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THE  
LIFE AND WORK  
OF THE SEVENTH  
EARL OF SHAFTESBURY, K.G.

BY  
EDWIN HODDER.

With Portraits.

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VOL. I.

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## PREFACE.

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FOR many years Lord Shaftesbury resisted every appeal that was made to him to allow his biography to be written. "No one can do that satisfactorily but myself," he said, "and I have neither the time nor the inclination." Towards the close of his life, however, it became apparent to him that a biography was, to use his own word, "inevitable," and it was then his wish that it should be written with his co-operation. "If the story, such as it is, must be told," he said, "I should like it to be told accurately. That cannot be done unless I furnish the means."

He accordingly placed at my disposal a mass of material, and, in addition, he was good enough to allow me for many months to be in frequent personal communication with him, when, pen in hand, I took down the record of his life as he narrated it. His memory to the very last was surprising, and as the scenes of his earlier life passed before him, he would recall facts and figures, dates and words, with such accuracy, that

although, at his request, I subsequently verified them, it was almost unnecessary to do so.

The conditions imposed upon me were simple and explicit, and were expressed as nearly as possible in these words :—

“I will give you every assistance in my power; place letters, books, and documents in your hands, give you introductions to those who know most about me, and tell you, from time to time, what I can remember of my past history. I will answer any questions and indicate all the sources of information available to you. But I will not read a word of your manuscript, nor pass a sheet for the press. When the book is issued to the public I will, if I am alive, read it, but not till then. All I ask is, that the story of my life be told in its entirety—political, social, domestic, philanthropic, and religious.”

I was aware that Lord Shaftesbury had kept voluminous Diaries, and, from the first, was anxious that these should be placed in my hands. “They are of no value to any one but myself,” was his reply; “they have never been seen by anybody, and they never will be. They are a mass of contradictions; thoughts jotted down as they passed through my mind, and contradicted perhaps on the next page—records of passing events written on the spur of the moment,

and private details which no one could understand but myself."

In these circumstances I felt that I could not urge Lord Shaftesbury to entrust them to me, but he promised that he would, if possible, go through them and furnish me with some extracts if he found any that were "worth putting into print." But neither time nor opportunity came for this; the busy life was busy to the last, and increasing weakness made any effort of this kind impossible.

For six months I continued my work, and in many long and intensely interesting interviews gained much information and many important details of his personal life. But I was conscious that, without the aid of the Diaries, I stood only on the threshold of the subject, and he was conscious of this too. I, therefore, lost no opportunity of urging him to let me have access to them.

In June, 1885, warned by continued failure in health that the end was not far off, Lord Shaftesbury yielded to these entreaties and placed the first volume of his Journals in my hands, promising to let me have the remainder in succession.

"It was never my intention that a page, or a line, should ever be published," he said to me; "but I have been looking through them again, and I think it is

possible that there are some portions of them that may do good. At all events I do not see how you can perform your task without them, for I cannot give you the personal assistance I could have wished. Besides, all that I could tell you, and much more, is written here, and I must leave it to your discretion to make what use of them you like. You will find they were written in hurried moments, just as thoughts or events arose. They were true at the time, but I may have changed my opinions, or have found afterwards that I had taken a wrong view of things. You are at liberty, of course, to take any view you like of my actions, and to praise or blame them as you will, but do not attempt to represent me as always in the right or you will inevitably break down in your task. You will find that the movements in which I was engaged brought me at times into opposition with all classes, even with those who were working with me, oftentimes with men I loved dearly and greatly admired. I did not seek this opposition; I could not help it; but do not represent me as having been always a man of a cantankerous disposition because of this, unless you find the evidence overwhelming that such was the case. Above all things—and this is one of my strongest motives for placing these volumes in your hands—try to do justice to those who laboured with me. I could never have done the few things I



have, had I not been supported by true, zealous, earnest men, who gave me their time and their brains to help forward the different movements. My religious views are not popular, but they are the views that have sustained and comforted me all through my life. They have never been disguised, nor have I ever sought to disguise them. I think a man's religion, if it is worth anything, should enter into every sphere of life and rule his conduct in every relation. I have always been, and, please God, always shall be, an Evangelical of the Evangelicals, and no biography can represent me that does not fully and emphatically represent my religious views."

For the selection of the quotations from Lord Shaftesbury's Diaries I am alone responsible. My object has been to make them illustrate, as much as possible, every phase of life and opinion. If it should appear that, in some instances, I have inserted passages which are of too purely a domestic character, I can only plead that I have acted in the spirit of the instructions given to me by Lord Shaftesbury. For example, on one occasion he had been narrating to me some incidents in the life of the late Countess of Shaftesbury, in connection with his factory labours, and lamented how little the factory people knew the extent to which they were indebted to "that blessed

woman," as he called her. Then he spoke of her death. "But you will find it all recorded in the Diaries," he said. "Those entries would be far too private and personal to put into print, would they not?" I asked. "Not at all," he answered, "I should like you to use them. I should wish you to use them. Her memory is far better worth preserving than mine." And then taking down from a shelf in the library the "Shaftesbury Papers," edited by Mr. Christie, he turned to a page in which the First Earl pays a tribute of affection to the wife whose loss he mourns. "There," said he, "that, in my opinion, is the best thing in the book."

In his Diaries Lord Shaftesbury has unconsciously done, what he so often said no one but himself could do satisfactorily—he has "written his own life." It was by a mere accident, however, that the whole of these valuable records were not destroyed. About the year 1880 he was suffering from illness which confined him to the house, and he determined to occupy his enforced leisure, in looking through and burning old papers. The Diaries were consigned to a heap awaiting destruction; but, in the meantime, health returned, the usual daily duties were resumed, and the books and papers were put away to await another pause, and so escaped the threatened fate.

Only a few of the bulky quarto Diaries of Lord

Shaftesbury, and four of his Journals of Travels, had been placed in my hands, when the news came from Folkestone of the alarming illness which terminated in his death. For the privilege of perusing and making extracts from the remaining volumes, for information supplying the defects of my own personal knowledge, for access to his correspondence, for reading the proofs and examining the extracts from the Diaries with the originals, and for other invaluable aid, I am indebted to the great kindness and courtesy of his son, the Hon. Evelyn Ashley.

Before Lord Shaftesbury gave me the first volume of his Diaries to peruse, he intimated that it would, in his opinion, be of special advantage to me in my labours to have the assistance of some one who, apart from his own family, had known him for many years, and in whose judgment he could repose the fullest confidence. To this end he asked me to place myself in communication with Mrs. Corsbie, the daughter of the late Mr. Alexander Haldane, one of his most intimate friends, with whom for thirty years he had been in almost daily correspondence. To her careful and valuable assistance in reading the proofs for the press, and for the kindness which placed at my disposal the voluminous letters of Lord Shaftesbury to her father, I am under the deepest obligation.

The sources from which much of the information in this work has been drawn have been extremely various, and I have to express my hearty thanks to the Secretaries of Societies with which Lord Shaftesbury was connected; to co-workers with him in various departments of labour; to personal friends and others, who have given me ready access to whole libraries of reports, minutes, pamphlets, and other records, and have rendered me important service in many ways.

It has been my endeavour to let the record of Lord Shaftesbury's whole life-work be told, as much as possible, in his own words; and in doing so I have not added to his opinions or founded conjectures upon his plans. My aim has been to present him as he was; a Christian gentleman first, then a patriot, a statesman, a social reformer, and all that is implied in the word he liked so little—a philanthropist.

"I have no desire whatever to be recorded," he wrote shortly before his death; "but if I must, sooner or later, appear before the public, I should like the *reality* to be told, be it good, or be it bad, and not a sham."

I have made no endeavour, therefore, to tone down his strong Protestantism; his unshaken and unshakable belief in Scripture, in dogma, and in prayer. If he was wrong here, he was wrong throughout, for he was a

*PREFACE.*

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man with a single aim ; his labours in the field of politics sprang from his philanthropy ; his philanthropy sprang from his deep and earnest religious convictions ; and every labour, political, benevolent, and religious, was begun, continued, and ended in one and the same spirit.

E. H.

21, CRAVEN PARK, WILLESDEN, N.W.,

*October, 1886.*

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