entirely obliterated.⁶ The consideration for this was one hundred pounds, and the annual payment of ten pounds so long as the survivor of the said Joseph and Catherine should live,—a circumstance significant of the good feeling existing between the parents and children. Upon this property Samuel Clement lived for many years, a consistent member of the Society of Friends and a participant in the political affairs of his day and generation. Being a practical surveyor, he was intrusted with the running and settlement of the several township lines of the county of Gloucester, and also of the boundaries between that and Burlington and Salem counties. This was done in 1765; it was the first attempt clearly to define these disputed matters, which had caused much quarreling among the inhabitants, and some litigation between the several incorporations. This duty Samuel Clement discharged faithfully, and the papers connected therewith are still in good preservation.

⁶ Lib. EF, 65.

Jacob Clement was a tanner. He settled in Haddonfield in 1743, where he purchased land of Timothy Matlack and William Miller.⁷ His property was opposite the "temperance house" in the village, and joined Sarah Norris's lot on the east; there he carried on considerable trade.⁸ In those days, most of the hides were procured from the people living along the sea coast, who took in exchange the leather already prepared for use; thus keeping up a business intercourse, although separated by many miles of dreary forest travel. The people of the present generation, who move with railroad speed, cannot appreciate the patience of our ancestors in performing these journeys, sometimes with teams of oxen, heavy, badly built wagons, and upon the worst of highways.

Mercy Clement, who married Joseph Bates, settled with her husband on land which he had purchased of Joseph Thorne, which lay on the south side of the south branch of Cooper's creek, about where the White Horse tavern now stands. None of the estate has been in the name or family for many years, and it would be difficult to trace the maternal blood in that line at the present day.⁹ The family name of Clement is sometimes confounded with that of Edward Clemenz, who purchased a tract of land lying in the forks of the north and the south branch of Cooper's creek, near Haddonfield. There is no question of the distinction; as the first is English, and terminates with *t*, while the last is German and ends with *z*. In 1684, Edward Clemenz, who was called "captain," removed from Long Island to a tract of land which he had purchased in Middlesex county, N. J., on the south branch of Raritan river; whence he came in 1692, and settled on the land first named. He established a landing where the two streams came together, which, at that time, was the head of navigation and, for many years after, a place of much business. In his will he gave the landing and a few acres of land to his daughter Hannah Axford, whose name was attached thereto and has ever after so remained.

Edward Clemenz deceased in 1715, leaving five children,¹⁰ namely: Edward, who married Elizabeth Allen, a daughter of

⁷ Lib. HH, 98.

⁸ Lib. L, 35.

⁹ Lib. A, 64.

Judah and Deborah, (which Deborah was a daughter of John Adams, one of the first settlers at Moorestown, Burlington county); Hannah, who married Jonathan Axford; Sarah, who married Thomas Cheeseman; Rachel; and Mary, who married Thomas Bates. Edward removed to Chester township, Burlington county, where he died in 1746, leaving his widow and three sons, Benjamin, Judah, and Ephraim.¹⁰ In 1764, Judah purchased a tract of land of John Burrough, Jr., (late part of the estate of David D. Burrough, deceased,) near Ellisburg, whereon he settled. This was sold from him by the Sheriff in 1785 to Jacob Haines, who conveyed part to Esther Clemenz, the wife of Judah and, *perhaps*, the daughter of the grantor, in 1789. Some portions of this branch of the family still reside in this neighborhood. By the marriage of Jonathan and Hannah Axford there was one child, who deceased before the mother. The landing and surrounding property they sold to John Gill in 1763; these have been out of the name for many years.

The descendants of Thomas and Mary Bates reside in this section of the country, intermarried with many of the old families, but not occupying any of the estate coming from their German ancestor, and having scarcely enough of the native blood to make it traceable.

¹⁰ Lib. No. 2, 2.

¹¹ Lib. No. 5, 283.