

# A BUCKINGHAMSHIRE POLYMATH: EDWARD JOHN PAYNE

J. R. CATCH

*In Piam et Sanctam Memoriam*  
EDVARDI JOANNIS PAYNE A. M.  
Coll: Univ: apud Oxonienses Socii  
Litterarum, Juris, Artis Musicae periti  
Historiae Scriptoris,  
Necnon huius Ecclesiae olim organistae,  
qui natus apud High Wycombe, die xxii Julii  
MDCCLXIV  
per xxi annos Recordator eius Municipii usque dum  
mortem  
obiit apud Wendover  
die xxvi Decembris MCMIV<sup>1</sup>

## *Introductory*

When Wycombe's new Town Hall was officially opened in 1904 by Lord Carrington the next place to His Lordship at the Mayor's luncheon table was taken by Edward John Payne, who responded to Lord Carrington's opening speech. That speech had referred to Payne as one of the town's 'most distinguished sons'. Payne is almost forgotten today. In his time he was recognised as a historian of high standing and also as an expert on musical instruments of the fiddle tribe, and as a pioneer in the revival of the *viola da gamba* in England many years before the more famous Arnold Dolmetsch began to study it. He was an extraordinarily versatile and painstaking scholar who was at the same time a working barrister; a remarkable man.

Payne is vaguely remembered locally only for his work on local history. This is only a minor part of his work, but it is the most accessible part for most readers of *Records*. He was best known as an authority on early maritime exploration, and the first volume of his ambitious (and, alas, unfinished) *History of the New World Called America* brought him world fame in the

Columbus centenary year 1892. He also contributed some fifty entries, mostly on bowed string instruments and their makers, to the first edition (1878–90) of *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, his major entries on 'Violin' and on 'Stradivari' winning high praise. He was not the only amateur to supply good material, but no other amateur was entrusted with so important a group of entries.

## *Personal History*

Such a career is the more remarkable because he did not come from a privileged background. His father, Edward William Payne, came to Wycombe from Weston in Oxfordshire and married a Wycombe girl, Mary Welch. He described himself variously as 'cowkeeper'<sup>2</sup> 'manservant'<sup>3</sup> and 'gardener'<sup>4</sup> but he owned the house he lived in in Easton Street and it would be unwise to assume that he was an uneducated rustic. Mary died when Edward John was six years old, and an unmarried cousin of 25, Maria Widdows, took over the household management.<sup>2</sup> Edward John was a precocious and brilliant scholar at the Royal Grammar School under James Poulter, with interests already developed in history and antiquarian research.<sup>5</sup>

At the same time he was poring over a seventeenth-century textbook of music, Playford's *Introduction*, which aroused his enthusiasm for the *viola da gamba*, at that time practically forgotten. He also learned the violin and the organ. He is said to have been a pupil of the London architect William Burges, one of the puzzles of Payne's career; and at 17 he was assistant to the architect and surveyor Joseph James Pontyfix of High Wycombe. Pontyfix was Receiver, i.e. agent, for the High Wycombe Charity Trustees and thus for the Grammar School. His father had been, and his sister Martha was (from 1844–69) organist of the Parish Church of All Saints, Martha being remembered for an acrimonious dispute in 1848 with the Vicar, the Rev. H. T. Paddon. She is recorded in 1871 as 'formerly schoolmistress'.<sup>6</sup> Joseph James in 1853 sold 'stationery, Pianofortes, and music' with a 'Berlin wool repository and depot for the SPCK'.<sup>7</sup> He was also an insurance agent.<sup>8</sup> He seems to have died early in 1863 and the young Payne took over without (as it later appeared) being formally appointed. The heart-searching that later took place about this among the Trustees is suggestive of a lack of harmony between Payne and some of them.<sup>9</sup> Between 1863 and 1867 Payne was excavating the Roman Villa at Wycombe and carrying on sound antiquarian research; he was also acting organist of the Parish Church, probably as deputy for the elderly Martha Pontyfix (b. 1793). Some of the down-to-earth Wycombe worthies may have felt uncomfortable with this brilliant young man who was obviously not giving the whole of his attention to business. The records reveal no reason for dissatisfaction with his work, but people as gifted as Payne are apt to make less gifted folk uncomfortable. A photograph from about this time is unusually mature, assured, and relaxed for so young a man from such a background (Plate I).

Payne was issued with his first Reader's Ticket for the British Museum library on 9 August 1864 (No. 69010), his reference being given by John Parker, no doubt the elder Parker, who would have recognised the young man's exceptional talents and may well have done much to help and encourage him. Payne is

known to have assisted Parker in his work on *The History and Antiquities of High Wycombe*.<sup>10</sup>

The year 1867 was a turning-point in Payne's life. He could expect a prosperous career as a local estate agent, but he must often have thought about his chances of an academic career. The scheme for the Royal Grammar School dictated to the Trustees by the Charity Commissioners in 1856 had hopefully envisaged 'one Exhibition of £30 p.a. tenable at Oxford or Cambridge' for which he was an outstanding candidate, but there was no money for it then or for many years to come. He had designed the Victorian almshouses in Easton Street.<sup>11</sup> His plans for the enlargement of the school were 'favourably received' but got no further for lack of money.<sup>12</sup>

However, about this time, the sweet-toned old Samuel Green organ of 1783 in the Parish Church was moved and rebuilt in the tasteless Victorian manner, and I speculate that this may have led to his meeting another gifted and ambitious young man of just his own age; J. F. Bridge, later Sir Frederick, organist of Westminster Abbey.<sup>13</sup> Bridge just then was trying to get an Oxford college post to help him take a degree in music; he visited Wycombe to train the choir for the opening ceremony, and he remembered long afterwards being entertained by his 'dear old friend' Poulter on his visits to Wycombe at that time.<sup>14</sup> It is agreeable to imagine that he and Payne met and talked about their plans and aspirations; talk which may have determined Payne to abandon a safe business career in a parochial community and aim higher in life.

However that may be, Payne matriculated at Magdalen Hall, resigned his place with the Wycombe Charity Trustees, and went to Oxford;<sup>9</sup> and another organist was (rather hastily it seems) found.<sup>15</sup> He supported himself at Oxford by continuing to work as an architect and surveyor— and by coaching in Classics.<sup>16</sup> After taking a First in 1871 he was elected a Fellow of University College in 1872 and was called to the Bar of Lincoln's Inn in 1874, at which time he probably moved to London.



Plate I. Edward Payne as a schoolboy.



Plate II. Edward Payne at Oxford.

There is a photograph from this Oxford period of the young Payne with his violin (Plate II).

A sheet of Payne's business notepaper of about this time has some verses on current religious controversies, and one verse, amusingly redolent of 'the shop', may be reproduced:

*The Reformation*

'Proud Babylon's hour is come – she shakes,  
 she falls,  
 Midst shouts of rising nations:  
 Luther breaks down the roofs – Calvin the  
 walls –  
 Socinus the foundations!'<sup>17</sup>

Payne's first passport was issued in 1868.<sup>17</sup> He certainly travelled a good deal in Europe, but hardly anything is known of his travels.

Payne practised as an equity draughtsman and conveyancer in the Chancery Court of the

Duchy of Lancaster, 'paper-work' rather than advocacy.<sup>18</sup> He was not a dedicated lawyer. The work for him was a source of income to support more congenial historical, literary and musical work which began to be published from this time onwards, but which was not very well paid.<sup>19</sup>

In 1885 Payne was involved in the huge International Inventions Exhibition at South Kensington, as a juryman for Groups 32 and 33, competitive exhibits in musical instruments and accessories, and also as a member of the committee of five responsible for the celebrated Historic Loan Collection of musical instruments and documents.<sup>20</sup> In both these tasks he was associated with professional musicians of the highest standing; and he had been short-listed as a possible Vice-President or member of the Committee of Advice for the exhibition as a whole.<sup>21</sup> In 1889 Payne gave a lecture-demonstration on the 'Viola da Gamba' to the

Musical Association<sup>22</sup> and I have published elsewhere some account of that lecture and its significance.<sup>23</sup> This would have been a relaxation from his other work, but his text and programme are impressive, and compare favourably with the work of other 'revivalists' and professional musicologists of the time.

It was probably Payne's growing reputation as a historian that introduced him to the circle of James John Garth Wilkinson (1812–99), a curious and attractive character whose London House was frequented by writers and scholars.<sup>24</sup> He was a successful physician, a widower, for whom two granddaughters, Emma and Florence Pertz, kept house. The two Pertz girls were descended from a celebrated German historian, Georg Heinrich Pertz. They were good-looking and artistically gifted, and Payne, at 55 married Emma, who was 33, in 1899. None of Payne's relatives is recorded as attending the wedding, although he had a brother with a family in Derby, and a half-sister Elizabeth;<sup>17</sup> nor did any attend his funeral in 1904.

The Paynes lived in a modern house in Wendover, owned originally by the wealthy Comtesse de Noailles, who had been a patient and a friend of J. J. G. Wilkinson.<sup>25</sup> It must have required some readjustment for both of them. Emma moved from the London house of a well-to-do notability, frequented by celebrities such as Henry James, to the more modest household of a scholar who (it is clear) was not much concerned to become rich, in a small sleepy town. Payne commuted to his chambers in Lincoln's Inn, and his work must have suffered from the time lost and the less ready access to London libraries. At the inquest on his death by drowning in 1904, Emma testified that 'he had had nothing to trouble him recently, with the exception that he had been very full of literary work'.<sup>26</sup> It was remembered in his family that he would, at this period, be up at 4 a.m., brew his own coffee, and write until it was time to take the train to London.

At Wendover the Paynes associated with the local notabilities; J. Lawson Walton, KC (The County Member), the Barlows of 'Boswells',

and the Libertys, beside the Parkers, Vernons, Raffetys and Gilbeys of Wycombe. Many of them attended his funeral.

On the morning of Boxing Day 1904 Payne went out for a walk with his dog, as he often did, and was later found drowned in the Wendover arm of the Grand Union Canal by Perch Bridge. It seems almost incredible to us that his body was brought back to a Christmas household with three small children, and that the inquest was held there next day. There was no suspicion of foul play, or suggestion of instability or distress or suicidal tendency. Payne had some ill-defined 'heart weakness' which caused occasional fainting fits. The jury returned an open verdict. Human behaviour can be unpredictable, but the drowning is most likely to have been accidental. Payne's sturdy character seems incompatible with his taking his own life. He was laid to rest in the churchyard of Wendover Parish Church; forty-three years later Emma's ashes were laid beside him.

Emma preserved the last sheet of paper left in his typewriter, part of his work for a third volume of *America*, but if there was more it is no longer extant. Had he lived it is likely that he would have been awarded a newly-founded Chair of Colonial History at Oxford.<sup>27</sup>

There were three children of the marriage. Cecilia (1900–79) was musical and deeply interested in botany, but while at Cambridge set her heart on a scientific career and became an astronomer of international standing, and eventually Professor of Astronomy at Harvard. She settled in the United States at 23 and returned to England only for occasional visits, but never lost her love for Wendover and the English countryside.<sup>28</sup> Humfry Gilbert Garth (1902–36) was a King's Scholar at Westminster and went on to Oxford, where he achieved a spectacular Double First in Classics, with an Alpha in every paper. Awarded the Conington Prize in 1926, he assisted Professor Sir John Beazley at the Ashmolean Museum, and became Director of the British School in Athens at the unprecedentedly early age of 27; a brilliant career cut tragically short by his death in 1936.<sup>29</sup> Leonora (1904–), artistically inclined,

studied architecture with Professor Sir Albert Richardson, and was the first woman to win the Owen Jones Travelling Scholarship. She provided many illustrations to the articles of Sir John Betjeman in the *Daily Telegraph*, and is married to Walter Ison, FSA, the architectural historian of Bath and Bristol and for fifteen years Architectural Editor of the *Survey of London*. Alone of Payne's three children, Cecilia has children and grandchildren in the United States of America.

#### *Contributions to Local History*

Payne's contributions to local history are all in *Records* (see Bibliography). He was elected a Vice-President of the Society in 1901.

'The Building of Wycombe Church . . . and the Miracles of St. Wulstan' is brief, but already in Payne's early twenties foreshadows the later scholar in its recourse to primary sources and meticulous scrutiny of evidence. The critical faculty remarked later by Elliott Viney<sup>30</sup> is also apparent; seizing on a discrepancy of dates, Payne suggests tactfully that the account given by William of Malmesbury is 'slightly embellished'. The 'Roman Villa at High Wycombe', which is not discreditable bearing in mind the general standards of the time,<sup>31</sup> tells us that the 18-year-old author was already 'collecting materials for an historical account of the borough' and searching 'two or three centuries of documents'.

The fifty pages of 'The Montforts, the Wellesbournes and the Hughenden Effigies' are more heavyweight stuff. Payne subjects the effigies, ('these wretched old guys') and an 'Old Parchment Roll' formerly in the possession of John Norris of Hughenden, to a searching scrutiny of the documentary, stylistic and heraldic evidence, concluding that the 'Roll' and the effigies are rather careless forgeries of the early sixteenth century, made to support an untenable Wellesbourne claim to descent from Simon de Montfort (d.1264). The historian of early American exploration and the expert on 'Old Master' violins here shows himself to be familiar with the peculiar 'science' of heraldry, with medieval genealogies and estates, and with

much curious local history. One marvels how he found time for such a labour of love.

'Whitecliff Cross' discusses the evidence, or rather the absence of evidence, for the supposed antiquity and religious significance of the chalk figure, the supposed derivations of the name, and the possible purpose of the cross; suggesting that it was a landmark dating only from 1642-4, to mark a route of military importance to the Parliamentary forces.

'The Church Bells of Buckinghamshire' is a long and careful review of a newly-published major book, with Payne's suggestions here and there for emendations or elucidations of texts and inscriptions on bells.

'Tring, Wing and Ivinghoe' is another demolition job; an examination of the origin and significance of Scott's 'curious stanza', showing that there is no trace of this 'rhyme of the 14th or 15th century' before 1712, and concluding that it is probably a fragment of a Royalist pasquinade of 1642-3. Payne's scepticism about traditional 'evidence' appears in an aside: '[Browne] Willis's clerical correspondents are prone to infer a palace from an old moat whenever they have a chance' (p.440)

#### *Contributions to General Literature*

A reviewer of Payne's second volume of *America* wrote that 'It is impossible for anyone but a specialist to do [it] justice . . . Mr. Payne . . . takes all knowledge for his province'.<sup>32</sup> It is a commonplace, but that is just the problem of reviewing Payne's work as a whole. One rarely finds such a mastery of detail, allied to a judicial general conspectus, exercised upon such a variety of subjects. The present writer is well aware that his own views are of little value in this section, but he has the good fortune to have a large collection of contemporary reviews and notices, which are of greater interest.<sup>33</sup>

Payne's own books are unfortunately not at all easy to procure. Not even the British Library has them complete.

Payne's knowledge of Burke (and, one might add, his time and its literature) was 'pheno-

menal'.<sup>26</sup> Examination of the Introductions and Notes to his three volumes fully supports that adjective, even though Payne had a colleague (J.F. Boyes) in preparing the notes. They show an easy familiarity not only with the better-known writers who are cited in every history book but with a long list of the obscure and forgotten, such as Hervey, Blair, Hoadly, Soame Jenyns, and South; and Payne writes as if he had lived through the period. He greatly admired Burke and studied his literary and rhetorical techniques (he also cites Hazlitt freely, which suggests the foundation of his own unaffected prose style) but he was not an uncritical admirer.

*The History of European Colonies* is a school text-book, a heavyweight one of some 150,000 words, packed with detailed factual information but very readable; the 'history . . . of the New Europe; that is . . . Europe beyond the seas': and Europe 'is a moral essence, not a name denoting race or locality' (p. 7). Payne at 33 was a liberal, a free-trader and a republican who recognised England as being a 'republic in monarchical guise' (p. 378). In his view the colonies planted by Europeans had progressed inevitably to independence and to freedom from the political and religious obstructions to progress which had hampered the Old World; so much so that

the new world will . . . perhaps . . . teach the old world . . . how to apply federation to the states . . . some have even predicted that a federation of nations of Western Europe will be forced on by the increasing aggressiveness of Eastern Europe . . . a federation inspired by the modern spirit of commerce and industry against those which are yet filled with the medieval lust of conquest. (p. 374)

That reads topically in our time.

Payne's humanity and his hostility to dogma in religion or politics are frequently apparent, but he is just; he pays generous tribute to the Jesuits for their attempts to protect the oppressed Indians from the invaders, and for their administrative ability, shown for example in Brazil, where they 'nearly realized the notions of people who have wished for Communism' (p. 92). One more quotation must suffice: 'The

Old Europe interrogated the new with the view of solving the problem *How to organize the colony*: the new Europe has replied – by *organizing the Republic – and by showing the old Europe how to do it*' (p. 373). A school book maybe, but intended for very mature school-children.

Johnson's *The Vanity of Human Wishes* was also edited for school use, with nine pages of brief and appropriate notes.

*The Voyages of the Elizabethan Seamen* shows again an easy mastery of material and historical detachment, generally free from the heroics and moral platitudes which were common in his time:

Drake's famous 'circumnavigation of the globe' was thus no voluntary feat of daring seamanship, but the necessary result of circumstances. This fact does not detract from its importance. The voyage marks a great period in English maritime history. (p. 195)

Hawkins, Frobisher and Drake are always remembered among us as the three lieutenants of the admiral who repulsed the Spanish Armada. It is sometimes forgotten that they were the very men who by their assaults on the Spanish possessions in America had done most to provoke the Spanish invasion of England. (p. viii)

Not that Payne was free from the imperialism of his age: 'Had Raleigh secured for England the "Treasure of the World" . . . he would have ranked as the greatest Englishman of his own or any other time' (p. ix). He forgot that the "Treasure of the World" had not, in the event, established Spain permanently as a major power in Europe or in the world.

*The History of the New World Called America* gives a thorough account of the discovery and exploration of the New World, starting from the very beginning with the speculations of the classical writers; but it goes far beyond this in discussing the effects of physical and material circumstances in shaping history. Payne's basic thesis, which he claimed to have originated, was that progress from savagery to civilization has been determined by the transition from a

natural to an artificial food supply: from hunting and foraging to herding and cultivation. The history of man in the Americas, isolated from the Old World from the remotest times, provided unique evidence on this transition; evidence which was obscured in the Old World by the long and complex history of later civilization. His exposition of this thesis leads him to lengthy discussions of geography and climate, flora and fauna, fetishes and religious beliefs, and social organization: and about half of Vol. 2 is taken up by a discussion in detail (which had even so been 'much curtailed and compressed'; p. xvii) of American Indian languages. As an American reviewer wrote 'facts are used only as a substratum . . . the rest is all reflection or even speculation . . . [it] offers peculiarly attractive reading.'<sup>34</sup> Not surprisingly, Payne's approach was compared with Buckle's, to Payne's advantage, and (the present writer thinks) justly so.

Reviewers criticised some foibles, such as the failure to divide two hefty volumes into chapters or provide indexes, but nearly all are laudatory, indeed encomiastic. *The Scotsman*, dealing with Vol. 2, is typical:

. . . the production of this single volume must have involved the work of years . . . a history every step of which has to be demonstrated . . . by a scientific treatise . . . for the purpose of what is ordinarily called history it might suffice to say, in a few pages . . . that (such and such) was pretty well established by scientific enquiry. But this is not Mr. Payne's way . . . when it is stated that these matters are exhaustively discussed, a faint, but only a faint, idea may be had of the labour and erudition that have been bestowed on this work . . . Mr Payne ruthlessly extinguishes many vain imaginations and bewitching traditions of wonderful ancient civilizations . . . such a work cannot be read in a hurry . . . it is as far as possible from being heavy and dull . . . one of the most readable books of learning and research . . .<sup>35</sup>

That is the tenor of nearly all of the reviews.<sup>33</sup> But as *The Times* foresaw in 1892<sup>36</sup> 'the concentrated labours of a long life will be necessary to bring the work to a satisfactory climax', and it remains a huge, impressive fragment. How far it

has influenced later historians I am not competent to judge.

'Of the 17 contributions [to Vol. I of the *Cambridge Modern History*] we think that Mr. Payne's is the best . . . masterly in a humane and understandable manner'.<sup>37</sup> That accords with many other contemporary reviews. These two chapters do not make a show of the breadth of knowledge on which they are based, but they are admirable historical essays; conforming with the overall plan, covering the ground, keeping to the point, detached, unprejudiced, and effortless reading. Once again, Payne generally refrains from moral judgements, but they surface now and again: 'By this time the Indians knew the general character and aims of the new-comers who styled themselves "Christians", and dealt with them accordingly' (p. 35); in short, they massacred them. Here is another excerpt (with ludicrously contemporary undertones): ' . . . the wretched natives, unable to procure the small quantity of gold demanded as a poll-tax, were provoked to resistance, and then captured and shipped in great numbers . . . to be sold' (as slaves) (p. 24).

*Colonies and Colonial Federation* is a detailed account of the geography, history, economics and political status of the fifty or so colonial 'governments as they were at that time. The author is no longer quite the liberal free-trader of 1877, and is now an advocate of Imperial preference: 'Mr. Payne was a powerful supporter of the principles for which the British Empire League exists', though 'he might have described [Cecil Rhodes] in happier language than as an "enterprising speculator"'.<sup>38</sup>

The *Speaker* is very blunt: ' . . . a sheer partisan interpretation'.<sup>39</sup> A contemporary reviewer thought that the book showed signs of hasty composition, particularly in the last few pages, which are frankly polemical on current political controversies.<sup>40</sup> It is strange, too, to find Payne commending British 'humanity, justice and generosity' in the eighteenth-century campaign to abolish slavery, while noting on the next page but one that 'Only when French and English economists, in the 18th century, had cast doubts

on the profitableness of slave as compared with free labour was a substantial beginning made in the movement' (pp. 41, 43). The inference is that humanity, justice and generosity had not achieved very much.

This last book, for all its industry, seems to show a falling-off from the detachment and cool analysis of Payne's earlier writings. Commuting from Wendover may indeed have weakened his concentration.

### *Musical Activities*

An extensive discussion would be out of place in *Records*. Payne's standing at the time as an expert on the violin family and their relatives is evident from his obituary in the *Musical Times*<sup>41</sup> and from reading his published work, particularly in *Grove I*. His major article on 'Violin' is much more far-ranging than the title may suggest. It is a history of bowed string instruments in general. As in his *Records* papers he is sceptical of myth and legend and sentiment, all too familiar in the literature of the violin, and like Mr. Jagers, 'takes everything on evidence'. His statement that 'A fiddle, after all, even a Stradivari, is not a work of pure art like a painting or a statue . . . it is merely a machine . . .' is a refreshing change from the almost animist attitudes of so many fiddle fanciers. Many other such commonsense observations might be quoted; and Payne seems to have been the originator of the quasi-Darwinian gibe of ' . . . a general principle underlying the whole history of musical instruments . . . the survival of the loudest . . .'<sup>42</sup>

The long article on Stradivari, in the same way, lays emphasis on factual knowledge, much of it obtained by Payne's own researches, and is sceptical of mere legend. Both of these entries have been superseded by more recent scholarship, but are remarkably good for their date, as contemporary critics recognised. It is remarkable also, in our age of specialization, to find this barrister-historian entrusted also with the entry on 'Violincello *Playing*'; and although this was revised for later editions by the eminent professional Ivor James, he left much of Payne's text unaltered. Indeed, of some fifty entries by

Payne more than half were used, in whole or in part, even in the 5th edition of 1954.

Payne's childhood interest in the *viola da gamba* led to his becoming a collector and a very competent player, who demonstrated its special qualities at the 1885 Exhibition<sup>41</sup> (Arnold Dolmetsch took no practical interest in it until 1889-90) and he also played the recorder, again before Dolmetsch took it up in 1905.<sup>43</sup> He was to be sure not the man to embark on a single-minded crusade such as Dolmetsch carried on for half a century, and subsequent studies have shown that some of Payne's conclusions (not all of them, by any means) were incorrect. But the growing band of *viola da gamba* enthusiasts should remember Payne gratefully as a pioneer whose lifelong interest preserved information on its nineteenth-century history which would otherwise have been irretrievable.

### *An Assessment*

Any attempt to sum up Payne's achievement and character is made difficult by the almost total lack of the personal papers and letters which are so often much more informative than published work.

Payne had extraordinary powers of accumulating and relating knowledge on a wide range of subjects; his versatility is astonishing. His mind was cast in the mould of the 'Age of Reason', when mastery of the dead languages and of the classics was considered the essential basis for the acquisition of modern learning, and he excelled in applying analytical and critical thinking to a vast data-base of knowledge. He went farther, bringing constructive thinking to causes and effects in history, of musical instruments as well as of mankind. In the popular sense of the word he might fairly be reckoned a genius; he had in abundance what Carlyle held to be its prerequisite, the capacity for painstaking labour. But in some ways his vision was limited. A comparison comes to mind with a very different man, George Bernard Shaw, twelve years his junior. Shaw's intellectual endowment was, I would think, less than Payne's, but he saw that the stable Victorian world of their time would not survive, and knew why. Shaw would not have written in



1899 that 'Man ultimately comes to an agreement with woman on his own terms. Struggle as she may, she is born for subjection and will in the end return to her master'.

'Somewhat ungallant' was the comment of one reviewer.<sup>44</sup> We may wonder what Emma thought of that sentiment. Shaw, again, foresaw the revolutionary impact that Dolmetsch would have on the musical 'establishment', fifty years before the impact became unmistakable; possibly Payne saw it too, but there is no evidence.

Genius, rightly considered, is something different from great intellectual power, and the reader may hesitate to apply the august term to Payne, but he was certainly an exceptionally gifted, industrious and disinterested scholar whose life exemplified

. . . the ideal of scholarship; that concept of intellectual effort, almost for its own sake, which first grew from centuries of veneration for the languages and achievements of classical antiquity . . . without it the great extension of human knowledge and experience which has been made by scientists, historians and other students would not have been undertaken.<sup>45</sup>

The obituaries suggest that he was also a very likeable man: 'Genial and kindly disposition',<sup>46</sup>

'Those who knew Mr. Payne's real character would remember him not only with esteem, but also with affection';<sup>47</sup> 'A strong, sensible and original man';<sup>48</sup> 'Active and genial . . . extreme kindness of nature';<sup>41</sup> 'Geniality . . . unselfishness'.<sup>26</sup>

His family remembered him as being 'very gentle' and with a strong and even mischievous sense of humour. To Cecilia he was a 'godlike figure' who would play with the babies on the nursery floor and had the tact and patience to soothe an aggrieved, squalling child.<sup>49</sup> One of his foibles was to have the Sunday joint roast in the traditional way on the spit before the fire. That did not suit Cook, but she knew when to expect 'the master's' visit to the kitchen and by then the joint would be out of the oven and on the spit.<sup>17</sup>

Any account of Payne is, then, necessarily, like his own major work, incomplete. If we knew more of his early days in Wycombe, his career before his marriage, his travels, his views about the portentous changes which were transforming society during his lifetime, he would be a candidate for a proper biography. Even as it is, the County has not so many people of Payne's stature that we should allow him to remain completely forgotten.

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1. Memorial plaque, High Wycombe Parish Church.
2. 1851 Census Return for High Wycombe.
3. Application for a Foundation Scholarship to the Royal Grammar School; BRO CH/1/AP/11, 31–42.
4. 1861 Census Return for High Wycombe.
5. *South Bucks Free Press*, 30 Dec. 1904.
6. 1871 Census Return for High Wycombe.
7. Musson and Craven's Directory for Bucks, 1853.
8. Kelly's Directory for Bucks, 1864.
9. *South Bucks Free Press*, 7 Dec. 1867.
10. J. Parker, *The History and Antiquities of High Wycombe* (1878) viii. The entry in the catalogue of the British Library treats Payne, in effect, as a co-author.
11. BRO CH/1/AM 1/Q, 11 Jan. 1865.
12. BRO CH/1/AM 2/Q, 4 Sep. 1867 and 4 Nov. 1868.
13. Sir Frederick Bridge, *A Westminster Pilgrim* (1918).
14. *South Bucks Free Press*, 9 Jan. 1903.
15. BRO/22/J/107 B Par. Bor. 1865–7, SM 911, 21 Dec. 1867.
16. Obituary, *DNB XXth C.*, 1901–11.
17. Information and material supplied by Payne's family, who have been unfailingly helpful and patient with my enquiries.
18. I am indebted to the Librarian of Lincoln's Inn for providing this information.
19. Contributors to the 2nd edn of *Grove's Dictionary* in 1904 were paid £1/page (Ref. 17).
20. *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 19 June 1885, 848.
21. Uncatalogued papers in the Greater London Record Office; A/RSA-Ac 74.92.
22. *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 4 Mar. 1889, 91–107.
23. *Galpin Society Journal* (1989) 3.
24. *DNB XXI* (1900) 271–2.
25. C. J. Wilkinson, *James John Garth Wilkinson* (1911).
26. Inquest Report, *South Bucks Free Press*, 30 Dec. 1904.
27. *The St. James's Gazette*, 14 Jan. 1905.
28. Katherine Haramundanis (ed.) *Celia Payne-Gaparchkin* (1984).
29. Humfry's widow Dilys Powell wrote a biography, *The Traveller's Journey Is Done* (London 1943). See also an article in *The Athenian* by Louise Zarmati, July 1990, p. 22.
30. *Recs. Bucks* 30 (1988) 176.
31. B. R. Hartley, 'A Romano-British Villa at High Wycombe', *Recs. Bucks* 16 (1959) 227.
32. *The Daily Chronicle*, 16 June 1899.
33. I am grateful to Payne's grandson, Dr Edward Gaposchkin, for sending me photocopies of some 150 press cuttings of the time. It would have been a practical impossibility to retrieve them now by direct search.
34. *The Nation*, New York, 28 June 1900.
35. *The Scotsman*, Feb. 1899 (exact date unknown).
36. 26 Sep. 1892.
37. *The Academy and Literature*, 13 Dec. 1902.
38. *British Empire Review*, Mar. 1905.
39. 11 Feb. 1905.
40. *The Times*, 14 April 1905.
41. Obituary, *The Musical Times*, 1 Feb. 1905.
42. *Grove's Dictionary*, 1st edn, 'Violin', p. 270.
43. Haramundanis, *op. cit.*, p. 87.
44. Ref. 33. Not attributed, but apparently from an American periodical.
45. L. J. Ashford, in *The History of the Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe*, 1962, 6.
46. *Geographical Journal*, Feb. 1905.
47. *South Bucks Free Press*, 31 Dec. 1904.
48. Obituary, *The Oxford Magazine*, 25 Jan. 1905.
49. Haramundanis, *op. cit.*, p. 86.