

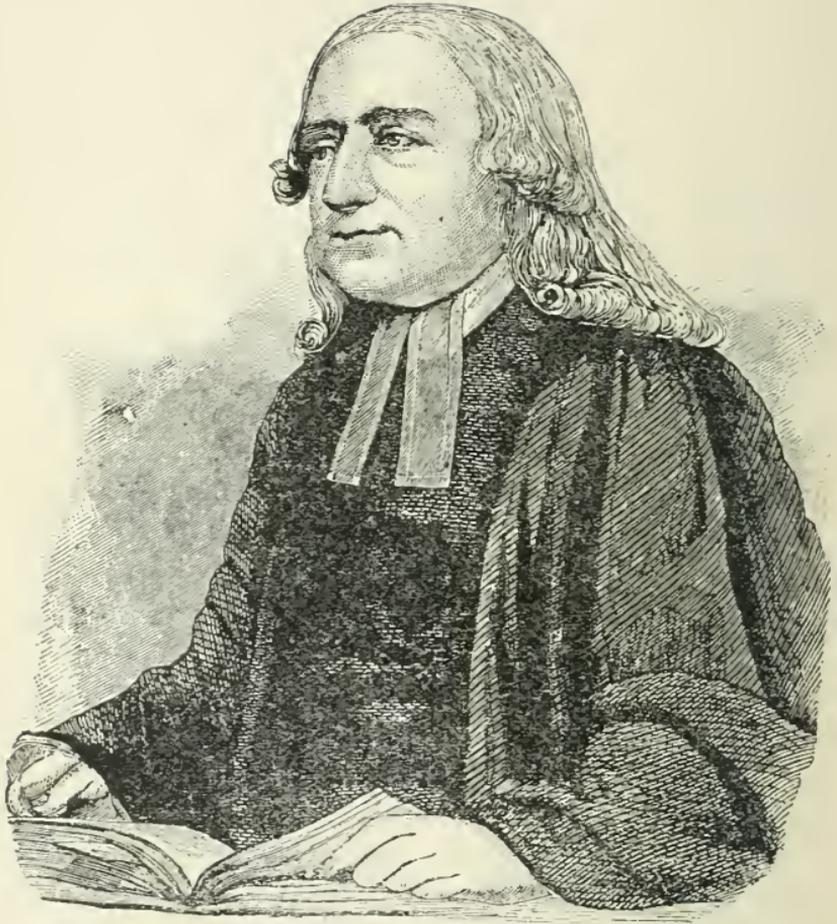


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JOHN WESLEY.

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V.

MAKERS OF METHODISM.

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MAKERS OF METHODISM.



I.

A FOREWORD.

METHODISM is in a very special sense the child of Providence. It is a happy feature in its history that it was not cradled in conflict, but was born of a religious revival. The origin of the Reformed churches in Bohemia, in Germany, in Switzerland, in France, in the Low Countries, in Scotland, was amid the throes of civil war. This gave a degree of hardness to certain aspects of religion and left a heritage of bitter memories. While it developed much of moral heroism, it also developed much of the sterner side of our nature, and sometimes evoked vindictive passions. No one can be familiar with the stirring tale of the conflict between Romanism and Protestantism, and of the strifes between different sections of the Reformed religion, without seeing and lamenting that often reproach was brought upon the cause of Christ by the passionate zeal and lack of charity of Christian men. Persecution upon one side sometimes led to persecution on the other. Even the valour

and fidelity of such heroes as Ziska and Gustavus Adolphus, of William the Silent and Admiral Coligny, of Cromwell and Knox, of Zwingle and of Duke Maurice of Saxony, were not unmarred by elements of human harshness and infirmity.

But, in the providence of God, Methodism had a milder and a happier development. Not that it was without persecution and suffering. It had enough of both to develop the grandest heroism, the most intrepid fortitude, and the noblest endurance even unto death. Yet it never appealed to the sword. Like the great founder of Christianity, it turned its cheek to the smiter; it suffered with a quietness of spirit the very tyranny and rage of its foes. No tinge of iconoclastic zeal or of retaliating sternness mars the saintly character of the Wesleys and their fellow-helpers. Their spirit was that of St. John, breathing the benedictions of love. The motto of John Wesley was typical of his life and ministry: "With charity to all, with malice to none."

Methodism was first of all a revival of pure religion in the hearts of a group of earnest young students of Oxford University. They had no wish to create a new sect or to make war upon the Church they loved. They sought its spiritual awakening and reformation. They preached from the parish pulpits, and when thrust from the Church of their fathers they preached on their fathers' graves, on the village common, in the market-place and by the wayside.

Methodism was not the result of political exigencies or of ecclesiastical councils. It was not framed by

kings or potentates, by bishops or priests. Like its blessed Lord, it was born in lowliness, and grew in favour with God and with man. Many different types of character were among the agents whom God used in its development,—the lofty and the lowly, the gentle and the simple, the learned and the illiterate, the rich and the poor. Among its founders were some of the most scholarly Fellows of Oxford. Among its faithful preachers were also “unlearned and ignorant men”—as the world measures learning. There were such men as John Nelson, the Yorkshire mason; as Silas Told, the converted sailor; as Samuel Bradburn, the shoemaker’s apprentice; as John Hunt, the rustic ploughman; and as Peter Mackenzie, the shepherd and collier. From the lowly walks of life came many of the boldest soldiers of this new crusade—men who, like the herdsman of Tekoa, came from following the oxen and the plough; men from the smithy and the loom; husbandmen and fishermen like the first disciples of our Lord; men from the mine and from the moor. Yet were there also those of wealth and noble rank, as Lord Dartmouth, Lord St. John, Mary Bosanquet and the Countess of Huntingdon, and others in high places who, like the Magi, laid their wealth and titles at the feet of Jesus.

But, for the most part, this great revival came with its revelation of love to the souls of the poor. The common people heard it gladly. To the great heart of suffering humanity,—burdened with its sorrows and its sins, with its sordid cares as to what it should eat, and what it should drink, and wherewithal

it should be clothed; with its immortal hunger which the husks of this world could not satisfy: with its divine thirst that the broken cisterns of earthly pleasure could not appease,—came the emancipating message of salvation, came the bread of heaven and the water of life. “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.”

In the pages that follow we shall select a few examples of the noble men and women whom God raised up on both sides of the sea to carry out His purposes of grace—to perform a great work in the world.

We cannot attempt anything like a complete history of the great world-movement of Methodism. That would require many volumes larger than this. The selection of certain Makers of Methodism involves the omission of others perhaps as noteworthy as some whom we present. We have endeavoured to maintain historic sequence, although the periods treated have of necessity, in some cases, overlapped. The study of a few prominent actors in this great movement will illustrate its spirit as a whole, will give unity and interest to the narrative, and will prevent the distraction caused by the attempted characterization of a great number of persons.

As to authorities, we are chiefly indebted to the

biographers of the several persons here sketched; to Bangs', Stevens' and Buckley's histories of Methodism; to the autobiographies of Mary Bosanquet, John Nelson, Jesse Lee, Nathan Bangs, and others, to Tyerman's "Wesley," and to many Review and Encyclopædia articles.

II.

*THE CONDITION OF ENGLAND IN THE TIME
OF THE WESLEYS.*

It is difficult to get a clear conception of the conditions amid which Methodism won its earliest triumphs. We may best succeed by comparing them with the conditions of to-day. The contrast between the tinder box and tallow dip of the last century and the lucifer match and electric light—between the lumbering coach or carrier's cart and the express train and electric trolley—is typical of much moral as well as material progress. The wonderful invention of Watt, the greatest of the eighteenth century, has more than realized the wildest legends of Aladin's lamp and the magician's ring. Applied to the printing press it has given wings to knowledge wherewith it may fly to the ends of the earth.

A journey to Land's End or to John o' Groat's House a hundred years ago was as difficult as one to St. Petersburg or to Constantinople is now. Clive's great Indian victory was unknown at the Company's office in London for many months after it was achieved. To-day the tidings of an irruption of the hill tribes of India, or of a revolt of the Mahrattas, throbs along the electric nerve of the world from Calcutta to Vancouver. The people of Shetland were

found praying for George II. when his successor had been a year on the throne. To-day the Queen's speech is hawked about the streets of Montreal and Chicago on the very day it wakes the applause of St. Stephen's palace, and the President's message is read simultaneously in London and San Francisco. We are disappointed if last evening's news from Bucharest and Vienna, from Paris and Berlin, from Peking and Tokyo, with yesterday's quotations from the bourses of Frankfort and Hamburg, and the exchanges of Chicago and New York, are not served with the coffee and toast at breakfast.

A century ago books and newspapers were the luxury of the few, they are now the necessity of all. No man of his age did more than John Wesley to give a cheap literature, that characteristic of our times, to the people. He wrote himself one hundred and eighty-one different works, two-thirds of which sold for less than a shilling each. They comprised histories, dictionaries, and grammars of several languages, editions of the classics, and the like. He established the first religious magazine in England. His manly independence hastened the abolition of the literary patronage of titled know-nothings, and of obsequious dedications to the great. He appealed directly to the patronage of the people, and found them more munificent than Augustus or Mæcenas, than Leo X. or Lorenzo the Magnificent. He anticipated Raikes by several years in the establishment of Sunday-schools. The Tract Society and the Society for the Diffusion of Christian Knowledge but carried

out more fully plans of usefulness which he had inaugurated. In imitation of the Moravian Brethren, he also actively promoted the cause of Christian Missions. But these were only the germs of those magnificent enterprises which, in our time, have brought forth such glorious fruit. The present century is especially the age of missions. Never since the days of the apostles have men exhibited such tireless energy, such quenchless zeal in going forth to preach the Gospel to every creature. The miracle of Pentecost seems repeated, as by means of the various Bible societies men of every land can read in their own tongue, wherein they were born, the Word of God.

The condition of public and private morals during the early part of the eighteenth century was deplorable. The veteran premier, Walpole, unblushingly asserted the doctrine that every man has his price; and his conduct was conformable to his theory. Borough-mongering was openly practised, and places at court and in the church, in the army and navy, were shamelessly bought and sold. It was by no means uncommon to find ensigns in the cradle, who grew to be colonels in their teens. "Carry the Major his pap," was a by-word. Charles Phillips states that one of Provost Hutchinson's daughters was gazetted a major of a cavalry regiment.

Few things are more painful to contemplate than the moral obtuseness of the court of the early Georges. From the King to the lackey there seems to have been an almost entire absence of moral sense. The

card table was the main resource from *ennui*. Faded dowagers sat late into the night playing the magic cards. The Newmarket races were the haunt of profligacy and vice. So also were the favourite resorts of Bath and Tunbridge Wells. Immense sums were lost and won in bets. The fashionable literature to be found in fine ladies' boudoirs was such as few now care to acknowledge having read. Intemperance was a prevailing vice. No class was free from its contamination. The ermine of the judge and the cassock of the priest were alike polluted by the degrading practice. The dissipation of the lower classes was almost incredible. Smollett tells us that over many of the spirit-vaults in the streets of London might be seen the inscription, "Drunk for a penny; dead drunk for twopence; straw (to sober off on) for nothing."

Profane swearing was awfully prevalent. The judge swore upon the bench, the lawyer swore in addressing the jury, the fine lady swore over her cards, and it is even said that those who wore the surplice swore over their wine. "The nation was clothed with cursing as with a garment." The profligacy of the soldiers and sailors was proverbial. The barrack-room and ship's fore-castle were scenes of grossest vice, for which the cruel floggings inflicted were an inefficient restraint. Robbers waylaid the traveller on Hounslow Heath, and footpads assailed him in the streets of London. In the northern part of the island, rieving, raiding and harrying cattle still often occurred. On the south-western coast,

before the Methodist revival, wrecking—that is, enticing ships upon the rocks by the exhibition of false signals—was a constant occurrence, and was frequently followed by the murder of the shipwrecked mariners. Although the mining population of the kingdom was greatly benefited by the labours of the Wesleys and their coadjutors, still their condition was deplorable. Many were in a condition of grossest ignorance, their homes wretched hovels, their toil excessive and far more dangerous than now, their amusements brutalizing in their tendency. Even women and children underwent the drudgery of the mine. For no class of society has Methodism done more than for these.

The introduction of gas has greatly restricted midnight crime in the cities. A hundred years ago they were miserably dark, lit only by oil lamps hung across the streets. Link-boys offered to escort the traveller with torches. Riotous city “Mohawks” haunted the streets at midnight, roaring drunken songs, assaulting belated passengers, and beating drowsy watchmen, who went their rounds with a “lanthorn” and duly announced the hour of the night—unless they were themselves asleep. Bear and badger baiting was a favourite amusement, as was also prize-fighting. Even women, forgetting their natural pitifulness and modesty, fought in the ring.

One of the greatest evils of the time was the condition of the laws affecting marriage. Prior to 1754 a marriage could be celebrated by a priest in orders at any time or place, without notice, consent of

parents, or record of any kind. Such marriages fell into the hands of needy and disreputable clergymen, who were always to be found in or about the Fleet Prison, where they were or had been confined for debt. It was proved before Parliament that there had been 2,954 Fleet marriages in four months. One of these Fleet parsons married 173 couples in a single day. The scandal reached its worst in the seaports when a fleet arrived, and the sailors were married, says Lecky, in platoons.

The state of religion previous to the Wesleyan revival was deplorable. Even of professed theologians but few were faithful to their sacred trust, and these bemoaned, with a feeling akin to that of Nehemiah and the exiled Jews, that the house of the Lord was laid waste. One of these, the venerable Archbishop Leighton, of pious memory, in pathetic terms laments over the national church as "a fair carcase without spirit." A sneering scepticism pervaded the writings of Bolingbroke and Hobbes, of Hume and Gibbon. The principles of French philosophy were affecting English thought. In the universities a mediæval scholasticism prevailed. Even the candidates for holy orders were ignorant of the Gospels. A hireling priesthood often dispensed the ordinances of the Church, attaching more importance to mere forms than to the spirit of the Gospel—to the wearing of a surplice than to the adorning of the inner man. Some of them were more at home at the races, at a cockpit, at a hunting or a drinking party, than in their study or their closet. It must not, however, be supposed

that there were no redeeming features to this dark picture. The names of Butler, Lowth, Watts and Doddridge would cast a lustre over any age. But they, alas, only made the surrounding darkness seem more dark.

At this time the Wesleys entered upon their sacred mission. They carried the tidings of salvation to regions where it was before unknown. Amid markets, fair-grounds and coal-pits they boldly proclaimed their message. On the mountains of Wales, among the tin mines of Cornwall, on the chalk downs of Surrey, in the hopfields of Kent, on the fenlands of Lincolnshire, in the cornfields of Huntingdon, on the wolds of Wiltshire, and among the lakes of Cumberland they proclaimed the joyful tidings to eager thousands. They adapted themselves to the capacity of miners and pitmen, of uncouth rustics and rude fishermen. They recognized in the ignorant and embroiled the sublime dignity of manhood. From the ranks of those who were rescued from degradation and sin arose a noble band of fellow-workers—earnest-souled and fiery-hearted men: men who feared not death nor danger, the love of Christ constraining them.

Nor was this new apostolate without confessors unto blood and martyrs unto death. They were stoned, they were beaten with cudgels, they were dragged through the kennels, and some died of their wounds. They were everywhere spoken against. Even Bishops, as Warburton and Lavington, assailed them with the coarsest and most scurrilous invective. But, like the

rosemary and thyme, which, "the more they be incensed," to use the words of Bacon, "the more they give forth their sweetest odours," so those holy lives, under the heel of persecution, sent forth a sacred incense unto God, whose perfume is fragrant throughout the world to-day. Thus the influence spread till its great originator ceased at once to work and live.

The penal code of England in the eighteenth century was of savage ferocity. Its laws, like those of Draco, were written in blood. The death penalty was inflicted not only for murder, but also for treason, forgery, theft, and smuggling; and it was often inflicted with aggravating terrors. Among the causes of the increase of robbers, Fielding lays much stress on the frequency of executions, their publicity, and their habitual association in the popular mind with notions of pride and vanity, instead of guilt, degradation or shame.

The turnkeys of Newgate were said to have made £200 by showing Jack Sheppard. Dr. Dodd was exhibited for two hours in the press-room at a shilling a head before he was led to the gallows. The criminal sentenced to death was encouraged and aided to put a brave face on the matter, and act on the maxim, *Carpe Diem*—"Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." Boys under twelve were hanged for participation in the Gordon riots of 1780. Mentioning the circumstance to Rogers, Mr. Grenville rather naïvely added: "I never in my life saw boys cry so." "When Blackstone wrote," says Mr. Lecky, "there were no less than 160 offences in England punishable with

death, and it was a very ordinary occurrence for ten or twelve culprits to be hung on a single occasion, for forty or fifty to be condemned at a single assize."

Persons now living can remember the gibbeting of murderers till the ravens devoured their flesh, and their bones rattled in the wind. Political offenders were still more harshly dealt with. The gory heads of knights and peers were impaled on Temple Bar, and their dismembered limbs on London Bridge.

Suicides were thrown into dishonoured wayside graves, transfixed with stakes and crushed with stones. The pillory and stocks still stood on the village green. Flogging was publicly inflicted by the beadle of the parish. The number of executions was enormous. In 1785, in London alone, it was ninety-seven. After a jail-delivery at Newgate, scores of miserable wretches were dragged on hurdles up Tyburn Hill, amid the shouts and jeers of a ribald mob, who either mocked the mortal agonies of the culprits, or exhorted their favourites to "die game," as the phrase was.

So far were those exhibitions from deterring vice, they actually promoted it. Mountebanks, gamblers and jugglers plied their nefarious callings under the very shadow of the gallows and in the awful presence of death. On the outskirts of the throng, John Wesley or Silas Told often exhorted the multitude to prepare for the Great Assize and the final Judgment.

The condition of the prisons was infamous. Prisoners for debt were even worse lodged than condemned felons, and both were exposed to the cupidity and cruelty of a brutal jailer. In 1773 John Howard

was appointed Sheriff of Bedford. The horrible state of the prison pierced his soul. He forthwith burrowed in all the dungeons in Europe, and dragged their abominations to light. They were the lairs of pestilence and plague. Men were sentenced not to prison only, but also to rheumatism and typhus. Howard bearded the fever demon in his den, and fell a victim to his philanthropy. But through his efforts and those of Mrs. Fry, Fowell Buxton, and others, a great reform in the state of prisons has taken place. Methodism did much for the prisoners. The Wesleys sedulously visited them, and Silas Told, the sailor convert of John Wesley, gave himself exclusively to this work.

In the following pages we will sketch briefly some of the Makers of Methodism,—some of the men and women who, in the providence of God, were to change the moral aspect of Great Britain—who were to save the kingdom from an eclipse of faith and a possible carnival of blood akin to the French Revolution, which overturned both throne and altar in the dust—who were to impress upon the age both in the Old World and the New the stamp of a higher Christian civilization—who were to go forth with a passionate charity to remember the forgotten, to visit the forsaken, to lift up the fallen from a condition little better than that of beasts to the dignity of men and the fellowship of saints—who were to carry the everlasting Gospel to earth's darkest and remotest bounds—who were to sing in the dull ear of the world

“ The songs of the Holy City
The chimes of eternal peace.”



SUSANNA WESLEY.

"THE MOTHER OF METHODISM."

III.

SUSANNA WESLEY.

THE record of woman's work and woman's influence in the Christian church forms one of the noblest and most inspiring chapters in its history. No branch of the church has been richer in holy and devoted women than has Methodism. To mention only a few of the illustrious names of its early years, we have Susanna Wesley; Selina, Countess of Huntingdon; Lady Maxwell; Mary Fletcher; Grace Murray; Dinah Evans, the heroine of "Adam Bede"; and Barbara Heck, the foundress of Methodism in both the United States and Canada.

Of these, one of the most notable and most influential on the destiny of Methodism* was Susanna Wesley. She fulfils the poet's ideal of true womanhood:

“ A perfect woman, nobly planned
To warn, to comfort and command ;
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of an angel light.”

In the quiet rectory of Epworth, often amid straitened circumstances and manifold household cares, she

* “The mother of the Wesleys,” says Southey, “was also the Mother of Methodism.”

moulded the character of those distinguished sons who were destined to originate a great religious movement, which should regenerate the age in which they lived and send its waves of beneficent influence to farthest shores and remotest times.

In the eyes of some it will be a feature of additional interest in the history of Susanna Wesley that she was "nobly related." But no circumstances of rank or birth can increase the lustre of her character. She was the daughter of Dr. Samuel Annesley, who was a nephew of the Earl of Anglesea, a noble lord, whose pedigree goes back to the Norman conquest. Her father was noted at Oxford for his piety and zeal. He entered the ministry of the national church, and acted as a chaplain at sea. He subsequently preached in Kent and in two of the largest congregations in London, and was also lecturer at St. Paul's.

When the Act of Uniformity was passed, in 1662, Dr. Annesley was one of the two thousand English rectors and vicars who, for their fidelity to the dictates of conscience, were driven from their parishes, and were persecuted throughout the realm. He became a prominent leader among the ejected Nonconformists, preaching almost daily and finding food and shelter for many of his impoverished brethren. After a half-century's service and many sore trials, from which he never shrank, he died on the last day of the year 1696, exclaiming, "I shall be satisfied with thy likeness; satisfied—satisfied." He was beloved and revered by all who knew him; and on her death-bed, his noble relative, the Countess of Anglesea, requested to be buried in his grave.

From such pious parentage was Susanna Wesley descended. The energy of character and intellectual vigour which she inherited she transmitted to her illustrious sons. She received, under her father's care, an education superior to that of most young women of her own or, indeed, of the present time. She was acquainted with the Greek, Latin and French languages, and exhibited a discriminative judgment of books. An illustration of her early maturity of thought and independence of character is seen in the fact that, before her thirteenth year, she had examined the ground of controversy between Churchmen and Dissenters. She adopted the principles of the Established Church, and renounced the views on account of which her father had been driven from his parish, and for which he had espoused a life of suffering and persecution. This change of opinion, however, produced no interruption of the loving intercourse between the affectionate father and his favourite child.

Miss Annesley, about the year 1689, being then in her nineteenth or twentieth year, was married to the Rev. Samuel Wesley, the hard-working curate of a London parish, who was in receipt of an income of only thirty pounds a year. The Wesleys were also an ancient family, probably, as is inferred from the "scallop shell" upon their coat of arms, descended from crusading ancestors. It is remarkable that both the father and grandfather of the Rev. Samuel Wesley were clergymen of the Established Church, who, refusing to obey the Act of Uniformity, were

driven from their homes and pulpits. By the Five Mile Act they were prohibited from approaching their former parishes or any borough town. Driven from place to place, fugitives and outcasts for conscience' sake, they preached wherever they could, enduring persecutions similar to those with which the early Methodists were afterwards so familiar. Four times was the father of Samuel Wesley thrown into prison—once for six, and again for three months; and at length he sank into the grave at the early age of thirty-four. His aged father, heart-broken by his griefs and sorrows, soon followed him to heaven. Of such godly stock, on the side of both father and mother, familiar with persecutions and strengthened in character by trial and sufferings, was the Mother of Methodism born.

A portrait of Susanna Wesley, taken not long after her marriage, presents a fair young face, with delicate features, of refined expression and almost classic regularity of outline, and with bright, vivacious eyes. A profusion of long and curling hair adorns a head of singularly graceful pose, "not without an air," says Dr. Abel Stevens, "of the high-bred aristocracy from which she was descended." A beautiful hand and arm support a book upon her breast. Her dress is simple, yet tasteful, like that of a well-bred lady of the period, equally removed from the worldly fashions of the time and from the ascetic severity which characterized some of the women of early Methodism. Dr. Adam Clarke describes her as not only graceful, but beautiful. One of her sisters was

painted by Sir Peter Lely as one of the "beauties" of the age, but she is admitted to have been less refined in feature than Mrs. Wesley.

But the more enduring attractions of her well-stored mind and of her amiable and pious disposition, surpassed even those of her person. She possessed a correct literary taste and sound judgment. She projected several literary works, which, however, the duties of a busy life prevented her carrying into effect. Among these was one on natural and revealed religion, comprising her reasons for renouncing Dissent, and a discourse on the Eucharist. A fragment, which is still extant, on the Apostles' Creed "would not," says a competent critic, "have been discreditable to the theological literature of the day."

Her sincere and earnest piety was her most striking characteristic. She nourished her soul by daily meditation on the Word of God and by prayer. To this purpose, an hour every morning and evening was devoted. Her letters to her children and her counsel to her sons on questions of grave religious importance evince at once the clearness and the correctness of her judgment. The respect with which her views were received by her cultured and filial sons proves the weight which they attached to her opinions.

The poetical faculty with which John and, especially, Charles Wesley were so highly endowed, was derived from their father rather than from their mother, who has left no special proof of talent in this direction. With the Rev. Samuel Wesley, on the contrary "beating rhymes," as he called it, was almost a mania.

He was a man of extraordinary literary industry, and poem after poem came in rapid succession from his pen. These found their way into print by the aid of Dunton, a London publisher, who had married a daughter of Dr. Annesley. He rendered Mr. Wesley, however, more valuable service by making him acquainted with Susanna Annesley, his future wife. Pope knew the elder Wesley well, and commends him to Swift as "a learned man whose prose is better than his poetry." His longer poems were a "Life of Christ" and a "History of the Old and New Testaments," written in rather doggerel rhymes; but his most able production was a learned Latin dissertation on the Book of Job. He possessed the rare distinction of having dedicated volumes to three successive Queens of England.

One of these dedications procured him the presentation to the rectory of Epworth, with a stipend of two hundred pounds a year. This was a piece of great good fortune, for, as he wrote to the Archbishop of York, "he had had but fifty pounds a year for six or seven years together, and one child, at least, per annum." Yet he welcomed each addition to his family as a gift from God, and bravely struggled to provide bread for the constantly increasing number of hungry mouths.

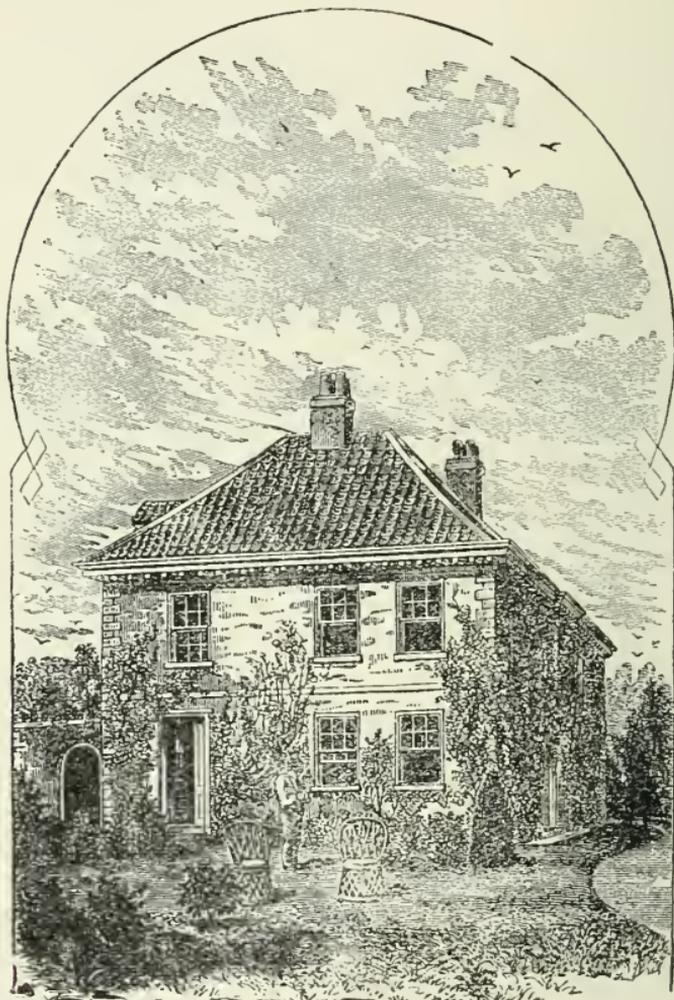
Even when living with his wife and child, in lodgings in London on an income of thirty pounds a year, his sturdy and hereditary independence was manifest. He was offered preferment by the court party, if he would read from the pulpit King James the Second's

famous Declaration of Indulgence. But believing it to be a design to favour the Roman Catholics, as indeed it was, he not only refused to read it, but denounced it in a sermon on the words of the three Hebrew children concerning the golden image of Nebuchadnezzar. The High Church notions of Samuel Wesley, like those of his wife, were the result, therefore, of conviction, and not of self-interest.

In the little rectory of Epworth was reproduced one of the noblest phases of what Coleridge has called the one sweet idyl of English society—life in a country parsonage. Here in a quiet round of domestic joys and religious duties, was trained, for usefulness and for God, a numerous family, numbering in all nineteen children. Mr. Wesley was zealous in pulpit and pastoral labours and bold in rebuking sin, whether in lofty or lowly. Evil livers, to whom the truth was obnoxious, soon resented his plainness. They wounded his cattle, twice set fire to his house, and fired guns and shouted beneath his windows. For a small debt, he was arrested while leaving his church and thrown into prison, where he remained three months.

“Now I am at rest,” he wrote from his cell to the Archbishop of York, “for I have come to the haven where I have long expected to be.” But he immediately began to minister to the spiritual wants of his fellow-prisoners, to whom he read prayers daily and preached on Sunday. He was greatly sustained by the sympathy and fortitude of his noble wife. “It is not everyone,” he wrote again to the Archbishop, “who could bear these things; but, I bless God, my

wife is less concerned with suffering them than I am in writing, or than, I believe; your Grace will be in



EPWORTH RECTORY.

reading them.” “When I came here,” he writes again, “my stock was but little above ten shillings, and my

wife at home had scarce so much. She soon sent me her rings, because she had nothing else to relieve me with, but I returned them."

The Epworth rectory was a humble, thatch-roofed building of wood and plaster, and venerable with moss and lichen, the growth of a hundred years. It had a parlour, hall, buttery, three large upper chambers, with some smaller apartments and a study, where, we are told, the rector spent most of his time "beating rhymes" and preparing his sermons. The management of the domestic affairs, together with the often vexatious temporalities of the tithes and glebe, he left to his more practical and capable wife. That rectory family was a model Christian household. Godly gravity was tempered by innocent gaiety, and the whole suffused with the tenderest domestic affection. "They had the common reputation," says Dr. Clarke, "of being the most loving family in Lincolnshire."

The centre and presiding genius of this fair domain was Susanna Wesley. Like the Roman matron, Cornelia, she cherished her children, of whom she had thirteen around her at once, as her chief jewels. They all bore pet "nicknames," which were fondly used, like an uttered caress, in the family circle and in the copious correspondence that was kept up after they left home. The noblest tribute to this loving mother is the passionate affection she inspired in her children.

Her son John writes to her from Oxford, at a time when her health was precarious, in strains of lover-like tenderness, and hopes that he may die before her, that he may not endure the anguish of her loss.

"You did well," she wrote him, in unconscious prophecy, "to correct that fond desire of dying before me, since you do not know what work God may have for you to do before you leave the world."

By her daughters she was beloved almost with filial idolatry. Death and sorrow many times entered that happy home, and several of the nineteen children died young. But upon the survivors was concentrated the affection of as warm a mother's love as ever throbbed in human breast. The children seem to have been worthy of that mother. They were all intelligent; some of them noted for their sprightliness and wit, and others for their poetic faculty, and several of the girls were remarkable for their beauty and vivacity. Fun and frolic were not unknown in this large family of healthy, happy children, and the great hall of the rectory became an arena of hilarious recreations. "Games of skill and chance, even," says Dr. Stevens, "were among the family pastimes, such as John Wesley afterwards prohibited among the Methodists."

But maternal affection never degenerated into undue indulgence. The home discipline was firm, but not rigorous: strength, guided by kindness, ruled in that happy household. Mrs. Wesley superintended the entire early education of her children, in addition to her other numerous household cares. Her son John describes with admiration the calmness with which she wrote letters, transacted business and conversed, surrounded by her numerous family. She has left a record of her mode of government and instruction.

“The children,” she says, “were always put into a regular method of living in such things as they were capable of, from their birth, such as in dressing, undressing, etc. They were left in their several rooms awake, for there was no such thing allowed in the house as sitting by a child till it fell asleep. From the time they were one year old they were taught to cry softly, if at all, whereby they escaped much correction, and that most odious noise of the crying of children was rarely heard. The will was early subdued, because,” she judiciously observes, “this is the only strong and rational foundation of a religious education, without which both precept and example will be ineffectual. But when this is thoroughly done,” she continues, “then a child is capable of being governed by the reason and piety of its parents till its own understanding comes to maturity, and the principles of religion have taken root in the mind.”

So early did this religious training begin that the children were taught “to be quiet at family prayer, and to ask a blessing at table by signs, before they could kneel or speak.” At five years old they were taught to read. One day was allowed for learning the letters—a feat which each of them accomplished in that time, except two, who took a day and a half, “for which,” says their mother, “I then thought them very dull.” As soon as they could spell they were set reading the Scriptures, and kept at the appointed task till it was perfectly mastered. One of the girls, we are told, was able, in her eighth year, to read the Greek language.

The culture of the heart was no less sedulously observed than the culture of the mind. "The family school opened and closed with singing. At four o'clock in the afternoon all had a season of retirement, when the oldest took the youngest that could speak, and the second the next, to whom they read the Psalm for the day and a chapter of the New Testament. She herself also conversed each evening with one of her children on religious subjects, and on some evenings with two, so as to comprehend the whole circle every week." The hallowed influence of those sacred hours is incalculable.

A high-souled sense of honour was cultivated in the hearts of the children. If any of them was charged with a fault, he was encouraged to ingenuous confession, and, on promise of amendment, was freely forgiven. The result of this pious home-training was seen in the character it produced. Ten of the children reached adult years, and every one of them became an earnest Christian, and, after a life of singular devotion, died at last in the triumphs of faith. "Such a family," says Dr. Adam Clarke, "I have never heard of or known, nor, since the days of Abraham and Sarah, and Joseph and Mary of Nazareth, has there ever been a family to which the human race has been more indebted."

This noble woman was deeply concerned for the spiritual welfare of her neighbours as well as of her own household. While her husband was confined in prison she opened the doors of her house for religious service. Sometimes as many as two hundred were

present, while many others went away for want of room. To these she read the most awakening sermons she could find, and prayed and conversed with them. Wesley's curate and some of the parishioners wrote to him against the assembly as a "conventicle." She vindicated her course in a letter of sound judgment and good taste. "The meetings were filling the parish church," she said, "with persons reclaimed from immorality, some of whom had not for years been seen at service." As to the suggestion of letting someone else read, she wrote: "Alas! you do not consider what these people are. I do not think one man among them could read a sermon through without spelling a good part of it; and how would that edify the rest?" But, with a true wife's recognition of the rightful authority of her husband, she says, "Do not advise, but command me to desist."

The tranquil rectory of Epworth was not, however, without its visitations of sorrow. Time after time, death visited its charmed circle, till nine of the loved household were borne away. And there were sadder things even than death to mar its happiness. The beauty and native graces of several of the daughters led to marriages which proved unfortunate. In anguish of soul their sympathizing mother writes thus to her brother of this saddest sorrow which can befall a woman's life: "O brother! happy, thrice happy are you. Happy is my sister, that buried your children in infancy, secure from temptation, secure from guilt, secure from want or shame, secure from the loss of friends. Believe me, it is better to mourn

ten children dead than one living, and I have buried many."

The pinchings of poverty also were only too familiar in this family, and sometimes even the experience of want. The shadow of debt hung over it, and beneath that shadow Mr. Wesley sank into the grave. Although the living of Epworth was nominally valued at £200, it did not realize more than £130. How, even with the utmost economy, such a large family was clothed, fed, and educated on this meagre stipend is one of the most extraordinary circumstances in its history. Yet, these privations were borne not complainingly, but cheerfully. In a letter to the Archbishop of York, this noble woman was able to say that the experience and observation of over fifty years had taught her that it was much easier to be contented without riches than with them.

It has been already stated that the rectory was twice fired by the disaffected rabble of the parish. It was on the second of these occasions that the future founder of Methodism was snatched, as by a special providence, almost from the jaws of death. Mrs. Wesley, who was in feeble health, was unable to make her escape, like others of the family, by climbing through the windows of the burning building. Thrice she attempted to fight her way through the flames to the street, but each time was driven back by their fury. At last, with scorched and branded hands, she escaped from the fire.

It was now found that little John Wesley was missing. Several times the frantic father strove to

climb the burning stairs to his rescue, but they crumbled beneath his weight. The imperilled child, finding his bed on fire, flew to the window, where two of the neighbours, standing one upon the shoulders of the other, plucked him from destruction at the very moment that the burning roof fell in, and the house became a mass of ruins. Everything was lost—the furniture and clothing of the household and the precious books and manuscripts of the studious rector. But the Christian and the father rose supreme above it all. “Come, friends,” he exclaimed, as he gathered his rescued family around him, “let us kneel down and thank God; He has given me all my eight children; I am rich enough.”

The grateful mother consecrated the child so providentially rescued to the service of God. “I do intend,” she subsequently wrote, “to be more particularly careful of the soul of this child, that thou hast so mercifully provided for, than ever I have been, that I may do my endeavour to instil into his mind the principles of true religion and virtue. Lord, give me grace to do it sincerely and prudently, and bless my attempt with good success.”

While her boys were absent at Charterhouse School and at Oxford University, this loving mother kept up a constant correspondence with them. Her letters are marked by a special solicitude for their spiritual welfare. “Resolve to make religion the business of your life,” she wrote to her son John. “I heartily wish you would now enter upon a strict examination of yourself, that you may know whether

you have a reasonable hope of salvation by Jesus Christ. If you have, the satisfaction of knowing it will abundantly reward your pains; if you have not, you will find a more reasonable occasion for tears than can be met with in any tragedy." With such a mother, and with such counsels, small wonder that her sons became a blessing to their race!

After the death of her husband this saintly soul was spared for many years to aid by her wise counsels the novel and often difficult decisions of her sons. When the "irregularities" of field preaching were complained of, she recognized the hand of Providence in the circumstances which made it a necessity, and stood by her son on Kennington Common as he proclaimed the Gospel to an audience of twenty thousand persons.

Adjoining the old Foundry, the mother-chapel of Methodism, John Wesley had fitted up a residence for himself and his assistants in London. Here with filial affection he brought his revered and beloved mother, and sustained her declining years with the tenderest care. When unable to attend the services, she could hear the singing and prayer that almost daily resounded through that historic building. Here, in the seventy-third year of her age, she peacefully passed away. "She had no doubt, no fear," writes her son, "nor any desire but to depart and be with Christ."

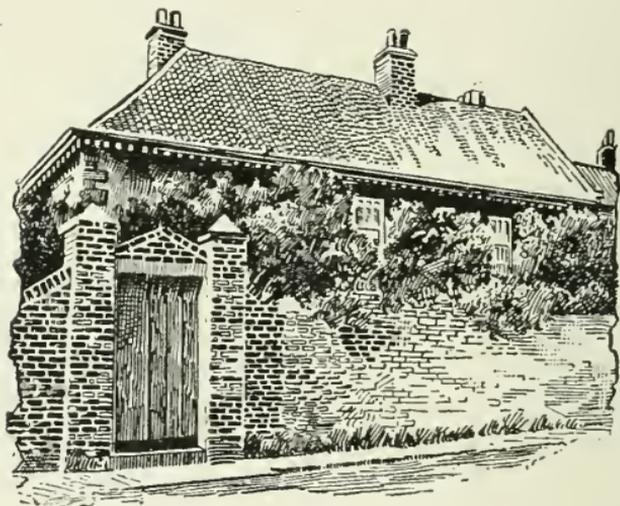
John Wesley and five of her daughters stood around her dying bed and commended her soul to God in prayer. When unable to speak, she looked

steadfastly upward, as if, like Stephen, she saw heaven open before her. With her last words she requested that her children should sing, as she departed, a psalm of praise to God. With tremulous voices they obeyed her last request, and her spirit took its flight from the toils and the travails of earth to the peace and blessedness of paradise. Her ashes sleep with those of the many illustrious dead of Bunhill Fields; and at City Road Chapel a simple marble monument commemorates her virtues.

Her noble life needs no words of eulogy. Her own works praise her. Her children rise up and call her blessed. Many daughters have done virtuously, but she has excelled them all. Her life of toil and trial, of privation and self-denial, of high resolve and patient continuance in well-doing has been crowned with a rich and glorious reward. The hallowed teachings of that humble home originated a sacred impulse that quickened the spiritual life of Christendom from that day to this. The pulsing tides of its growing influence shall roll down the ages and break on every civilized and savage shore till the whole world is filled with the knowledge of God.

The house in which John and Charles Wesley were born is still used as the rectory of the Parish of Epworth. It is externally somewhat changed, a roof of tiles having taken the place of that of thatch of the olden time. It is at present occupied by Canon Overton, a liberal churchman, who has himself written a sympathetic life of John Wesley. The Canon kindly gives courteous permission to the pilgrims to this Mecca of Methodism to visit the church and rectory. A few summers ago a number of Epworth Leaguers from

the United States were cordially welcomed to these historic scenes. One of our smaller cuts shows the view of the east front of the rectory, with the brick enclosure which, in Great Britain, seems to be a survival of the walls with which the feudal castles were surrounded. In this birthplace of Methodism the Wesleyan Methodists have a commodious and elegant chapel and schools.



EPWORTH RECTORY, EAST FRONT.

IV.

*JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY—FOUNDERS OF
METHODISM.*

THE Epworth rectory may well be called the cradle of Methodism. The group of boys and girls who gathered around the knees of Susanna Wesley may not unfitly be regarded as a type of the great family of Epworth Leaguers who are being trained up in the household of Methodism in Christian culture and Christian service.

Of the nineteen children of Samuel and Susanna Wesley several were in after life distinguished for piety, intelligence and scholarship. Others were remarkable for wit and vivacity. The eldest son, Samuel, became a very learned clergyman and author of some noble hymns. Others also had poetic talent. Several of the children died in childhood, but thirteen of them were living at one time, and must have made the old Epworth rectory alive with youthful fun and frolic.

Two members of this remarkable family have won world-wide fame as the chief founders of Methodism. John Wesley, the elder of the two, born in 1703, is described as having a boyish turn for wit and humour. His brother Charles, five years younger,

was exceedingly sprightly and active, and remarkable for courage and skill in juvenile encounters with his school-fellows. We have already described the home-training of this first Methodist household,



JOHN WESLEY AT THE AGE OF 23.

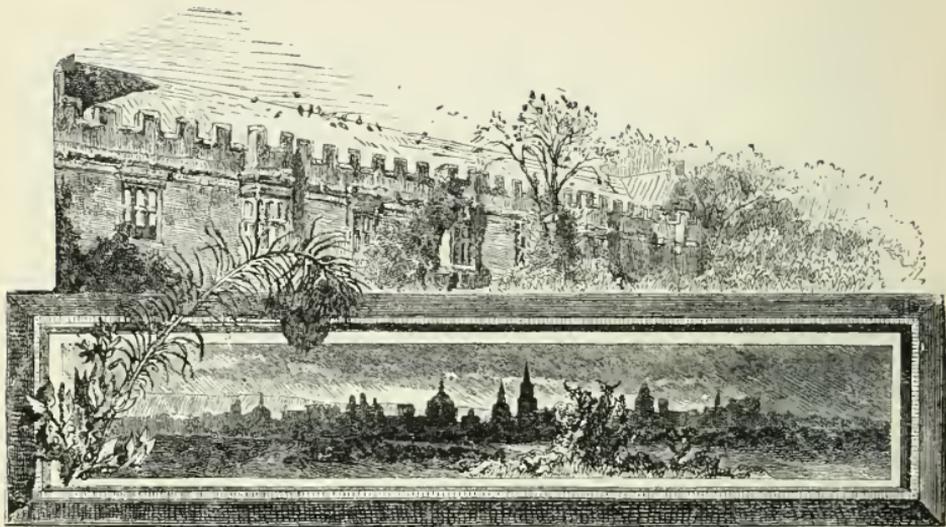
and the providential rescue of little John Wesley from destruction by fire.

When only thirteen years old "Jacky," as he is named in his mother's letters, left the sheltering roof-tree of the Epworth rectory for the cloisters of Charterhouse School, London. This was an old monastery founded five hundred years ago. After its

dissolution by Henry VIII. it became the family seat of the Howards, and the court of Queen Elizabeth and of King James. It was converted into a school for forty boys and an asylum for eighty poor gentlemen. It has an annual revenue of \$150,000. Among its famous scholars were Addison, Steele, Blackstone, Wesley, Grote, Havelock and Thackeray. In Wesley's day the food for the brain was better than that for the body, and Jacky was nearly starved. He obeyed the wise counsel of his father, that he should run around the large garden three times a day. He thus got up an excellent appetite, even if he did not get very much to gratify it.

In three years he entered Christ Church College, Oxford, where he continued his classical studies. He became Greek lecturer at the University when a little more than twenty-three years old. In Hebrew, too, he was one of the best scholars of the age. About this time he was joined by his younger brother Charles. When John was twenty-eight and Charles was twenty-three, the famous "Holy Club" was formed. It consisted of a little group of students who met together for the study of the Greek Testament, for self-examination and prayer. Their methodical lives led to their receiving the epithet of "Methodists," a name of contempt which was destined to become one of highest honour.

While Epworth rectory may be called the cradle of Methodism, it was at Oxford that it received its strong impress of intellectual culture. It must never be forgotten that it was in the first university of



- Oxford -



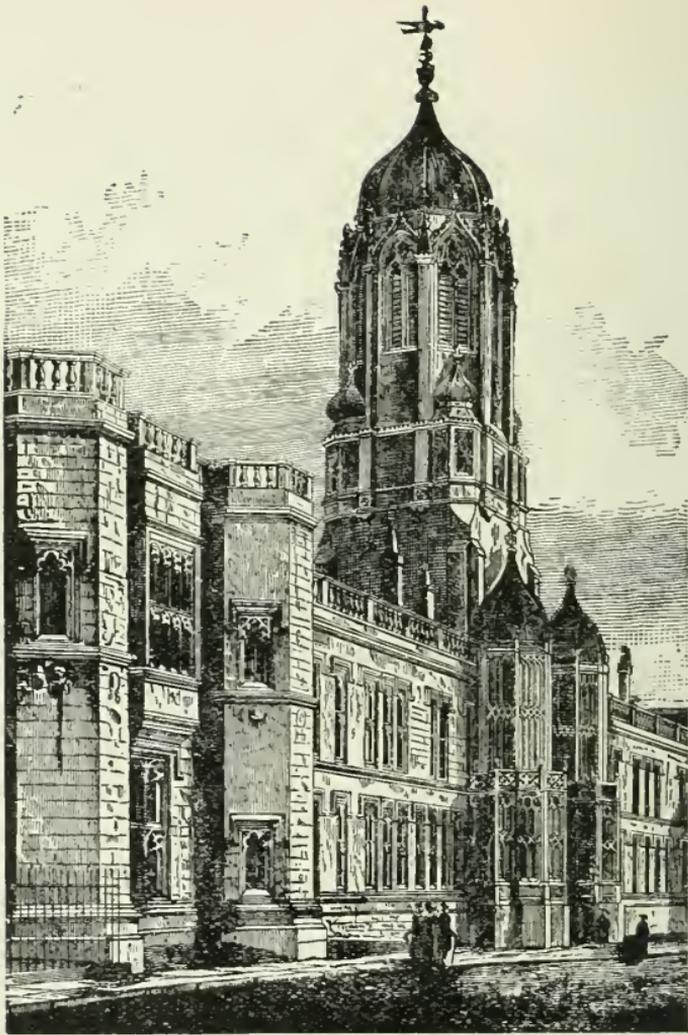
OXFORD AND ITS COLLEGES.

Europe that this child of Providence was fostered and trained. They were no illiterates those Fellows of Oxford who met for the study of the oracles of God in their original tongues. With the instincts of true learning, having kindled their torches at the altar fire of eternal truth, they went forth to diffuse the light, to illumine the darkness, and as heralds to proclaim the dawn of a new day. The University crest has in this connection a prophetic significance. It is an open Bible with the motto, "DOMINVS ILLV-MINATIO MEA"—The Lord is my Light. Though the mission of Methodism has been largely like that of the Christ of Nazareth, to preach the Gospel to the poor and lowly, it has been the better able to do this because it has sought to

"Unite the pair so long disjointed,
Knowledge and vital Piety."

Amid the stately surroundings of Oxford, that city of colleges which has trained so many of the English scholars and statesmen, the Wesleys, Whitefield, Coke and other early Methodist leaders received that broad culture, that sound classical learning, that strict logical training, which so efficiently equipped them for the great life-work they were to do. This lends special interest to a visit to this Mecca of Methodist pilgrimage.

This venerable seat of learning, dating from the time of Alfred, the ancient Oxenforde—its cognizance is still a shield with an ox crossing a stream—has a singularly attractive appearance as seen from a



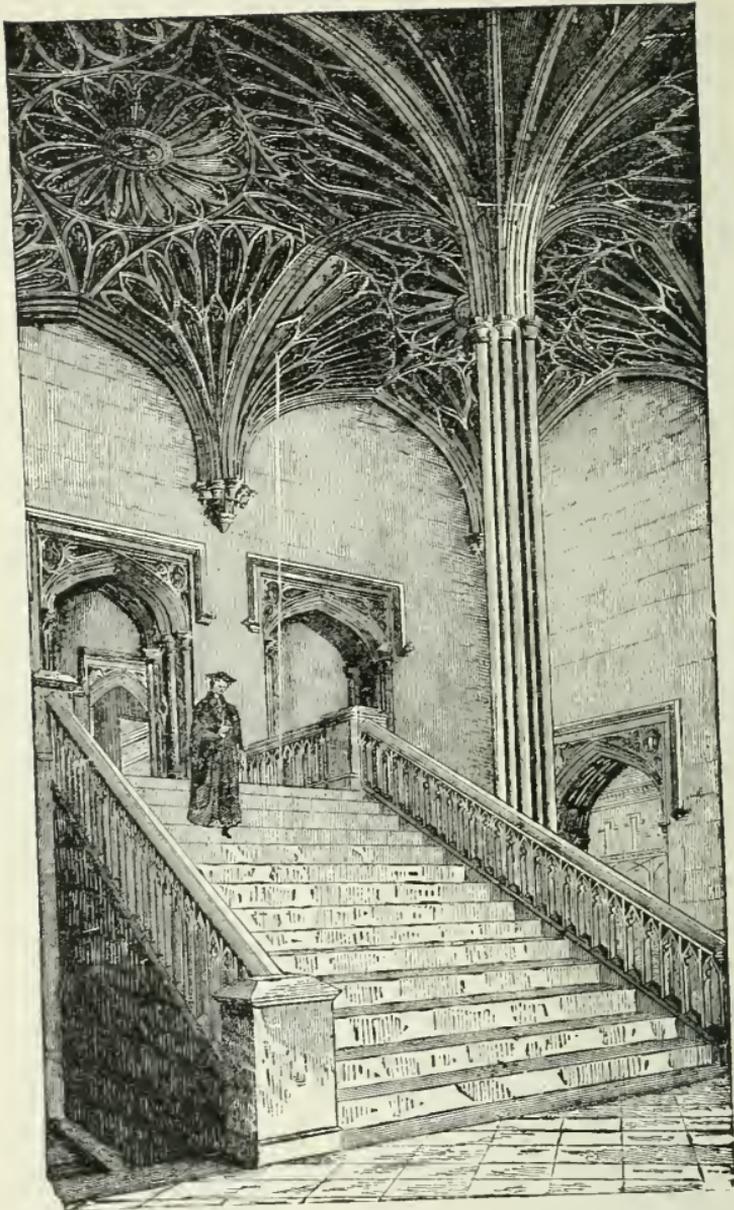
CHRIST CHURCH COLLEGE AND WOLSEY'S GATE, OXFORD.

distance, its many towers and spires, and the huge dome of the Radcliffe Library rising above the billowy sea of verdure of its sylvan surroundings. A nearer approach only heightens the effect of this architectural magnificence. Probably no city of its size in the world presents so many examples of stately and venerable architecture as this city of colleges. Look in what direction you will, a beautiful tower, spire, or Gothic façade will meet the eye.

As we walk the smooth-turfed quadrangles and traverse the ivy-clad cloisters and the long rows of collegiate buildings, and visit the alcoved library, the great halls and the college chapels, we gain some suggestions of the atmosphere of learning by which the founders of Methodism were surrounded.

Christ Church College, of which the Wesleys and Whitefield were students, is the largest and most magnificent college at Oxford. It owes its splendour to the munificence of Cardinal Wolsey, by whom it was founded when he was in the zenith of his prosperity. One enters Christ Church through Wolsey's "Faire Gate," well worthy of the name.

St. Mary's Church, in whose pulpit John Wesley often preached, is invested with some of the most memorable associations of the Reformation. From its pulpit Wycliffe denounced the Romish superstitions of his day, and maintained the right of the laity to read the Word of God, the true palladium of their civil and religious liberty. Two centuries later, when Romish influence was in the ascendant at the University, the martyr-bishops, Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer,



ENTRANCE TO HALL OF CHRIST CHURCH COLLEGE, OXFORD.

were cited here for trial before Cardinal Pole, 1555; and hither the following year the venerable Archbishop Cranmer was brought from prison for the purpose of publicly recanting his Protestant opinions.

“He that late was Primate of all England,” says Foxe, “attired in a bare and ragged gown, with an old square cap, stood on a low stage near the pulpit. After a pathetic prayer, stretching forth his right hand, instead of the expected recantation he said: ‘Forasmuch as my hand offended in writing contrary to my heart, my hand, therefore, shall be first punished, for it shall be first burnt.’ Having thus ‘flung down the burden of his shame,’ he was dragged from the stage, with many insults, to the place where he glorified God in the flames, after having been compelled to witness the martyrdom of Latimer and Ridley.”

The Wesleys were familiar with this sacred spot. With Whitefield and others of the “Holy Club,” they also regularly visited the felons in the public prison. Within these gloomy dungeons the martyr-bishops, Cranmer, Latimer and Ridley, were confined, and from it they walked to their funeral pyre. Here, we may be sure, the Wesleys often mused, catching inspiration from the example of those heroic men, and willing, if need were, to die like them for the Lord they loved so well.

The ivy-mantled gateway of St. Mary’s Church is an object of strikingly picturesque beauty. The image of the Virgin above it gave great offence to the Puritans, and was one of the causes of the impeachment of Archbishop Laud.



ST. MARY'S CHURCH, OXFORD.

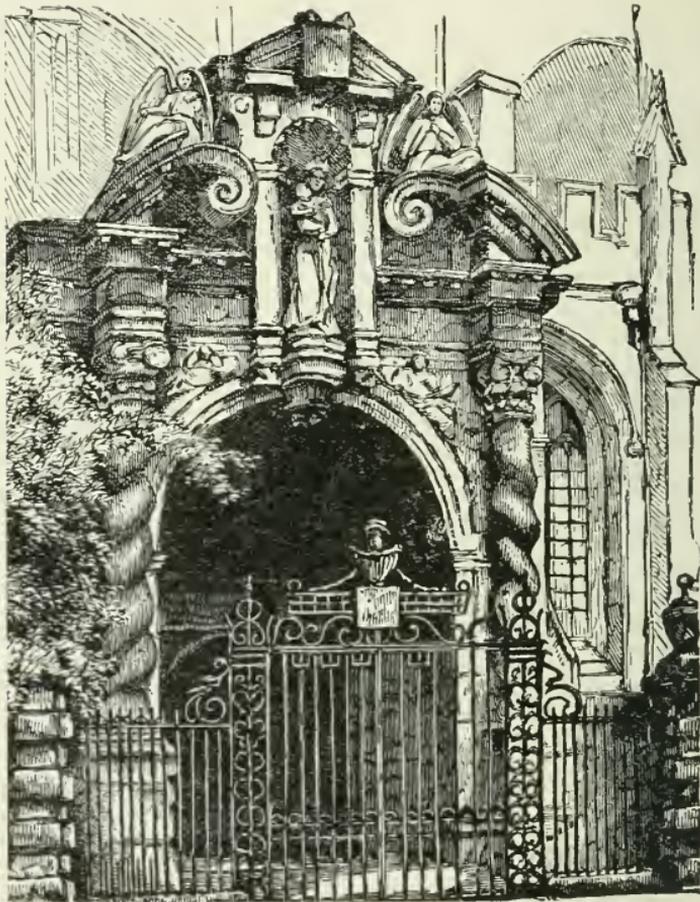
But we must return to the personal history of John Wesley. In due course he was ordained a minister of the Established Church, and for a time aided his father, then sinking under the weight of years, at Epworth.

On his father's death he was invited to succeed him as rector. He was also requested to go with his brother as a missionary to Georgia. The decision rested upon the consent of his venerable mother. "I can be," he said, "the staff of her age, her chief support and comfort." But the heroic soul, notwithstanding her lonely widowhood, replied, "Had I twenty sons I should rejoice that they were all so employed, though I should never see them again."

On board the ship by which the brothers sailed to the New World were a number of German Moravians with their Bishop. The vessel became at once "Bethel church and a seminary." Daily prayer and preaching, the study of the Scriptures and Christian divinity, and instructing the children filled up the hours. During a terrific storm, which greatly alarmed the English passengers, the pious Moravians, even the women and children, sang calmly on, unafraid to die—a lesson which the Oxford Fellows had not yet learned.

Arrived in Georgia, the Wesleys devoted themselves with zeal to their missionary toil. They lived the lives of ascetics. "They slept on the ground rather than on beds, they refused all food but bread and water, and John went barefooted that he might encourage the boys of his school—a condescension

better in its motive than in its example." The matter-of-fact colonists did not appreciate such ascetic piety,



GATEWAY OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH, OXFORD.

and the Wesleys soon found it expedient to return to England.

"I went to America," wrote John Wesley in his

Journal, "to convert the Indians, but, oh! who shall convert me? I have a fair summer religion; I can talk well, nay, and believe myself, while no danger is near; but let Death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled, nor can I say to die is gain." Yet he continued to preach and pray, though suffering great quietude of soul. He renewed his acquaintance with the Moravians by attending their services in London. One evening a layman was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. Wesley writes: "I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ and Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." Thus not until his thirty-fifth year did he obtain that full assurance of faith which he so long had sought, and which he was to preach, a flaming herald of the Cross, throughout the land. "It is scarcely an exaggeration to say," writes Lecky in his "History of England in the Eighteenth Century," "that the scene which took place in that humble meeting in Aldergate Street forms an epoch in English history. The conviction which then flashed upon one of the most powerful and active intellects in England is the true source of English Methodism."

Deeply impressed with the piety of the Moravians, Wesley determined to visit their chief settlement at Herrnhut, in Bohemia. His soul was strengthened by their devout companionship. "I would gladly," he said, "have spent my life here, but my Master calling me to labour in other parts of His vineyard, I was constrained to take my leave of this happy place."

A new note was now heard in his sermons. To the condemned felons of Newgate, as well as to the decorous congregations in the churches, he preached repentance, the remission of sins, and free salvation. Joined by his brother Charles and George Whitefield, he went everywhere preaching with strange power this new evangel of the grace of God.

In 1739 John Wesley dedicated the first place of worship for the people called Methodists, and organized the first Methodist society. His own account of this important event is as follows: "In the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to me in London, and desired that I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come; this was the rise of the United Society." This is recorded as the epoch of Methodism from which its corporate organization dates.

The origin of any important institution, the birth-place of any great movement or great man, will ever engage the profoundest attention of the human mind. Hence men visit with eager interest the cradle-lands of the race, they contemplate with patriotic pride the field of Runnymede, they make long pilgrimages to the humble cottage in which the Bard of Avon or the Bard of Ayr was born. With not less reverent feelings should we visit the cradle of the greatest religious movement of modern times.

The first home of Methodism was, indeed, very humble, suggesting analogies with the lowly beginnings of Christianity itself—the manger of Bethlehem

and the cottage home of Nazareth. Early in 1739 John Wesley was urged to secure the old Foundry, Moorfields, London, as a place of worship. This was a large, rambling pile of buildings, near the site of the present City Road Chapel. Wesley's only regular income was £28 a year, from his Oxford fellowship. The sum required for the purchase of the Foundry was £115, but full of faith he assumed the debt, and some friends coming to his aid, nearly £700 was expended in fitting it up for worship. Instead of the clang of anvils and roar of furnaces employed in the manufacture of the deadly enginery of war, its walls were to echo the holy hymns and the glad evangel of the gospel of Peace.

Part of the building was fitted up with desks for a school. Here, for seven years, Silas Told taught a number of charity children from six in the morning till five in the evening, for the salary of ten shillings a week. Part was afterwards fitted up as a book room for the sale of Mr. Wesley's publications. A dispensary and alms-house for the poor was also part of the establishment, where, in 1748, were nine widows, one blind woman and two poor children. "I might add," says Wesley, "four or five preachers, for I myself, as well as the other preachers who are in town, diet with the poor, on the same food and at the same table; and we rejoice therein, as a comfortable earnest of our eating bread together in our Father's kingdom." A savings bank and loan fund were also established. High up near the roof were apartments for Mr. Wesley, in which his mother died. There

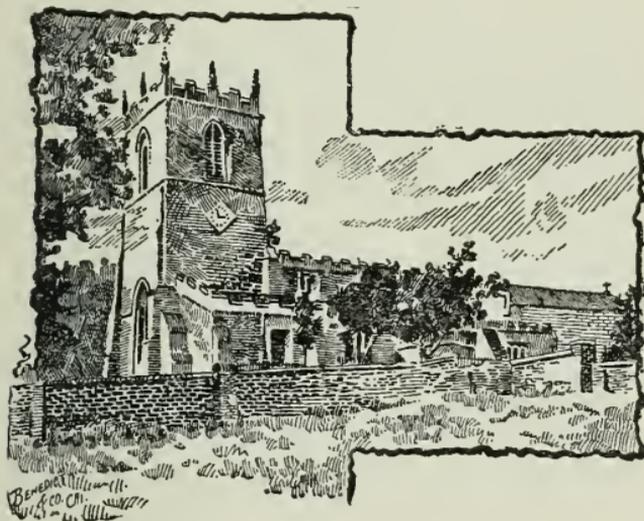
was also accommodation for the assistant preachers and for domestics.

To this rude and ruinous structure, in the dark London mornings and evenings, multitudes of God-fearing Methodists wended their way by the dim light of their candle or oil lanterns, over the ill-paved streets, to the services; and here multitudes of souls were converted to God. The Foundry society numbered, in 1743, no less than 2,200 members, meeting in sixty-six classes.

The "irregularities" of the new apostles soon caused the closure of many churches against him. Charles Wesley was ejected from his curacy and threatened with excommunication by the Archbishop of Canterbury. When driven from the churches, the zealous evangelists went everywhere preaching the word—in the market-places, on the hillsides, on the broad commons, wherever men would listen, and often where they would not.

John Wesley was soon called to sanction a new departure, namely, that of lay preaching. Thomas Maxfield, one of his gifted helpers, during Wesley's absence from the Foundry in London, occupied the pulpit—to the great benefit of the large congregations. Wesley, hearing of this new irregularity, and strong in his sentiments of churchly order, hastened to London to put a stop to the innovation. His wise mother, however, read the signs of the times with a profounder sagacity than her learned son. "Take care what you do to that young man," she said; "he is as surely called of God to preach as you are," and she

counselled him to hear and judge for himself. "It is the Lord. Let Him do what seemeth to Him good," the stanch churchman remarked, and another of his old prejudices was swept away. He at once recognized Maxwell as a son in the Gospel. Lady Huntingdon wrote of the eloquent preacher, "God has raised from the stones one to sit among the princes

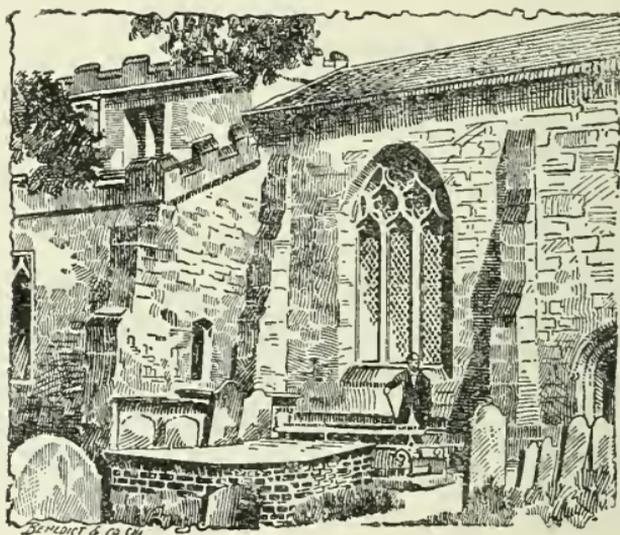


PARISH CHURCH, EPWORTH.

of His people." Thus was begun that great army of lay helpers who have done so much in the Old World and the New to carry on the triumphs of Methodism.

A no less important institution was soon originated in Bristol, namely, the Methodist class-meeting. The organizing genius of Wesley, no less, says Macaulay, than that of the great Cardinal Richelieu, began to

form his adherents into little groups for mutual edification and prayer, and for receiving systematic and regular contributions for the growing expenses of the Methodist societies. "This," writes Mr. Wesley, "was the origin of our classes, for which I can never sufficiently praise God. The unspeakable usefulness



SAMUEL WESLEY'S TOMBSTONE.

of the institution has ever since been more and more manifest."

Excluded from the Epworth Church, where his own father had so long been rector, John Wesley took his stand upon his father's tombstone, and day after day preached with such power and pathos that many of his hearers "lifted up their voices and wept," and several dropped down as if dead.

Shut out almost entirely from the pulpits of the Church established by law, and Methodist classes and societies springing up in all directions, John Wesley framed the General Rules of the United Societies, which have become a part of the constitution of the Methodist churches throughout the world. This is one of the most simple and catholic formulæ of faith recorded in the annals of Christendom. As John Wesley remarks in his Journal, "Oh, that we may never make anything more or less the term of union with us, but the having the mind that was in Christ, and the walking as He walked."

Travelling preachers and lay helpers rapidly multiplied, and chapels were, in course of time, erected in the chief centres of population. But while many heard the Word gladly, others were moved to intensest hostility. The persecutions of the early Methodists were akin to those of the primitive Christians. "At Sheffield," John Wesley writes, "hell from beneath was moved to oppose us." Stones and other missiles were thrown into the church. To save the building and the people he gave notice that he would preach out of doors and look the enemy in the face. A military officer rushed at the elder Wesley and presented his sword at the preacher's breast. Wesley, undaunted, threw open his vest and calmly said, "I fear God and honour the King." "The rioters resolved to pull down the preaching house, and set to their work," he writes, "while we were preaching and praising God. It was a glorious time with us. Every word and exhortation sunk deep, every prayer was

sealed. The rabble raged all night, and by morning had pulled down one end of the house, and soon not a stone remained upon another."

Next morning he was preaching, as usual, at five o'clock. The rioters smashed in the windows of his dwelling and threatened to tear it down, but the preacher fell asleep in five minutes in the dismantled room. "I feared no cold," he writes, "but dropped to sleep with that word, 'Scatter Thou the people that delight in war.'"

Charles Wesley, though constitutionally a timid man, was bold as a lion in the discharge of duty, and shared with unflinching courage the persecutions of the Methodist preachers. Having met with an accident in Bristol, he was unable, for a time, to walk. He was, however, carried about from place to place, preaching daily on his knees. "The Word of God," he wrote, "is not bound if I am, but runs very swiftly." At St. Ives, in Cornwall, the chapel was utterly demolished, and the worshippers were beaten and trampled on without mercy. At length "the ruffians fell to quarrelling among themselves, broke the head of the town clerk, and drove one another out of the room." Often the clergy and wardens of the Established Church headed the rabble. At Poole "the church record bears to this day an entry of expenses at the village inn for drink to the mob and its leader for driving out the Methodists." Yet nowhere were more glorious triumphs won for Methodism than in this county of Cornwall. Its bitterest persecutors became its most stalwart defenders.

At Wednesbury John Wesley was attacked at night in a pelting storm by an overwhelming mob of colliers and others. "A strong man aimed several blows with an oak bludgeon at the back of his head. One of them would probably have been fatal, but they were all turned aside, Wesley says, he knows not how. He



JOHN WESLEY AT 60.

This is the type followed in his bronze statue at City Road Chapel, London.

was struck by a powerful blow on the chest, and by another on the mouth, making the blood gush out; but he felt no pain, he affirms, from either more than if they had touched him with a straw. The noise on every side, he adds, was like the roaring of the sea. Many cried: 'Knock his brains out! Down with him! Kill him at once! Crucify him!' 'No, let us

hear him first,' shouted others. He at last broke out aloud into prayer. The ruffian who had headed the mob, a bear-garden prize-fighter, was struck with awe, and turning to him, said: 'Sir, I will spend my life for you: follow me, and not one soul here shall touch a hair of your head.'

The houses of the Methodists were attacked, the windows broken, the furniture demolished. His brother Charles writes of John Wesley, "He looked like a soldier of Christ. His clothes were torn to tatters." Yet the timid, fastidious, scholarly poet of Methodism also went like a soldier into the imminent deadly breach, and preached from the text, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong;" and again, at daylight, from the text, "Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer."

On the outbreak of the Stuart rebellion of 1745 the most absurd calumnies were reported concerning John Wesley. "He was an agent of the Pretender; he had been arrested for high treason; he was a Jesuit in disguise; he was a Spanish spy; he was an Anabaptist, a Quaker: had been prosecuted for unlawfully selling gin; had hanged himself; and, at any rate, was not the genuine John Wesley, for it was well known that the latter was dead and buried."

Charles Wesley was actually indicted before the magistrate because he had besought God to call home His banished ones. This, it was insisted, meant the House of Stuart.

Bishop Lavington threatened to strip the gown off one of Wesley's preachers for his Methodistic practices.

Stripping it off himself he cast it at the Bishop's feet, saying, "I can preach the Gospel without a gown." Lavington was charmed by his manly independence and agreed to overlook his Methodist fervour.

In Wednesbury the mob ruled for a week. The houses of the Methodists were pillaged and plundered as in a sack of a foreign town. Yet would the persecuted Methodists not surrender their religious convictions.

The whole region was in a state little short of civil war. The London newspapers reported that these outrages were perpetrated by the Methodists themselves. The magistrates took part with the mob against the preachers. One of them offered five pounds to have the Methodists driven from town. Another shouted, "Huzza, boys, well done, stand up for the Church." At Thorpe one of the persecutors died in despair, and the rabble was appalled into quiet. At Newcastle Wesley proclaimed in the public square, "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." Beneath his burning words the ringleaders were melted into contrition. Yet so mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed that Wesley's journeys soon became like a royal progress. The people who had mobbed him crowded the streets to bless him as he passed.

At Roughlee, a place rightly named, a mob thought to exact a pledge from Wesley that he would no more visit the neighbourhood. He declared that he would cut off his right hand sooner. He was knocked down and trampled upon, but next day he preached, he

writes, as he never did in his life before. At Devizes the mob brought a fire-engine, flooded the rooms in which Wesley lodged, and demanded that he should be given up to them to be thrown into a horse-pond. The wife of the Mayor sent her maid to entreat him to escape disguised as a woman. He declined this doubtful method. More than a thousand men joined in the assault. "Such threatenings, curses, blasphemies," writes Wesley, "I have never heard."

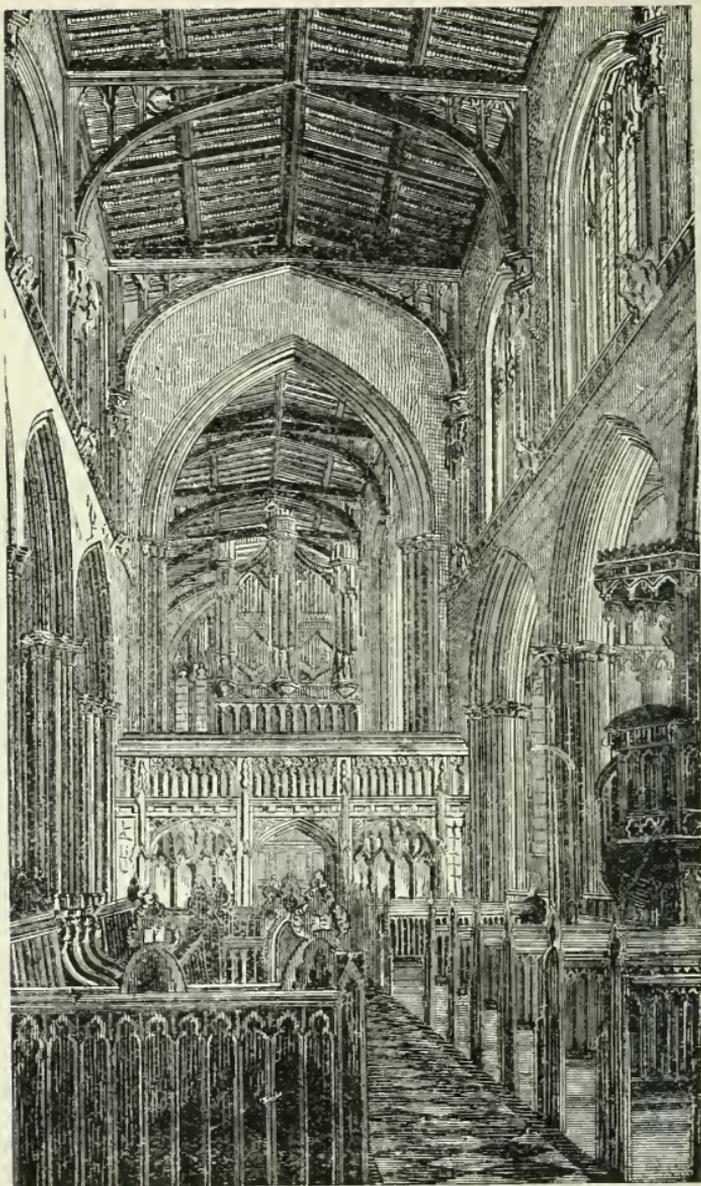
The persecuted Methodists knelt down in prayer to await the assault. A lot of ruffians were over their heads removing the tiles from the roof. A constable appeared and demanded a pledge that the preachers should return no more. This was refused, when they were conducted out of the town and went on their way rejoicing. Amid these tumultuous scenes John Wesley declares that "ten thousand cares were of no more inconvenience to him than so many hairs on his head." His countenance, as well as conversation, expressed an habitual gaiety of heart.

During all these years of toil and persecution John Wesley maintained his connection with Oxford University as one of the Fellows of Lincoln College. Indeed, the thirty pounds a year which he derived from his fellowship, was his only fixed income. One of the duties arising from this relationship was that of preaching in his turn before the University, even after his name was cast out as evil and everywhere spoken against. It was in the pulpit of the venerable Christ Church, from which Wycliffe, the Morning Star of the Reformation, and the martyr-bishops,

Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer, had preached, that he in turn proclaimed the Word of Life. The last time that he preached before the University was an occasion of special interest. It is thus described by Dr. Stevens:

“Oxford was crowded with strangers, and Wesley’s notoriety as a field preacher excited a general interest to hear him. Such was the state of morals at the time, that clergymen, gownsmen and learned professors shared with sportsmen and the rabble the dissipations of the turf. Charles Wesley went in the morning to the prayers at Christ Church, and found men in surplices talking, laughing and pointing, as in a playhouse, during the whole service. The inn where he lodged was filled with gownsmen and gentry from the races. He could not restrain his zeal, but preached to a crowd of them in the inn courtyard. They were struck with astonishment, but did not molest him. Thence he went to St. Mary’s Church to support his brother in his last appeal to their *Alma Mater*. Wesley’s discourse was heard with profound attention. The assembly was large, being much increased by the races.

“‘Never,’ says Charles Wesley, ‘have I seen a more attentive congregation. They did not let a word slip them. Some of the heads of colleges stood up the whole time, and fixed their eyes on him. If they can endure sound doctrine like his he will surely leave a blessing behind him. The Vice-Chancellor sent after him and desired his notes, which he sealed up and sent immediately. We walked back in form, the



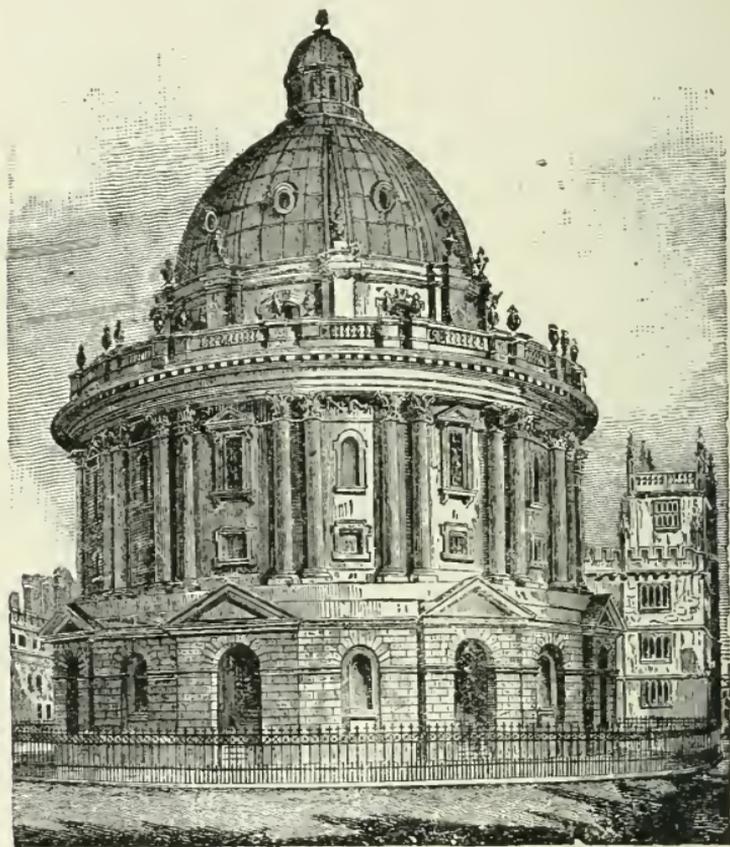
INTERIOR OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH, OXFORD.

little band of us four, for of the rest durst none join us.'

"In his journal of that day John Wesley says, 'I preached, I suppose, the last time at St. Mary's! Be it so. I am now clear of the blood of those men. I have fully delivered my own soul.' Such was the treatment he received from the University, to which he has given more historical importance than any other graduate of his own or subsequent times, and more perhaps than any other one ever will give it."

The Wesley brothers had hitherto been too busy in the service of God, and too unsettled in their mode of life, to marry. At length, in his forty-first year, Charles Wesley married the daughter of a Welsh squire, a lady of culture, refinement and piety. John Wesley entertained a sincere affection for a pious Methodist matron, Mrs. Grace Murray. She, however, became the wife of one of his lay helpers, and Wesley, in his forty-ninth year, married a Mrs. Vizelle, a widow lady of wealth and intelligence, but of intolerably jealous disposition. Her ample property was secured to herself, and she was made to understand that the great evangelist was not to abate a jot of his constant labour and travel. She soon grew tired of his wandering life. For twenty years she persecuted him with unfounded suspicions and intolerable annoyances. His letters were full of patience and tenderness. When she finally left him, with the assurance that she would never return, he wrote in his journal: "Non eam reliqui, non dimissi, non revocabo"—(I did not forsake her, I did not dismiss her, I will not recall her).

John Wesley made many visits to Ireland, and showed much sympathy toward the warm-hearted and impulsive Irish people. Sometimes he was



RADCLIFFE LIBRARY, OXFORD.

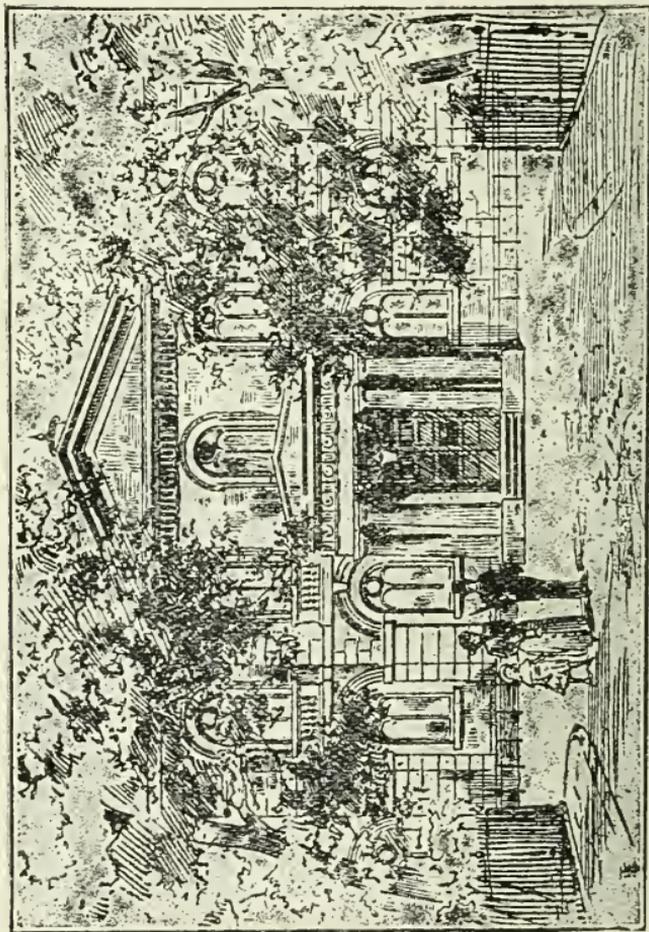
bitterly persecuted by a Roman Catholic mob, but often he was astonished at their cordiality and goodwill. He describes them as an immeasurably loving people.

Thomas Coke visited the Green Isle still more frequently, and toiled without stint in preaching the Gospel. Thomas Walsh was brought up a zealous Roman Catholic, but became a no less zealous Methodist. He had an extraordinary facility for acquiring languages, and mastered, besides his native Irish tongue, English, Latin, Greek and Hebrew. He rose at four in the morning, studied till late at night, labouring arduously during the day. He spent much time reading his Greek and Hebrew Scriptures on his knees; and was so familiar with the latter that he could quote any chapter or verse.

But, it was not all plain sailing in Ireland. In Cork a drunken mob ranged the streets shouting, "Five pounds for the head of the Swaddler." What was worse, a jury made the following presentment: "We find and present Charles Wesley to be a person of ill fame, a vagabond, and a common disturber of His Majesty's peace, and we pray that he may be transported."

In 1744 John Wesley invited a number of his ministers and lay assistants to a council in the old Foundry at London in June. There were present four ordained ministers of the Church of England who had cast in their lot with the Wesleys in their toils and persecutions, and four lay helpers. These faithful men remained together for five days, discussing questions of religious doctrine and polity. They avoided all unnecessary dogmatics, "confining their instructions to those vital truths which pertain to personal religion, as repentance, faith, justification, sanctifica-

tion, the virtues of the Spirit." Thus was held the first Methodist Conference, the type of many thousands which have since been held in two hemispheres.



CITY ROAD CHAPEL, LONDON.

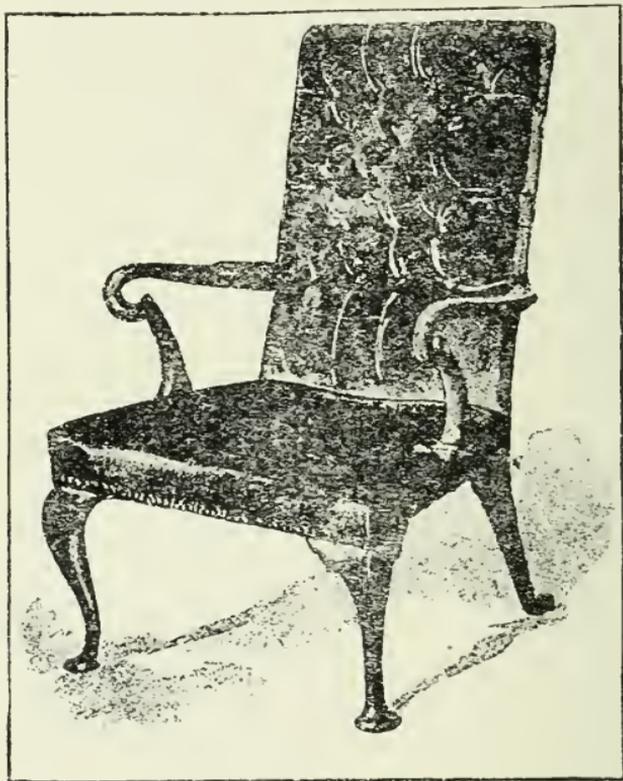
Even then Methodism began to look forward to the creation of a seminary for the training of its ministers, nor did it rest till this became an accomplished fact.

So great was the growth of the London societies that Mr. Wesley made an appeal for subscriptions to the amount of £6,000 for the proposed "new chapel." At length the City Road Chapel was built near the Foundry, in what was then open fields, but is now a wilderness of brick and stone. This is the best known of all the Wesleyan chapels. It is a large, plain, and nearly square structure, without much attempt at architectural display. In the interior on the walls all around are numerous marble tablets in memory of the distinguished preachers who have ministered within its walls,—John and Charles Wesley, Fletcher, Benson, Coke, Clarke, Watson, Bunting, Newton, Punshon, Gervase Smith, and many others. American and Canadian Methodism are represented by marble columns in the restored structure.

In the grave-yard without rest the remains of the founder of Methodism, of Adam Clarke, Joseph Benson, Jabez Bunting, and of many another whose life and labours were devoted to the glory of God in the service of Methodism. In Bunhill Fields burying-ground, just opposite, sleeps the dust of Susanna Wesley; also of the glorious dreamer, John Bunyan; of Isaac Watts, the sweet singer; and of Daniel Defoe, author of "Robinson Crusoe." These three are probably the best known writers of the English tongue.

"City Road Chapel burying-ground," said John Wesley, "is as holy as any in England." Aye, truly. From all parts of Christendom come pilgrims to visit

that sacred spot. Beside the tomb of John Wesley grows an elder tree, clippings from which have been transplanted to almost every part of the world—an emblem of the Church which he planted, which has



JOHN WESLEY'S CHAIR.

taken root and brought forth its blessed fruit in every clime.

In this venerable mother-church of Methodism, for many years service was held as at the Foundry, at

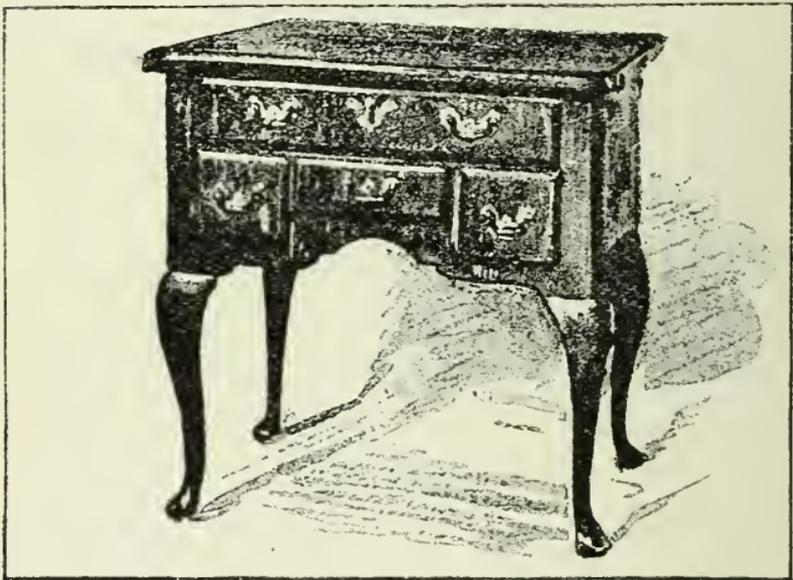
five o'clock in the morning, and we have records of large gatherings assembling on Christmas Day at four o'clock, and again at ten.

In connection with City Road Chapel was the preacher's house, a very plain brick building. In a small room of this, used as a bedroom and study, John Wesley died. For over a hundred years it has been occupied by his successors, and the same plain and simple furniture—chair, table, and desk—that he used, are still to be seen. It has now been set apart as a Wesleyan museum and as a home for Christian workers.

It seems to bring one nearer to the springs of Methodism to stand in the old pulpit in which its early fathers preached; to sit in Wesley's chair; to see the room in which he died; the study, a very small room, in which he wrote many of his books; the very time-worn desk at which he sat; and then to stand by the grave in which he is buried. In the old parsonage is shown the teapot, of generous dimensions, from which Wesley used to regale the London preacherse very Sunday. On one side is the verse beginning "Be present at our table, Lord," and on the other the words, "We thank Thee, Lord, for this our food," etc.

Up to his sixty-ninth year John Wesley kept up his round of travel, amounting to five thousand miles a year, on horseback. After this his friends provided him with a carriage. "He paid more tolls," says Southey, "than any other man in England." The grand old man ascribed his health and strength to his

out-of-door life, to his constant rising at four o'clock, to the fact that he never lost a night's sleep in his life, to his constant preaching, particularly at five o'clock in the morning, for fifty years, and last, to his contentment of mind. "By the grace of God," he says, "I fret at nothing."



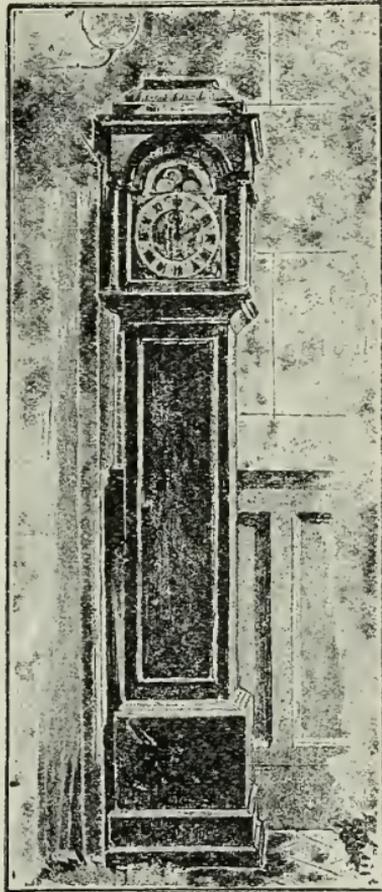
JOHN WESLEY'S DESK.

It is truly amazing that so venerable a man could be heard by so many persons out of doors. At Gwennap Pit, a great natural amphitheatre, 240 feet in diameter, he was heard distinctly by over thirty thousand persons. At Moorfields, once the scene of reckless riot, there were thousands upon thousands, "and all was as still as night." In towns where

once no Methodist could show his head, he was welcomed to the pulpits of the Established Church. But the allurements of rest and leisure could not detain his earnest soul.

In his seventy-sixth year he writes: "I rested at Newcastle; lovely place, lovely company! but I believe there is another world. Therefore I must arise and go hence." And the next day he was away, preaching twice before the sun went down.

He visited with diligence from house to house in the most noisome purlieus of East London. He had not found any such distress, not even in Newgate Prison. On his eightieth birthday he writes, "Blessed be God, my time is not labour and sorrow." He felt no more pain or infirmity than at twenty-one. On his eighty-third birthday he repeats, "It is eleven years since I felt such a thing as weariness." His hale and hearty old age was full



JOHN WESLEY'S CLOCK.

of keen appreciation of nature and of the eager study of books, including the Italian classics and current literature. In commenting upon the picturesque scenery of his travels he reflects, "Nevertheless the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor ever shall be till it see the King in His beauty."

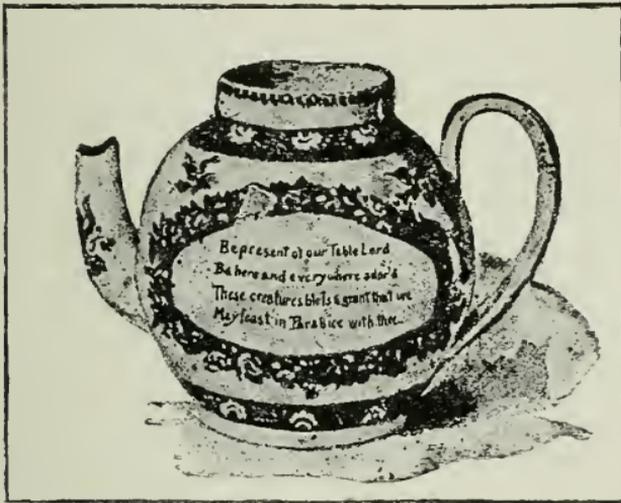
When over eighty he made two journeys to Holland, preaching at The Hague, Utrecht, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam, and greatly enjoying the historic and patriotic associations of these cities. He knew everyone best worth knowing in the United Kingdom. At Lincoln he called on his old friend, Dr. Samuel Johnson, who highly appreciated his visit and regretted only Wesley's economy of time. "He talks well on any subject," said the great moralist. "I could converse with him all night."

John Howard, the great philanthropist, before leaving England on his last "circumnavigation of charity," called at City Road to present Wesley with a copy of his latest quarto on prisons. With Wilberforce, the philanthropist, John Wesley was in keenest sympathy, and to him he wrote his last letter in which he designates the African slave trade as "that execrable villany which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature."

The genial old man was ever a lover of children. At Oldham he found "a whole street lined with them—a troop of boys and girls who closed him in, and would not let him go till he had shaken each of them by the hand." In his eighty-eighth year he preached a special sermon to children in words of not more

than two syllables. His appearance in extreme old age is described as a pattern of neatness and simplicity, his hair as white as snow, and his smile one of peculiar benignity.

Feeling that he must soon lay down his work, he framed, in 1784, the Deed of Declaration whereby a



JOHN WESLEY'S TEAPOT.

hundred of his preachers were constituted the Legal Conference after his death. In their name were held all the chapels and parsonages and other property of the Wesleyan Connexion. He also set apart Dr. Coke as Superintendent or Bishop of the American Methodist Church, as elsewhere described.

In his eighty-fifth year the grand old man acknowledges that he is not so agile as formerly, that he has occasional twinges of rheumatism, and suffers slight

dimness of sight, his other senses remaining unimpaired. "However, blessed be God," he says, "I do not slack from my labour, and can preach and write still." From being one of the worst hated he became one the best loved men in the kingdom. At Cork, where he was mobbed and burned in effigy, he was met by a cortege of mounted horsemen. At Falmouth, where he had been taken prisoner by an immense mob, "roaring like lions," high and low now lined the street from one end of the town to the other, "out of love and kindness, gaping and staring as if the king were going by." At Burslem the people gathered so early in the morning that he began to preach at half-past four. At Newgate he preached to forty-seven men under sentence of death, "the clink of whose chains was very awful." But most of them sobbed with broken hearts while he proclaimed, "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

On his last birthday he writes that although his strength had forsaken him so that he had to be helped into the pulpit, and his eyes had become dim, yet he felt no pain.

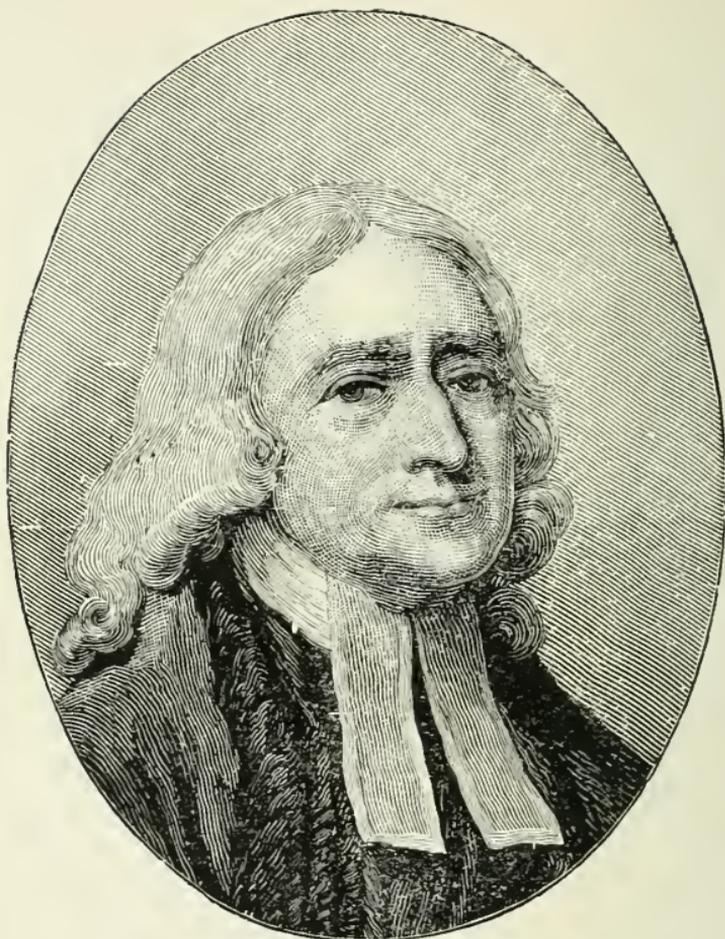
In 1790, for the last time, John Wesley presided at his Conference at Bristol, being then in his eighty-eighth year. His response to the salutations of the multitudes who gathered around him as he passed was that of St. John the Divine, "Little children, love one another." He now ceased recording his receipts and expenditures in his account book. His last entry is a remarkable one: "For upward of eighty-six years I

have kept my accounts exactly: I will not attempt it any longer, being satisfied with the continual conviction that I save all I can, and give all I can; that is all I have." It is scarcely legible, and the error in the number of years given shows the failure of his faculties.

When his income was but thirty pounds a year he confined his expenses to twenty-eight pounds and gave away two. When it reached one hundred and twenty, which seems to have been its largest amount, he still lived on his old allowance and gave away ninety-two pounds. Besides this he earned a large amount by his numerous writings. This was generously employed in carrying on his great work. It is estimated that he gave away over thirty thousand pounds which he had earned with his pen.

His was a serene and sunny old age which mellowed as the years passed by. His early asceticism had long disappeared. One of his pious helpers complained that by Wesley's witty proverbs he was tempted to levity. To a blustering fellow who attempted to throw him down, saying, "Sir, I never make way for a fool," Wesley replied, "I always do," and politely stepped aside. But, for the most part, he endured persecution and buffeting with the meekness of his Master, and when smitten on one cheek he literally turned the other also.

Notwithstanding his extreme age, there seemed no limit to his energy. After performing a long service of three hours, praying, preaching, and administering the Sacrament, he preached again in the open air.



John Wesley

WESLEY IN HIS OLD AGE.

The next day he preached twice in different towns, and in the evening to a crowd in the chapel, and to a multitude without, who could hear through the open windows. And so on, day after day, preaching twice or thrice daily, beginning at five o'clock in the morning.

In his last letter to America, he writes, with a sense of the essential unity of Methodism the wide world over, "Lose no opportunity of declaring to all men, that the Methodists are one people in all the world, and that it is their full determination so to continue."

On the 22nd of February, 1791, he preached his last sermon in City Road Chapel, and the following day his last sermon on earth. "On that day," says Dr. Abel Stevens, "fell from his dying grasp a trumpet of the truth, which had sounded the everlasting Gospel oftener, and more effectually, than that of any other man for 1,700 years. Whitefield preached 18,000 sermons, more than ten a week for his thirty-four years of ministerial life. Wesley preached 42 400, after his return from Georgia, more than fifteen a week."

The following Sunday he quoted with cheerfulness his brother's hymn :

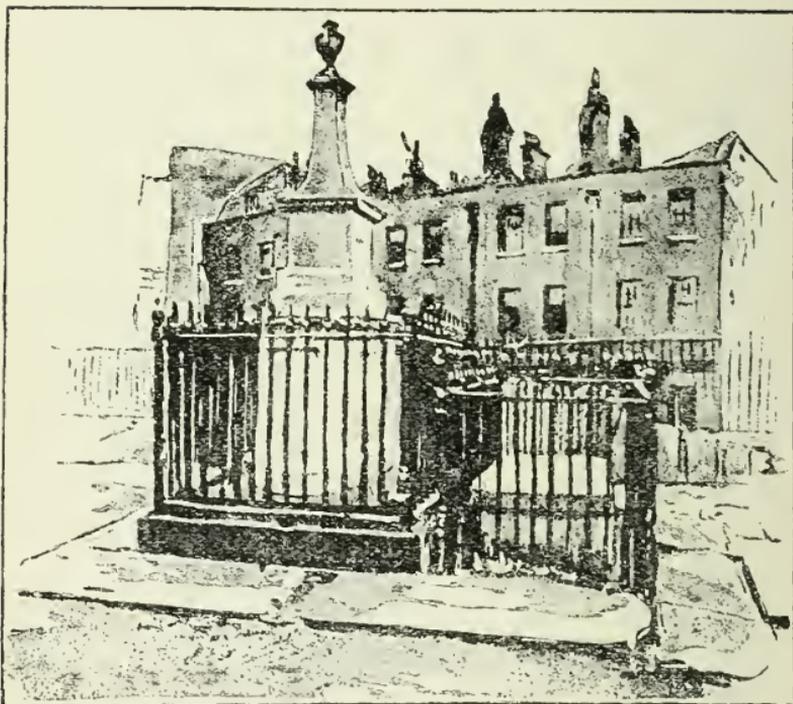
"Till glad I lay this body down,
Thy servant, Lord, attend;
And O, my life of mercy crown
With a triumphant end !"

And repeated over and over again the lines :

"I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me."

Two days later he sang with fervour :

“I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers ;
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures.”



JOHN WESLEY'S TOMB IN REAR OF CITY ROAD CHAPEL.

Twice he repeated the words, “The best of all is, God is with us” ; and with the words, “Farewell! farewell!” upon his lips, his spirit passed into the skies. In accordance with his will, six poor men bore him to

his grave in the rear of City Road Chapel. "He directed that there should be no hearse, no coach, no escutcheon, no pomp, except the tears of those who loved him, and were following him to heaven." So great was the multitude that thronged to pay a last tribute of love that it was deemed best to bury him before six in the morning. Nevertheless, a great multitude were present, and their tears and sobs attested the depth of their affection.

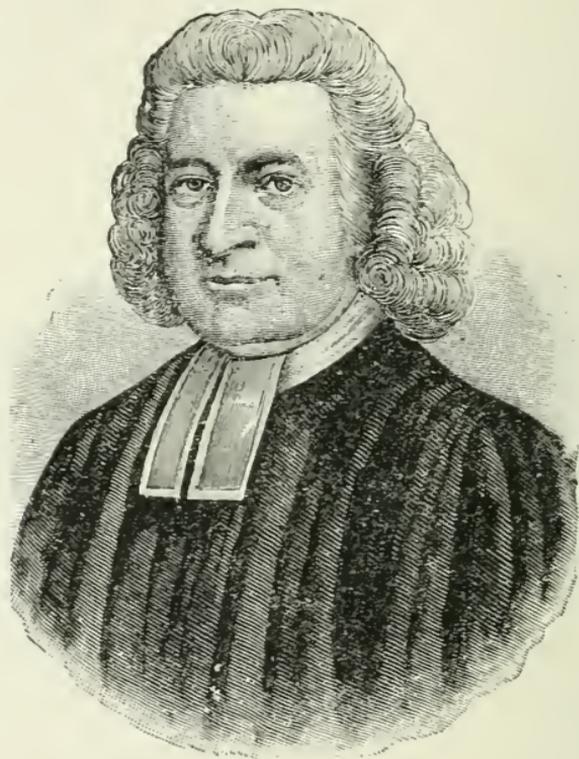
It has been well said "that few men could have endured to travel so much as he did, without either preaching, writing, or reading; that few could have endured to preach as often as he did, supposing they had neither travelled nor written books; and that very few men could have written and published so many books as he did, though they had always avoided both preaching and travelling."

Charles Wesley, the Poet of Methodism, was almost as great a marvel as his venerable brother. Up to his eightieth year he maintained his vigour of body and mind. His last hymn, dictated to his wife on his death-bed, was the sweet, sad note of the dying swan about to set sail on a sea of glory :

In age and feebleness extreme,
Who shall a sinful worm redeem ?
Jesus, my only hope Thou art,
Strength of my failing flesh and heart ;
O could I catch one smile from Thee,
And drop into eternity !

He was, for the volume and excellence of his verse, the greatest hymnist the world has ever seen. He

composed his immortal songs chiefly on horseback as he rode "from town to town, from mob to mob," writing them in pencil in shorthand characters on a card. Often when he came to his lodgings he would



CHARLES WESLEY,

"THE SWEET SINGER OF METHODISM."

call out for pen and ink, and complete the hymn while the inspiration was upon him.

Some of his finest lyrics were composed during his travels at the time when the early Methodists were

daily assaulted, maltreated, and persecuted. He often recited and sometimes sung them among the raging mobs. Four of them were written "to be sung in a tumult," and one was a "prayer for the first martyr." It was soon to be found appropriate. Many others were inspired by the triumphant deaths of these holy confessors of the faith

Over six hundred of his hymns have been collected in the Wesleyan hymn-book. About 4,600 in all have been printed, but about 2,000 still remain in manuscript. Many of these, by their spiritual exaltation and poetic merit, have won their way into the hymnaries of nearly all the Christian churches. They have inspired the faith and voiced the feelings of unnumbered millions, and have been lisped by the pallid lips of the dying, as, shouting their triumphant songs, they have "swept through the gates" of the celestial city.

A great hymn is one of God's best gifts to His Church. When the voice that first sang it is silent forever, the hymn will go singing through the ages in many lands and many tongues. Every great revival has been largely dependent on the help of sacred song. The doctrines of the Reformation in Germany flew abroad on the wings of the hymns and carols of Martin Luther. The Wesleyan revival found its most potent ally in the immortal hymns of Charles Wesley.

"To the sweet singer of Methodism," says Dr. W. F. Tillett, "our Church owes more than to any other man, save his brother John. The doctrines of early

Methodism were not only preached into the ears, but they were sung into the minds and hearts of the people, in and through the matchless hymns of this seraphic poet of the Church."

"Let me write the songs of a people," said one, "and I care not who may write their laws: I will govern them." "Let me write the hymns of a Church," said another, "and I care not who may write her creeds and her ponderous volumes of theology: I will determine the faith of the people."

So these hymns of Charles Wesley have moulded the thought and life of Methodism beyond any other influence. "His songs have helped more souls to happiness, to holiness and heaven than those of any other bard since the days of the Psalmist of Israel."

Much as his hymns are appreciated by Methodists, some of the most glowing criticisms and eulogies of his verse have come from other than Methodist writers. "Christian experience," says James Montgomery, "from the depths of affection, through all gradations of doubt, fear, desire, faith, hope and expectation, to the transports of perfect love in the very beams of the beatific vision, furnishes him with everlasting and inexhaustible themes, celebrated with an affluence of diction and a splendour of colouring rarely surpassed."

Henry Ward Beecher said, "I would rather have written that hymn of Wesley's, 'Jesus, lover of my soul,' than have the fame of all the kings that ever sat on the earth. It is more glorious. It has more power. I would rather be the author of that hymn than hold

the wealth of the richest man in New York. He will die. He will pass after a little while out of men's thoughts. But that hymn will go on singing until the last trump brings forth the angel band; and then, I think, it will mount up on some lip to the throne of God." It is the hymn probably more used than any other in the English language.

Between his conversion and death Charles Wesley wrote nearly seven thousand hymns, filling thirteen octavo volumes of five hundred pages each, exceeding all the poetry of Watts, Cowper and Pope put together. He wrote on an average nearly three hymns a week for fifty years. And the number of his hymns is only equalled by their range and variety, spanning as they do the sublime empyrean from the first cry of a new-born babe to the last shout of a dying spirit. His memory will live immortal in his immortal verse till time shall be no more. To quote from the inscription on his tomb :

“Posterity shall hear and babes rehearse
 The healing virtues of a Saviour's name ;
 Yes, babes unborn shall sing in Wesley's verse,
 And still reiterate the pleasing theme.”

He was the laureate of the affections, and had a hymn for almost every event in life. At the time of his marriage to Miss Sarah Gwynne, they sang hymns of solemn joy composed by himself for the occasion ; and just after the ceremony he took his lovely young bride behind him on horseback, and they sang other hymns with pious joy as they rode thus along the

way. His married life was as full of happiness as his brother John's was of domestic misery.

Two of Charles Wesley's sons became distinguished musicians. A great-grandson, a venerable gentleman of silvery hair and exquisite musical taste, is the organist of City Road Chapel, London.

It is fitting that in Westminster Abbey, that "temple of silence and reconciliation," that mausoleum of England's mighty dead, there should be a memorial of the two great men who did so much to mould the higher life of the nation. The beautiful mural monument of John and Charles Wesley, which is shown in our cut, is one of the first which Methodist tourists from all parts of the world visit in the venerable abbey. It was unveiled by Dean Stanley on March 30th, 1876, in the presence of a large company of invited guests, ministers, laymen and ladies. The company assembled first in the Chapter-house, in which the first English parliament was held.

Dean Stanley, in unveiling the monument, expressed the obligation which the Church of England, which England itself, and which the Church of Christ owed to the labours of John and Charles Wesley.

Immediately beneath the sculptured picture of the scene in the churchyard is John Wesley's great philanthropic declaration :

"I LOOK UPON ALL THE WORLD AS MY PARISH."

And under this, on the sloping line at the bottom, is graven Charles Wesley's exultant exclamation :

JOHN WESLEY, M.A.

BORN JUNE 17, 1703; DIED MARCH 2, 1791.

CHARLES WESLEY, M.A.

BORN DECEMBER 18, 1708; DIED MARCH 29, 1788.



"THE BEST OF ALL IS, GOD IS WITH US."



"-I LOOK UPON ALL THE WORLD AS MY PARISH."

WESLEY MEMORIAL TABLET, WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

“GOD BURIES HIS WORKMEN, BUT CARRIES ON
HIS WORK.”

The monument is situate midway between the “Poets’ Corner” and the nave of the Abbey, being near to the smaller monument of Dr. Isaac Watts, and in close neighbourhood to the memorials of men of genius and learning—

“The dead, but sceptred sovereigns, who still rule
Our spirits from their urns.”

Dr. Daniels eloquently remarks: “It is but just that some memorial of that royal man should be set up among the tombs of England’s princes, bishops, heroes and statesmen. Other men have been kings by the accident of birth, of royal blood: John Wesley reigned by virtue of the divine anointing. Other bishops have worn the mitre and carried the keys through the devious workings of State Church preferment: John Wesley was a bishop by the grace of God. Other heroes have earned their honours by ravaging sea and land to kill, burn and destroy: Wesley, with equal courage and equal skill, achieved his fame not by killing, but by saving men.”

V.

JOHN NELSON, THE YORKSHIRE MASON.

“I, JOHN NELSON, was born in the parish of Birstal, in the West Riding of the County of York, in October, 1707, and brought up a mason, as was my father before me.” Thus begins one of the most remarkable books in the language. In simple, homely Saxon words, the author tells the story of his life. We get in his pages a vivid picture of the England of a hundred and fifty years ago—of its spiritual destitution, and of the great Wesleyan revival that swept over it, and gave it a grand, moral impulse, which is felt throughout the world.

John Nelson's life was one of holy zeal and grandest heroism. Like many a man through whom God has blessed the world, he was made to pass through intense religious experience, doubtless, that he might the better counsel and comfort those who were in spiritual distress. We shall tell the story as much as possible in his own words. While yet a boy, he was “horribly terrified with the thoughts of death and judgment.” As the awful imagery of the Apocalypse was presented to his mind, the Word came with such power that he “fell with his face on the floor,

and wept till the place was as wet where he lay as if water had been poured thereon." Still, he had no saving acquaintance with the truth till after his marriage and settlement in life. But all the while his heart cried out for the living God. The hand of God was heavy upon him, and often forty times a day he prayed for pardon. His fellow-workmen persecuted him because he would not drink with them, till he fought with several of them: then they left him alone. He wandered from one part of the kingdom to another, seeking rest and finding none.

In his thirtieth year he writes: "O that I had been a horse or a sheep! Rather than live thirty years more as I have, I would choose strangling. O that I had never been born!" An awful sense of the reality of the unseen world and of the impending terrors of the Judgment-day weighed, like an intolerable load, upon him. He went from church to church—to St. Paul's, to the Dissenters, the Quakers, the Roman Catholics, to "all but the Jews"—to try to save his soul. Still, the burden of conscious guilt was unremoved. He realized, in all its bitterness, that "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified."

A score of times he stood amid the surging, grimy throng that gathered around Whitefield as he preached on Moorfields: but though he loved the man, and was ready to fight for him, he found no peace from hearing him. "The pains of hell gat hold upon him." Sleep departed from his eyes, and when he fell into slumber he dreamed that he was engaged

in mortal combat with Satan, and awoke convulsed with horror and affright.

At last John Wesley preached at Moorfields. When he spoke he made the heart of Nelson beat like the pendulum of a clock. Conviction deepened. His friends would have knocked Mr. Wesley's brains out, for he would be the ruin, they said, of many families



BUST OF JOHN NELSON,

CITY ROAD CHAPEL, LONDON.

if he were allowed to live and to go on as he did. For weeks Nelson wrestled with God in agony of soul. At last he vowed that he would neither eat nor drink till he found forgiveness. He prayed till he could pray no more. He got up and walked to and fro, and prayed again, the tears falling from his eyes like great drops of rain. A third time he fell

upon his knees, but "was as dumb as a beast before God." At length, in an agony, he cried out, "Lord, thy will be done; damn or save." That moment was Jesus Christ evidently set before him as crucified for his sins. His heart at once was set at liberty, and he began to sing, "O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me." Through such spiritual travail was this valiant soul born into the kingdom of God.

That night he was driven from his lodgings on account of his much praying and ado about religion. But as he was leaving the house, conviction seized his hosts, and they were both, man and wife, soon made partakers of the same grace.

Nelson was ordered to oversee some work on the following Sunday. He declined, and was threatened with dismissal from his employment. "I would rather see my wife and children beg their way bare-foot to heaven," he replied, "than ride in a coach to hell. I will run the risk of wanting bread here rather than the hazard of wanting water hereafter." His master swore that he was as mad as Whitefield: that Wesley had made a fool of him. But, instead of being dismissed, he was raised higher than ever in his master's regard, nor were any men set to work on the Sunday.

In all this time he had never spoken to Mr. Wesley, nor conversed with any experienced person about religion. He longed to find someone to talk with; but, he pathetically says, he sought in vain, for he

could find none. Nevertheless he was taught of God, and had sweet fellowship with Him in almost constant prayer and in the study of His Holy Word.

Such a desire for the salvation of souls now possessed him that he hired one of his fellow-workmen to hear Mr. Wesley preach, which led to his conversion and that of his wife.

But Nelson was permitted to be sorely buffeted by Satan; grievous temptations assailed his soul. God's hand, too, was laid heavily upon him. An accumulation of calamities, almost like the afflictions of Job, overtook him. A single letter informed him that his almost idolized daughter was dead, that his son's life was despaired of, that his wife had fallen from a horse and was lamed, that his father-in-law was dead and his mother sick. But, like Job, he exclaimed, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

He set out on his eventful journey to Yorkshire, but he "had no more thought of preaching than of eating fire." His friends were astonished at the story of his conversion. They said they had never heard of such a thing in their lives. His mother said his head was turned. "Yes," he replied, "and, I thank God, my heart also." His neighbours upbraided and mocked him. His wife refused to live with him; but by his faith and love he brought her to a knowledge of the Saviour.

He forthwith began exhorting his neighbours to flee from the wrath to come. Like Andrew, he first brought his own brother to Jesus, and in a few days, six of his neighbours also. There was a spiritual famine in

the land, and he had found the Bread of Life. He could not, therefore, but cry aloud to those who were perishing of soul-hunger. Soon his aged mother, another brother, and most of his kindred were brought to God; and, for several weeks, six or seven persons every week were converted through his exhortations.

He was urged to preach, but he exclaimed, "O Lord, thou knowest I had rather be hanged on that tree than go out to preach:" and, Jonah-like, he fled from the call of God. A great congregation was gathered in the fields, and begged him to preach. He fell flat on his face, and lay an hour on the grass tasting, he believed, the cup of the lost. "Let me die, let me die!" he exclaimed in bitterness of soul, shrinking from the burden of this cross. But in his anguish the Sun of Righteousness shone upon him, and he exclaimed, "Lord, I am ready to go to hell and preach to the devils if Thou require it." That night two men were converted under his burning words, which he took as a seal of his call of God to preach the Gospel. But in his mental strait he would have given ten pounds, he said, for an hour's conversation with Mr. Wesley.

Some of his more cautious friends now urged him to wait a month till he knew more of his own heart. But the Word of God was a fire in his bones, and he exclaimed, "Nay, unless you will persuade the devil to be still for a month from going about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." Oftentimes when he preached at night, after his day's work, the

people, hungering for the Bread of Life, refused to go away, waiting like beggars that wanted a morsel of food.

Soon he began his ranging through the kingdom, proclaiming the Word of Life. As he entered Leeds, he was warned,—“If you preach there you need not



BIRTH-PLACE OF JOHN NELSON.

expect to come out alive, for a company of men have sworn that they will kill you.”

“All the men in the town cannot kill me,” answered the dauntless soul, “till I have done my Heavenly Father’s work.”

At Manchester someone threw a stone which cut

him in the head, but as his audience saw the blood running down his face, they kept quiet till he was done preaching. With a boldness not less than Luther's on his way to the Diet of Worms, the sturdy Yorkshireman, in spite of the threat that he would be mobbed and killed if he entered Grimsby, exclaimed, "By the grace of God, I will preach if there were as many devils in it as there are tiles on the roofs of the houses."

Nelson's most bitter opposition came from dissolute clergymen of the Established Church. In Derbyshire a drunken parson, with a lot of lead miners, began to halloo and shout as if they were hunting with a pack of hounds; but the power of the truth so affected the rude miners that they became the champions of the man they came to persecute. Thus God put a bridle in the mouths of howling mobs, who came not merely to mock but to kill, and many of them remained to pray.

Nelson was summoned by Mr. Wesley to London. But he had worn out his clothes in the cause of God, and had none fit to travel till some tradesmen, unsolicited, sent him cloth for a suit. Unable to hire a horse, he set out on foot for London, preaching as he went. The aristocratic gownsmen and embryo parsons of Oxford vied in ruffianism with the rude miners of Derbyshire. "I never heard a soldier or sailor," says Nelson, "swear worse than they did."

On his way to Cornwall with a fellow-evangelist, they had but one horse between them, so they rode by turns. Like the Apostle Paul, Nelson laboured

with his hands at his trade, that he might not be burdensome to those to whom he preached. Nevertheless, he was sometimes in want of bread, and, like his Master, had not where to lay his head. At St. Ives he and Mr. Wesley, for some time, slept every night on the floor—the learned Oxford Fellow and the Yorkshire mason side by side.

“Mr. Wesley,” writes Nelson, “had my great-coat for a pillow, and I had Burkett’s Notes on the New Testament for mine. After being here three weeks, one morning, about three o’clock, Mr. Wesley turned over, saying, ‘Brother Nelson, let us be of good cheer. I have one whole side yet, for the skin is off but one side.’ We usually preached on the commons,” he adds, “and it was but seldom any asked us to eat or drink.”

One day after preaching, Mr. Wesley stopped his horse to pick the wayside berries, saying, “Brother Nelson, we ought to be thankful that there are plenty of blackberries; for this is the best country I ever saw for getting a stomach, but the worst I ever saw for getting food. I thought of begging a crust of a woman,” he added, “but forgot till I had got some distance from the house.” By such unostentatious heroism were the foundations of Methodism laid in Great Britain by these apostolic labourers.

On Nelson’s return to Yorkshire he found his wife ill through maltreatment by a mob, while she was bravely defending a preacher whom they were assaulting. “You are Nelson’s wife, and here you shall die,” swore the savages, and did their best to fulfil their threat.

“In Leeds,” Nelson naïvely remarks, “the mob did not meddle with me, only some boys threw about a peck of turnips at me.” A sergeant, who came to assault him, publicly begged his pardon, and went away weeping.

At Grimsby the church parson rallied a drunken mob, and smashed the windows and furniture of the house where he lodged, with paving stones. A ring-leader, after beating his drum three-quarters of an hour, began to listen, and then to weep, and at last to pray. “So we had great peace in our shattered house that night,” says Nelson, “and God’s presence amongst us.”

At length the drink-loving parsons and the ale-house keepers—worthy allies!—resolved that Nelson must be impressed into the army, as the only way to stop his interference with their pleasure or profits. Still, he durst not keep silent, but continued hewing stone all day and preaching every night. “I am not my own but the Lord’s,” he said; “he that lays hands on me will burn his own fingers.”

By a monstrous perversion of justice he was arrested as a vagrant; £500 bail was refused, and the Commissioners of the Peace, among whom was the parson, impressed him as a soldier, under the penalty of death, if he refused. Still his soul was kept in perfect peace, and he prayed to God to forgive them, for they knew not what they did.

With other prisoners condemned for vagrancy and theft, Nelson was marched off to York, he being singled out for special severity. At Bradford, he was

lodged in a noisome dungeon, reeking with filth, without even a stone to sit on, and with only a little foul straw for a bed—a type of too many of England's prisons a hundred years ago. But his soul was so filled with the love of God that the felon's cell was to him a paradise. He realized that

“Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage.”

Some friends brought him meat and drink, which they put through the small opening in the door, and

“Like Paul and Silas in the prison,
They sang the praise of Christ arisen.”

“I wished that my enemies,” wrote Nelson, “were as happy in their houses as I was in the dungeon.”

At four o'clock in the morning his noble wife visited his cell, and said, although she then most required a husband's care, “Be not concerned about me and the children. He that feeds the young ravens will be mindful of us;” and the brave-souled husband answered, “I cannot fear either man or evil, so long as I find the love of God as I do now.”

“Now, Nelson, where is thy God?” jeered a woman, as the prisoners stood, like a gang of slaves, for hours in the streets of Leeds. He referred her to Micah vii. 8-10: “Rejoice not over me, O mine enemy: when I fall I shall rise again.”

Large bail was offered for his release, but was refused. “I am too notorious a criminal,” he somewhat bitterly remarks, “to be allowed such favours; for

Christianity is a crime which the world will never forgive." And this persecution took place in Christian England little more than a hundred years ago!

But he was not without consolation. "The time has not yet come," he says, "for me to be hated of all men for Christ's sake." At night a hundred of his friends visited him in the jail. They sang a hymn and prayed together, and he exhorted them through the opening in his cell door.

When he was brought before the military officers, he boldly reprovèd them for the sin of swearing. "You must not preach here," he was told; but he answered, "There is but one way to prevent it—that is, to swear no more in my hearing." All York came forth to see him led under guard through the streets, "as if he had been one that had laid waste the nation;" but he passed through the city as if there had been none in it but God and himself.

He refused to take the King's money. "I cannot bow my knee to pray for a man and then get up and kill him," he said. Nevertheless, he was girded with the weapons of war; but he bore them as a cross, and would not defile his conscience by using them. But if he was bound, the Word of God was not bound; for "if any blasphemed, he reprovèd them, whether rich or poor."

At the instigation of some clergymen, he was forbidden to preach, under the penalty of being severely flogged: but Peter-like, he replied, "It is better to obey God than man." "I will have no preaching

nor praying in the regiment," swore the officer. "Then," said Nelson, "you should have no swearing nor cursing either." He was, however, carried off to prison; yet God enabled him to rest as well on the bare boards, he declares, as if it had been on a bed of down. "For what were you imprisoned?" demanded the major. "For warning people to flee from the wrath to come," said the intrepid preacher; "and I shall do so again unless you cut my tongue out."

The London Methodists having hired a substitute to serve in his place, through the influence of the Wesleys and the Countess of Huntingdon with the Earl of Stair the discharge of this resolute non-combatant was procured. When he left the regiment, several of his fellow-soldiers wept and desired him to pray for them.

He was now free to indulge his hallowed passion—to preach the Gospel without hindrance. For the most part the people heard him gladly; yet in many places, lewd fellows of the baser sort assailed him with sticks, stones, and filth. Once a halter was put round his neck to drag him to the river to drown him. At Aekham, in Yorkshire, he was knocked down eight times in succession by a drunken mob, led by some "young gentlemen." He was dragged over the stones by the hair of the head, kicked, beaten and trampled on, "to tread the Holy Spirit out of him," as the murderous wretches blasphemously declared. "We cannot kill him," they said; "if a cat has nine lives, he has nine score." "This," says Nelson, "was

on Easter Sunday—a strange commemoration of the day.” They swore they would serve Mr. Wesley the same way. “Then we shall be rid of the Methodists forever,” they said, “for none will dare to come if they two be killed.”

The next morning this Ajax of Methodism set out to meet Mr. Wesley, and “was enabled to ride forty miles that day.” But these things were light afflictions: for the Gospel had free course, and multitudes were converted to God.

Here ends the remarkable journal of John Nelson. For five-and-twenty years longer he continued to range through the kingdom as one of Mr. Wesley’s regular helpers, a burning and a shining light to all, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. He finished his course with joy in the sixty-seventh year of his age, 1774.

We shall obtrude no comments of our own upon the lesson of this noble life. No braver soul ever went to the martyr’s stake, or won the martyr’s starry and unwithering crown. He, and such as he, by their consecrated toils, their suffering, and their undying zeal, laid the foundations of that goodly structure of Methodism that now rises fair throughout the land they loved so well, and throughout the world. Their memory is the imperishable heritage of the Church universal. It shall be to all time, and in all lands, a glorious example of valiant living and holy dying, a rebuke to indolence or self-seeking, and an inspiration to zeal and energy in promoting the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

VI.

SILAS TOLD, THE PRISONERS' FRIEND.

THE life of Silas Told was one of extraordinary vicissitude. He has left the record of his remarkable adventures, written with a vividness of detail that Defoe might have envied. He was born in the ancient seaport of Bristol, in the year 1711. Both his father and grandfather were eminent physicians and landed gentlemen. But, through misfortune and ill-advised speculation, the family, on the father's death, were reduced almost to poverty. Silas received a meagre education at a charity hospital, endowed by a wealthy East India merchant. Here, even in boyhood, he was the subject of deep convictions of sin and of subsequent religious enjoyment. While swimming with some school companions he was nearly drowned, and with difficulty was brought back to life to pass through tribulations which "seemed like a sea of blood and fire."

In his fourteenth year he was apprenticed to a West India sea captain. In the hard school of the ship's fore-castle, he received such barbarous treatment that he thought he should have broken his heart with grief. But the orphan cabin-boy, alone in the wide world, had no friend to whom he could apply

for redress. On the Spanish Main the crew were several weeks on the short allowance of a single biscuit and half a pint of foul water per day. At Kingston, Jamaica, they were overtaken by a hurricane, and of seventy-six sail in the harbour only one escaped destruction.

For miles along the shore the drowned seamen were cast up by the waves and devoured by the vultures. The poor lad was abandoned, ill of fever, in the port of Kingston, without money or friends, and lay down to die. Here he "pondered much upon Job's case, considering his own condition similar to his." Rescued from death by a London captain, he returned to England, and was soon shipped with a Guinea slaver, bound for the coast of Africa and the West Indies. A greater villain than his new master, he writes, he firmly believed never existed. From the negro savages he received more kindness than from his own countrymen. The appalling cruelties of that floating hell, a slave-ship, were never more vividly described. Battened down under the hatches, half the human cargo were suffocated in a single night. Driven to frenzy by outrage and wrong, the slaves rose in mutiny. Overpowered by their tyrants, many plunged overboard and were drowned. Cruelty and murder rioted unrestrained. "The mariners," says Told, "seemed greedy of eternal death and damnation." The unhappy boy, amid these vile companionships, plunged recklessly into sin: yet, through the mercy of God, his terrified conscience was never without fear of death and the judgment.

The outrages and wrongs wreaked upon the hapless slaves in Jamaica were too revolting to be described. By an awful and inevitable retribution, such wickedness degraded masters as well as slaves. In his many sojourns on the island Told never met a single person having the fear of God, or even the form of godliness.

With a sailor-like vein of superstition, he tells us that, on the home voyage, the captain being sick, a hideous devil-fish followed the ship for eighteen hundred miles, and on the captain's death disappeared and was seen no more.

During a later voyage the vessel in which Told sailed was captured by Spanish pirates, and the crew were informed that "every one of them should be hanged, and that without ceremony." The prize, with its crew, made its escape, however, but only to be wrecked upon a rocky shore. The crew were rescued by a New England vessel, but were again wrecked on Martha's Vineyard. Reaching the mainland, they set out for Boston, but were arrested for travelling on Sunday. In Boston, "a commodious and beautiful city," Told remained four months, and—marked contrast to Jamaica—never heard an oath uttered, nor saw any Sabbath-breaking, nor found an individual guilty of extortion. "Would to God," he exclaims, "that I could say this of the inhabitants of old England."

After several other voyages, in one of which, through stress of weather, the ship's company could dress no food nor change their wet clothing for six weeks, the whole crew were pressed for the Royal

Navy. The commander of the ship to which Told was assigned, in striking exception to many of his class of that age, was a devout Christian, and used constantly to visit the ship's invalids and pray at their bedsides.

The story of Told's short sailor-courtship and marriage is recorded in four lines. He now joined the Royal fleet of twenty-four ships of the line, which soon sailed to Lisbon to protect the Brazil fleet from the Spaniards. They lay at anchor in the Tagus ten months, and then returned to Chatham, which movement occupied another month. Those were the leisurely times before the days of steam and telegraphy. Told was now paid off, and, disgusted with the hardships and wickedness of a life before the mast, he never went to sea again.

"Being now married, and desirous of living a regular life," as he says, "he habituated himself to church-going;" but, finding churchmen living as others, he hastily concluded that religion was a mere sham. He obtained the position of a school-master on the magnificent salary of £14 a year. The curate of the parish frequently decoyed Told to his lodgings to join him in smoking, drinking, and singing songs, so that often his guest could scarcely find his way home. As the sailor once quoted a text of scripture, the parson exclaimed, "Told, are you such a blockhead as to believe that stuff? It is nothing but a pack of lies." Such clerical influence and example certainly did not deepen his conviction of the reality of religion.

He shortly after found employment with a builder in London. One day a young bricklayer asked him some questions on business. Told answered him roughly, which treatment the young man received with much meekness. "This," says Told, "struck me with surprise." That young man, by his meek silence, had preached an eloquent sermon, which led to his companion's conversion, and through that, to the conversion of multitudes of others.

His new acquaintance introduced him among "the people called Methodists." Told tried to stifle his convictions by cursing and swearing at his friend, who had been largely the cause of them; but the young man bore it all with unwearied patience, without returning one evil look or word. "His countenance," says Told, "appeared full of holy grief, which greatly condemned me."

Told was at length induced to go to early Methodist service at "The Foundry." He found it a ruinous old place which the Government had used for casting cannon. It had been abandoned, and was much dilapidated. Above the smoke-begrimed rafters was seen the tile roof-covering. A few rough deal boards were put together to form a temporary pulpit. Such was the rude cradle of that wondrous child of Providence called Methodism.

Exactly at five o'clock a whisper ran through the large congregation that had assembled, "Here he comes! Here he comes!" Told expected to see some farmer's son, who, not able to support himself, was making a penny in this low manner. Instead of this,

he beheld a learned clergyman of the Established Church, arrayed in gown and bands. The singing he much enjoyed, but the extempore prayer savoured rather of Dissent for Told's sturdy Churchmanship. Wesley's text was, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you." The words sank into the heart of the long-storm-tossed sailor, weary with bearing its load of sorrow and sin. With a characteristic, generous impulse, he exclaimed, "As long as I live I will never leave this man."

He soon met persecution. "What, Told, are you a Whitefieldite?" jeered his boon companions. "As sure as you are born, if you follow them you are damned," admonished these zealous enemies of Methodism. His wife, also, although, he says, "a worthy, honest woman," swore at him and said, "I hope you have not been among the Methodists. I'll sacrifice my soul rather than you shall go among those miscreants." Thus was the despised sect everywhere spoken against. His firmness and affection, however, overcame her opposition.

Told was soon requested by Mr. Wesley to undertake the teaching of the charity children at the Foundry school, at the salary of ten shillings a week. At this work he continued for seven years, having the children under his care from five in the morning till five in the evening, both winter and summer. During this time he educated 275 boys, "most of whom were fit for any trade." Thus early did Methodism grapple with the social problem of the education of the ignorant masses of the population.

One morning, as Told and his scholars attended the five o'clock sermon, Mr. Wesley preached from the words, "I was sick and in prison, and ye visited me not." The generous-hearted sailor was conscience-stricken at his neglect of what was now revealed as a manifest duty, and was "filled with horror of mind beyond expression." Learning that ten malefactors were lying in Newgate under sentence of death, he committed his school, without an hour's delay, to the care of an usher, and hastened to the prison.

Silas Told had at length found his vocation. For five and thirty years he continued to burrow in the dungeons of London and the neighbouring towns—often literally to burrow, for many of them were underground—carrying the light and liberty of the Gospel to their dark cells, and to the still darker hearts of their inmates. The unvarnished story of his experiences abounds in incidents of the most thrilling and often harrowing interest.

He was often locked up with the felons all night before their execution. He sat beside them as they rode to the gallows in the death-cart with the halter on their necks, sharing with them the jibes and jeers, and sometimes the missiles, of the mob who gloated on their misery. He prayed with them and exhorted and comforted them as they stood on the brink of eternity. He begged or purchased their bodies for burial, and often succoured their wretched and suffering families. He led many to repentance and the forgiveness of sins.

Hardened criminals broke down under his loving

exhortations; and turnkeys, sheriffs and hangmen wept as they listened to his prayers. Friendless and degraded outcasts clung to him for sympathy and counsel, and through the manifestation of human love and pity caught a glimpse of the infinite love and pity of Him who died as a malefactor to save the malefactors.

Through his influence the felon's cell became to many the gate of heaven. The ribald oaths and obscene riot of the British jail—then the vilest in Europe save those of the Inquisition—often gave place to the singing of Christian hymns and the voice of prayer and praise. At one time Told had a Methodist society of thirty members, and at another of thirty-six members among the poor debtors of Newgate. Yet was he “very cautious of daubing them with untempered mortar,” but sought to bring about their real and permanent conversion.

The chief opposition to this Christ-like work came from the “ordinaries” or chaplains, whose hireling and heartless service was put to shame by the intense and loving zeal of this voluntary evangelist. But he burst through every obstacle, and, “in the name of God, would take no denial.”

The appalling condition of that prison-world, with which he became so familiar, makes one recoil with horror. In many of the prisons there was little or no classification of age or sex, and hardened felons became the teachers in crime of youthful offenders against cruelly unjust laws. The extortion and rapacity and inhumanity of jailers and turnkeys seem

to us almost incredible. The dungeons reeked with squalor and wretchedness and filth. Honest debtors were confined, sometimes for years, in odious cells; and, as a favour, were permitted, caged like wild beasts, to solicit the precarious charity of passers-by. Men and women were dragged on hurdles to Tyburn and hanged by the score for forgery, for larceny, for petty theft. Worst of all, Told cites certain instances which demonstrate, by the subsequent discovery of the real criminal, that sometimes innocent persons had fallen victims to this sanguinary code.

One young woman was thus judicially done to death, although even the sheriff was convinced of her innocence. A ribald mob clamoured for her blood. Her religious resignation was jibed at as hardness of heart, and so great was the popular fury that Told, riding with her to the gallows, was in imminent peril of assault. Her innocence was afterwards completely established.

Told records the tragic circumstances of a poor man who was hanged for stealing sixpence to buy bread for his starving wife and babes. Their parting in the prison was a harrowing scene. Told collected from a poor Methodist congregation a sum of money for the destitute widow, and successfully overcame the official brutality of the poorhouse guardians so as to obtain for her parish relief.

On another occasion the multitude, when exhorted by Told to pray for the passing soul, answered with a shout of execration and a shower of stones that endangered the life of the culprit before the law could

do its work. "Nothing could have equalled them," says Told, "but the spirits let loose from the infernal pit." Yet all this did not draw off the mind of the dying woman from resting in that supreme hour on the Lord Jesus.

Sometimes a rescue of the culprit was attempted by his friends. A volley of stones would assail the sheriff's *posse*, and a rush would be made towards the gallows. Then the ghastly proceedings would be hurried through with the most indecent despatch and confusion.

Yet the frequency of this awful spectacle did not diminish crime. On the contrary, it flourished, seemingly unrestrained, beneath the very gallows. Familiarity with scenes of violence created a recklessness of human life and propensity to bloodshed. Often the confederates of the felon surrounded the gibbet and exhorted the partner of their guilt "to die game," as the phrase was. Even the sheriff's officers sometimes, by their crimes, incurred the penalty they had often assisted to inflict. We may well rejoice that, through the ameliorating influence of a revived Christianity on the penal discipline and social life of Christendom, such scenes of horror are now scarcely conceivable.

Sometimes the faithful warning and most solemn adjuration of this hero-heart, burning with such passionate zeal to "pluck poor souls out of the fire," though he probed the guilty conscience to the quick, failed to move men to repentance, even on the awful brink of perdition. But many, without doubt, found, through temporal death, eternal life.

Sometimes Told had the great joy of conveying a reprieve to the condemned. After a convivial election dinner, three young sprigs of nobility, half crazed with drink, diverted themselves by playing highway-men and robbing a farmer. One of them, an officer on one of the King's ships, was betrothed to Lady Betty Hamilton, the daughter of an ancient ducal house. The lady importuned the King upon her knees for the life of her lover. "Madame," said His Majesty, "there is no end to your importunity. I will spare his life upon condition that he be not acquainted therewith till he arrives at the place of execution." The condemned man fainted with joy when the reprieve was communicated to him; "but when I saw him put into a coach," says Told, "and perceived that Lady Betty Hamilton was seated therein, in order to receive him, my fear was at an end."

Many were the checkered scenes in which this humble hero bore a prominent part. He was not only a remarkable trophy of divine grace, but an example of the power of Methodism to use lowly and unlettered men in evangelistic and philanthropic work.

What was the inspiration of this unwearying zeal? It was the entire consecration of an earnest soul to the service of its Divine Master. At a time when Told rose daily at four o'clock, attended morning service at five, and toiled every spare hour for the prisoner and the outcast, he was agonizing in spirit over the remains of the carnal mind. Like the Psalmist, he even forgot to eat bread by reason of

his sin. Often he wandered in the fields till near midnight, "roaring for very disquietude of soul." If he might, he would have chosen "strangling rather than life."

At length deliverance came. The heavens seemed visibly to open before him, and Jesus stood stretching forth His bleeding palms in the benediction of full salvation. Tears gushed from the eyes of the impassioned suppliant, and, in ecstasy he exclaimed, "Lord, it is enough."

Thus was he anointed to preach good tidings to the prisoners, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to them that were bound. Like the Lord he loved, he went about doing good, till, with the weight of well-nigh seventy years upon him, "he cheerfully resigned his soul into the hands of his Heavenly Father."

VII.

GEORGE WHITEFIELD, THE GREAT EVANGELIST.

THE peculiar glory of Methodism is that through its influence men of lowliest origin and often of sinful lives have been transformed into saints and apostles. But this is only a repetition of the miracle of grace which made Newton, the slave-trader, the eloquent preacher; and John Bunyan, the swearing tinker, the most widely read of all English writers.

The story of George Whitefield, one of the mightiest preachers the world has ever seen, is a striking illustration of the transforming grace of God. He was born at Gloucester, England, in 1714, the son of an inn-keeper. Two years later his father died, and the poor neglected boy grew up in the evil atmosphere of the tap-room, amid the coarse surroundings and bad example of its lounging and drinking patrons.

When he was fifteen years old, he tells us, he put on his blue apron, washed mops, cleaned rooms, and became the common drawer in the inn which his mother kept in the great port of Bristol. He describes his youth as exceedingly vicious. "If the Almighty had not prevented me by His grace," he says, "I had now been sitting in darkness under the shadow of death." It is probable, however, that his sensitive

conscience prompted these self-accusings, in the sense in which Paul and John Wesley each declared himself to be the "chief of sinners."

The work of the Latin monk, Thomas à Kempis, "The Imitation of Christ," fell into his hands, and awakened in his soul the conviction of sin. The boy had exhibited some natural eloquence, and won some reputation by his school declamations. He earnestly desired to become a scholar. It was possible in those days for a poor student to enter Oxford as a "servitor," providing for his expenses chiefly by performing menial duties for his fellow-collegians. This young Whitefield resolved to do. Thomas à Kempis had made a deep impression upon his mind, but he had not yet apprehended the doctrine of Justification by Faith. He endeavoured to earn the pardon of his sins by prayer and penance. He has left on record that when sixteen years of age he began to fast twice a week for thirty-six hours together. He prayed many times a day, and received the Sacrament every ten days. He fasted himself almost to death during the forty days of Lent, and practised private devotions seven times a day. "But," he adds, "I knew no more that I was to be born a new creature in Jesus Christ than if I was never born at all."

About this time he heard of the Methodists, and procured at last an introduction to the Oxford "Holy Club." "They built me up daily," he says, "in the knowledge and fear of God, and taught me to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." He now began to "live by rule," from which practice



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the Methodists acquired their name. He found this practice at first difficult, but at last delightful. He engaged in the practice of visiting the poor and neglected, the sick and the prisoners.

The state of morality at Oxford was very low. A subtle infidelity prevailed, and even the observance of religion was cold and formal. "This zealous young soul passed through," says Dr. Stevens, "an ordeal of agonizing self-conflicts. He selected the poorest food and the meanest apparel, and by dirty shoes, patched raiment, and coarse gloves, endeavoured to mortify his burdened spirit." The students threw dirt at him in the street, and when he knelt down to pray he felt such pressure of soul and body that the sweat dripped from his face.

"God only knows," he writes, "how many nights I have lain upon my bed groaning under what I felt. Whole days and nights have I spent lying prostrate on the ground in silent or vocal prayer." During Lent, for the most part, he ate nothing but coarse bread and sage tea. He prayed under the trees at night, trembling with the cold, till the college bell called him to his room, where he often spent in tears and supplications the hours which should have brought him sleep. His health sank under these rigours. But at last he was able to lay hold of the Cross by a living faith, and the burden of his guilt rolled forever away.

Shortly after this he was ordained by the Bishop of Gloucester. "I can call heaven and earth to witness," he wrote, "that when the Bishop laid his

hand upon me, I gave myself up to be a martyr for Him who hung upon the cross for me."

He now set forth on his flaming evangel, "the John the Baptist of Methodism," to prepare the way in both hemispheres for the Wesleys and their fellow-helpers. He was without a guinea in the world. The good Bishop made him a present of five sovereigns. His marvellous eloquence was soon felt as a spell of power. At his first sermon it was reported that fifteen of his hearers had gone mad. The Bishop only wished that the madness might not pass away. Whitefield was called to London to preach in the grim old Tower, which had been the scene of many a sombre tragedy. He laboured with zeal among the soldiers in the barracks and hospitals, preaching every week at Ludgate Prison.

John Wesley, then in Georgia, invited him to proceed thither. "You ask me what you shall have?" he said. "Food to eat, raiment to put on, a house to lay your head in, such as your Lord had not; and a crown of glory that fadeth not away." Whitefield, therefore, started to Bristol to sail for America, preaching wherever he had a chance. The churches were thronged before dawn with people lighting their way with lanterns to hear him. He understood the language and the heart of the common people, and they heard him gladly. He spoke directly to their souls, which responded warmly to his appeals.

On shipboard he preached with strange power to the soldiers, sailors, emigrants—a wicked and reckless class. In Georgia he laboured zealously among the

Indians as well as the white people. His sympathies were deeply touched on behalf of the many orphan children whom he found. He felt a call from God to create an asylum for their protection and training, and returned to England full of this design. But the Church established by law refused to permit her most gifted son to preach from her pulpits. With the Wesleys he soon began "ranging the kingdom," preaching on moor and common, at the village markets and at the cross-roads. Soon great multitudes, increasing to five, ten, fifteen and twenty thousand, listened to his soul-stirring sermons. "He could see the effect of his words by the white gutters made by tears which trickled down the blackened cheeks of the miners, for they came unwashed out of the coalpits to hear him."

John Wesley could scarcely reconcile himself at first to this field preaching. "Till very lately," he writes, "I was so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin, if it had not been done in a church." But soon he, too, was preaching to the colliers and ploughmen and fishermen throughout the kingdom.

At Moorfields and on Kennington Common the clear ringing voice of Whitefield could be heard by vast multitudes who thronged to hear the new prophet. "Scores of carriages, hundreds of horsemen, and thirty or forty thousand on foot," says Dr. Stevens, "thronged around him. Their singing could be heard two miles off, and his own voice a mile.

Waggon and scaffolds were hired to the throng, that they might the better hear and see the wonderful preacher, who, consecrated and gowned as a clergyman of the national hierarchy, had broken away from its rigid decorum, and like his Divine Master, had come out into the highways and hedges to save their neglected souls."

The people generously contributed their pence to his Orphan Asylum. He records one collection of which nearly one-half consisted of little short of 10,000 pieces of copper.

In 1739 Whitefield again visited America. His eloquence aroused the good Quakers and Presbyterians of Philadelphia to enthusiasm. His favourite out-of-door pulpit was the balcony of the old courthouse in Market Street. His voice could be heard on the opposite shore of the Delaware. From Savannah to Boston he ranged through the country. Twenty thousand persons gathered beneath the trees on Boston Common to hear him. At New Haven the Legislature was in session. He preached before them with wonderful power and pathos. "Thanks be to God," said the aged Governor of the Province, "for such refreshment on our way to heaven." In seventy-five days he had preached one hundred and seventy-five sermons, and stirred the consciences of thousands from Maine to Georgia.

An unhappy alienation for a time now took place between Whitefield and his old friends the Wesleys. Whitefield had adopted the Calvinistic doctrine of Election. He felt himself to have been so vile a

sinner that he could not but ascribe his own conversion to infinite and sovereign grace, which had elected him from all eternity to everlasting life. But the estrangement between such loving hearts could not long continue. They were soon reconciled and continued to labour in love and loyalty till their lives' end.

Whitefield was frequently assaulted and maltreated. Yet his influence over a turbulent mob was marvellous. During the Whitsuntide holidays when drummers, trumpeters, merry-andrews, masters of puppet-shows, exhibitors of wild beasts and players were all busy in entertaining their respective groups, he shouted his text, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," and boldly charged home upon them the vice and peril of their dissipations. Stones, dirt, rotten eggs, and dead cats were thrown at him. "My soul," he says, "was among lions." But before long he prevailed, and the immense multitude were turned into lambs. No less than a thousand notes were afterwards handed up to him for prayers from persons who had been brought "under conviction" that day; and, soon after, upward of three hundred were received into the society at one time. Many of them were "the devil's castaways," as he called them. "Numbers that seemed to have been bred up for Tyburn were at that time plucked as brands from the burning."

In 1750, one morning, at five o'clock, a great earthquake shook the city of London. Wesley was preaching in the Foundry at the time, and cried out to the agitated people, "Therefore will we not fear,

though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea: for the Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." London looked like a sacked city, with people flying in coaches and on foot to escape the impending peril. The earthquake shocks continued, and Whitefield preached amid a midnight tempest in Hyde Park to an awe-stricken multitude, on the more dreadful terrors of the dissolving world and of the Judgment Day.

He continued year after year ranging through the kingdom, from Land's End to Edinburgh and Glasgow. "Invitations," he wrote, "came from every direction. I want more tongues, more souls, more bodies for the Lord Jesus." He preached on one tour one hundred and eighty sermons in three months to hundreds of thousands of hearers. In Edinburgh in four weeks he preached to nearly ten thousand hearers every day. "Oh, that I could fly from pole to pole publishing the everlasting Gospel!" he wrote, "I have scarce known sometimes whether I was in heaven or on earth."

In Dublin he was assailed by a Roman Catholic mob. "Stones flew about him from all directions," writes Dr. Stevens, "and he reeled under them till he was breathless and dripping with blood. A few of his friends had followed him, and now washed the blood from his wounds; but as soon as he revived, the family, fearing their house would be demolished, entreated him to leave them. As it was perilous for him to go out, a mechanic offered him his wig and

cloak as a disguise. He put them on: but, ashamed of such apparent cowardice, threw them off with disdain, determined to face the populace in his proper habit. A Methodist preacher brought a coach to the door. Whitefield leaped in and rode unhurt, and with what he calls 'Gospel triumph,' through whole streets of Roman Catholics, who threatened him at every step of the way. None, he says, but those who were spectators of the scene could form an idea of the affection with which he was received by the weeping, mourning, but now joyful Methodists."

Strange that so saintly a man should be thus assailed. Yet play actors caricatured him on the boards of the theatre. Letters threatening his life were sent him, and more than once a ruffian came into the pulpit to attack him with clenched fists.

Many were the dangers which this great evangelist encountered by sea and land. Like the Apostle whom, in his burning zeal, he so much resembled, he might refer to his journeyings often, his perils in the city and in the wilderness, to his weariness and painfulness, his watchings, his fastings, and his manifold infirmities. In traversing the pathless American forests he sometimes could hear the wolves "howling like a kennel of hounds"; and he had at night to keep them at bay by blazing fires. He had to ford icy rivers, and once was nearly drowned in crossing the Potomac amid the rigours of midwinter.

Seldom has such a burning soul been tabernaled in so frail a body. The latter portion of his life was one long martyrdom of suffering. Once after

preaching he was so exhausted that, as he was laid upon a bed, he heard the bystanders say, "He is gone." Again, he writes, "I was in all appearance a dying man, expecting to be with my Maker before morning. I spoke with peculiar energy. Such effects followed the Word I thought it worth dying a thousand times."

Yet his zeal burned the more intensely the nearer he drew to the end of his labours. Fourteen times he visited Scotland, in the rude and uncomfortable coaches of the period. During the last of these visits we read that he preached "generally twice, sometimes thrice a day, and once five times." When his health was at its worst, his short allowance of preaching was once a day and thrice on Sunday. To get into the pulpit seemed to put new life into his dying frame. While thousands hung upon his words he seemed to soar like a seraph to the gate of heaven, and to speak as one who saw the secrets veiled from mortal sight. Forty-two times he crossed the Irish Channel to preach to the turbulent yet generous-hearted Irish people. Thirteen times he crossed the Atlantic in the crowded and comfortless vessels of the time, often consuming eleven weeks on the voyage. Once his vessel lay a month in the Downs waiting for a favourable wind. He had prayers and preaching on shipboard every day. We read of him after such a voyage lingering for three weeks between life and death, but preaching repeatedly, "though he had to be carried like a child." From Georgia to Maine he ranged through the forest wilderness of America,

preaching in its scattered towns to eager multitudes. In Great Britain, from the mountains of Wales to the heathy moors of Scotland, in crowded cities and on barren wolds, his persuasive voice was heard pleading with men to flee from the wrath to come.

Often he preached beneath the gallows-tree, standing upon the coffin of the criminal who was to be executed, and, ascending with him to the scaffold, prayed with him to the last. At five o'clock on a winter's morning thousands were drawn without the city to listen to the story of Calvary from his lips. "I have seen," writes a spectator, "Moorfields as full of lanterns at these times as the Haymarket is full of flambeaux of an opera night."

Never were more disinterested labours than those of Whitefield. While raising thousands of pounds for charitable objects, he lived and died a poor man. At one service he collected £600 for the people of an obscure village in Germany, which had been burned down, for which he received the thanks of the Prussian sovereign. He maintained for years a household of over a hundred orphan children in Georgia, by the voluntary contributions of his hearers, most of whom themselves were poor. He even sold his furniture to meet the expenses of the orphan-house. He might, indeed, have enjoyed ease and leisure if he would. He was offered £800 a year in Philadelphia to become a settled pastor for but half the time, leaving him six months to range the continent. But he could brook no trammels on his freedom to go whithersoever the Spirit called him, and the tempting offer was declined.

The profound humility, the true lowliness of spirit of this great man is one of the noblest traits in his character. He exhorts his friends at Savannah to "pray that he may know himself to be, what really he is, less than the least of them all." In the midst of his apostolic labours, he exclaims, "Oh, that I may at length learn to live. I am ashamed of my sloth and lukewarmness, and long to be on the stretch for God." Again, near the close of his life of unprecedented toil, he writes with undeserved self-upbraidings, "Oh, to *begin* to be a Christian and minister of Jesus."

Notwithstanding the doctrinal differences between himself and his early friend, John Wesley, he ever cherished towards him feelings of the deepest and tenderest regard. When a small-souled bigot asked him if he thought he should see John Wesley in heaven, he replied, "I fear not, for he will be so near the throne and you and I so far away that we shall scarce be able to catch a sight of him."

In spite of the carpings of mole-eyed malice, few men ever awakened such enthusiastic admiration and warm affection. The common people heard him gladly. Nor were the higher ranks insensible to the spell of his eloquence. More than once in America the Legislature and the Judges' Sessions adjourned in order to hear him preach. Philosophers, like Franklin and Hume, esteemed his correspondence with them a privilege, and many titled and noble persons deemed themselves honoured by his friendship.

It is difficult, after the lapse of more than a hundred

years since his death, to fully comprehend the secret of his wonderful eloquence and of his spell-like power over the souls of men. If his delivery were the product of art, it was certainly the perfection of art, for it was entirely concealed.

While he was a great master of words, he studied especially plainness of speech. His appeals touched every heart, and held the attention of every hearer. A worthy ship-builder narrates that he could usually during a sermon build a ship from stem to stern; but under Mr. Whitefield he could not lay a single plank.

The voice of this Son of Thunder was one of rich musical quality and of great strength. The philosophic Franklin computed, by practical experiment, that he could easily be heard by thirty thousand persons. Indeed, he often held audiences of over twenty thousand spell-bound by his eloquence. His dramatic ability was such that his auditors seemed actually to see the things which he described. Once, while preaching to an audience of sailors at New York, he thus portrayed in vivid words the terrors of a shipwreck: "Hark! don't you hear the distant thunder? Don't you see those flashes of lightning? The air is dark. The tempest rages. Our masts are gone! What next?" The unsuspecting tars, as if struck by the power of magic, arose, and with united voices exclaimed, "Take to the long boat, sir!" The celebrated actor, Garrick, was heard to say that he would give a hundred guineas if he could only say "Oh!" as Mr. Whitefield did. Hume, though one of the coldest and most sceptical of men, said it was worth going

twenty miles to hear him. The philosopher, Franklin, as he tells us, listening to a charity sermon resolved to give nothing; but under the power of the preacher's appeals he "emptied his pocket wholly in the collector's plate—gold, silver, and all."

But the crowning glory of his preaching was that it was accompanied with the demonstration of the Spirit and with power. Hundreds were pricked to the heart and led to repentance and faith. In a single week he received a thousand letters from persons under conviction of sin through his preaching, and wherever he laboured he won scores and hundreds of trophies of divine grace.

A marked characteristic of Whitefield was his tenderness, his sympathy for sinners, his burning love for souls. He that would move others must himself be moved. Hence multitudes were melted into tears, because tears were in the preacher's words, his voice, and often on his cheeks. "You blame me for weeping," he says, "but how can I help it when you will not weep for yourselves, although your immortal souls are upon the verge of destruction?"

Whitefield used to pray that he might die in the pulpit or just after leaving it. His prayer was almost literally granted him. He died, as he lived, in the midst of labours more abundant than those of almost any other man. The last entry in his journal, July 29th, 1770, is that during the month he had completed a five hundred miles circuit in New England, preaching and travelling through the heat every day. At Exeter, Massachusetts, he was requested to preach

again. A friend remonstrated, "Sir, you are more fit to go to bed than to the pulpit." "True," he replied, and clasping his hands, exclaimed, "Lord Jesus, if I have not yet finished my course, let me speak for Thee once more in the fields, and then come home and die." As he entered the pulpit he seemed like a dying man. Yet, for two hours, he exhorted the people like a man who already beheld the realities of the eternal world. At this last service an intending persecutor, with a pocketful of stones, said, "Sir, I came to break your head, but God has broken my heart."

After the sermon, he rode on to Newburyport, a distance of fifteen miles. As he retired to his chamber on the last evening of his life, so many were desirous of hearing him that he stood upon the stairs with his candlestick in his hand, and addressed them with much feeling till the candle burned low in its socket—like the lamp of his life then flickering to extinction.

During the night the asthmatic spasms, to which he had been for so many years a martyr, came on with increased violence. He was removed to the open window to enable him to breathe with less difficulty, but after an hour's suffering his spirit passed away. He left no dying testimony; but he had borne so many for God during his life that there was no need. His labours in two hemispheres, the eighteen thousand sermons that he preached, his many journeyings by sea and land, his undying zeal for the salvation of souls—these were a testimony which shall be an inspiration and spell while the world shall last.

He was buried beneath the pulpit of the Old South

Church, Newburyport, and thither pilgrims from many lands have come to pay their tribute of homage to the memory of the greatest preacher since the days of Chrysostom. One of these thus describes his visit to Whitefield's tomb: "We descended to the vault. There were three coffins before us. Two pastors of the church lay on either side, and the remains of Whitefield in the centre. The cover was slipped aside, and they lay beneath my eye. I had stood before his pulpits; I had seen his books, his ring, his chairs; but never before had I looked upon part of his very self. The skull, which is perfect, clean, and fair, I received, as is the custom, into my hands. Thought and feeling were busy and we gave expression to the sentiments that possessed us, by solemn psalmody and fervent prayer."

The Quaker poet, Whittier, has thus sketched, in tuneful lines, the salient features in the life and character of this great man, and with the quotation we close this review of his labours:

"Lo! by the Merrimack Whitefield stands
 In the temple that never was made by hands,—
 Curtains of azure, and crystal wall,
 And dome of the sunshine over all!—
 A homeless pilgrim, with dubious name
 Blown about on the winds of fame;
 Now as an angel of blessing classed,
 And now a mad enthusiast.
 Called in his youth to sound and gauge
 The moral lapse of his race and age,
 And, sharp as truth, the contrast draw
 Of human frailty and perfect law;

Possessed by one dread thought that lent
 Its goad to his fiery temperament
 Up and down the world he went,
 A John the Baptist, crying,—Repent !

“ And the hearts of people where he passed
 Swayed as the reeds sway in the blast,
 Under the spell of a voice which took
 In its compass the flow of Siloa’s Brook
 And the mystical chime of the bells of gold,—
 On the ephod’s hem of the priest of old,—
 Now the roll of thunder, and now the awe
 Of the trumpet heard in the Mount of Law.

“ A solemn fear on the listening crowd
 Fell like the shadow of a cloud.
 The sailor reeling from out the ships
 Whose masts stood thick in the river-slips
 Felt the jest and the curse die on his lips.
 Listened the fisherman rude and hard,
 The calker rough from the builder’s yard,
 The man of the market left his load,
 The teamster leaned on his bending goad,
 The maiden, and youth beside her, felt
 Their hearts in a closer union melt,
 And saw the flowers of their love in bloom
 Down the endless vistas of life to come.
 Old age sat feebly brushing away
 From his ears the scanty locks of gray ;
 And careless boyhood, living the free
 Unconscious life of bird and tree,
 Suddenly wakened to a sense
 Of sin and its guilty consequence.

“ It was as if an angel’s voice
 Called the listeners up for their final choice ;
 As if a strong hand rent apart
 The veils of sense from soul and heart,

Showing in light ineffable
 The joys of heaven and woes of hell :
 All about in the misty air
 The hills seemed kneeling in silent prayer ;
 The rustle of leaves, the moaning sedge,
 The water's lap on its gravelled edge,
 The wailing pines, and, far and faint,
 The wood-dove's note of sad complaint,—
 To the solemn voice of the preacher lent
 An undertone of low lament ;
 And the rote of the sea from its sandy coast,
 On the easterly wind, now heard, now lost,
 Seemed the murmurous sound of the judgment host.

“ So the flood of emotion deep and strong
 Troubled the land as he swept along,
 But left a result of holier lives,
 Tenderer mothers and worthier wives.
 The husband and father whose children fled
 And sad wife wept when his drunken tread
 Frightened peace from his roof-tree's shade,
 And a rock of offence his hearthstone made,
 In a strength that was not his own began
 To rise from the brute's to the plane of man.
 Old friends embraced, long held apart
 By evil counsel and pride of heart ;
 And penitence saw through misty tears,
 In the bow of hope on its cloud of fears,
 The promise of heaven's eternal years,—
 The peace of God for the world's annoy,—
 Beauty for ashes, and oil of joy !

“ Under the church of Federal Street,
 Under the tread of its Sabbath feet,
 Walled about by its basement stones,
 Lie the marvellous preacher's bones.
 No saintly honours to them are shown,
 No sign nor miracle have they known ;

But he who passes the ancient church
Stops in the shade of its belfry-porch
And ponders the wonderful life of him
Who lies at rest in that charnel dim.
Long shall the traveller strain his eye
From the railroad car, as it plunges by,
And the vanishing town behind him search
For the slender spire of the Whitefield Church ;
And feel for one moment the ghosts of trade,
And fashion, and folly, and pleasure laid,
By the thought of that life of pure intent,
That voice of warning yet eloquent,
Of one on the errands of angels sent.
And if where he laboured the flood of sin
Like a tide from the harbour-bar sets in,
And over a life of time and sense
The church-spires lift their vain defence,
As if to scatter the bolts of God
With the points of Calvin's thunder-rod,—
Still, as the gem of its civic crown,
Precious beyond the world's renown,
His memory hallows the ancient town !”

VIII.

SELINA, COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON.

THE history of early Methodism, like the history of primitive Christianity, shows that not many mighty, not many noble were called to the work of the Gospel. Both won their trophies chiefly among God's great family of the poor. But as there were those of Cæsar's household who acknowledged Christ, so there were those of noble rank who became the friends of Methodism. One of the most notable of these was Selina, Countess of Huntingdon.

The names of Wesley and Whitefield are inseparably joined as the apostles of Methodism. Yet, a difference of opinion on doctrinal grounds soon led to a divergence of operations and a division of interests. Whitefield was destined to be the flaming herald whose mission it was to revive the almost extinct spiritual life of the Church of England, and to establish that Calvinistic Methodism which is so potent for good in the principality of Wales to the present day.

It was with this branch of Methodism that Lady Huntingdon was connected. She was of noble birth, the daughter of the Earl of Ferrers, and was remotely connected with the Royal Family. In her early

life she was married to Theophilus Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon. Lady Elizabeth and Lady Margaret Hastings, her sisters-in-law, had become interested in the Oxford Methodists. Through their influence, and through severe personal and family affliction, the Countess was led to a religious life and to a strong sympathy with the methods and principles of the evangelists, especially of Whitefield.

Her husband sent for Bishop Benson to restore her to a "saner mind," but the learned prelate failed in the attempt. Although she moved in the most aristocratic circles, the Countess was not ashamed of the lowly and despised Methodists through whom she had received such spiritual benefit. She invited John Wesley to her residence at Downington Park, where he preached to fashionable congregations the same uncompromising Gospel that he declared at Gwennap Pit or Moorfields Common. With a wise prevision of one of the greatest evangelistic agencies of the age, she specially encouraged the employment of a lay ministry, against the strong prejudices of the Wesleys.

When the separation took place between Whitefield and the Wesleys on the ground of the Calvinistic controversy, she sought to win the blessing of the peacemaker by mediating between them. She succeeded in bringing about a reconciliation, which was confirmed by the exchange of pulpits and of kindly offices. The friendship thus happily cemented continued unbroken through their lives, their only rivalry being one of hallowed zeal in promoting the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Lady Huntingdon still considered the moral unity of Methodism unbroken, and when Wesley's first Conference was held in London, in 1744, the entire body were entertained at her elegant mansion at Chelsea. She used her social influence in high places with much effect on behalf of brave John Nelson, who had been impressed into the army and suffered bonds and imprisonment for conscience' sake. He was rescued from his persecutors and set free to range the kingdom, proclaiming everywhere the great salvation.

In 1748 Lady Huntingdon became a widow. Henceforth her life was devoted to the promotion of Christ's kingdom. Whitefield became one of her permanent chaplains, and the trembling plumes on the heads of the court dames in the elegant salons of the mansion at Chelsea, no less than the tear-washed furrows on the grimy faces of the Cornish miners, attested the power of his message. High-born and titled hearers were now brought under the influence of the simple Gospel story, and not unfrequently with saving and sanctifying results. Lord St. John became a convert from the fashionable scepticism of the times to the faith of Christ. His brother, the witty Bolingbroke, complimented the preacher, but despised his message. The wife of Lord Chesterfield and her sister, the Countess of Delitz, received the Gospel and died in the triumphs of faith. Many "elect ladies" of the highest rank became devout Christians, adorning with their holy and useful lives the doctrines of the Lord Jesus.

Many of Whitefield's courtly hearers were doubtless attracted by the fashionable character of the assemblage, as they would be to the opera. Others were fascinated by the eloquence of the preacher, as they would be by the skill of an actor. The sceptical Hume, for instance, said that he would go twenty miles to hear him: and Garrick, the actor, who doubtless took lessons in style from his matchless elocution, declared that he could make one weep by the way in which he pronounced the word Mesopotamia.

Chesterfield paid him courtly compliments, and Horace Walpole employed his keen wit upon the earnest preacher whose solemn messages they both neglected and despised. The notorious Countess of Suffolk, the fair and frail favourite of George II., procured admission to one of the fashionable religious services. Mr. Whitefield's burning denunciations of sin, which probed her guilty conscience to the quick, were an unwonted and unwelcome experience to the proud court beauty. She flew into a violent passion, abused the Countess to her face, and declared that she had been deliberately insulted. Deeply mortified, she went her way and returned no more.

Nor was the zeal of the high-born and pious lady, whose life and character are the subject of our present study, restrained to mere passive patronage of those zealous evangelists—a sort of *dilettante* piety that cost her little. She proved her sincerity by her self-sacrifice, and by her generous donations to the cause of God. She curtailed her expenditure and

reduced her domestic establishment that she might build chapels for the poor. She gave up her liveried servants and carriage, and sold her jewels, that she might have money for charitable purposes. In London, Bristol and Dublin she purchased public halls and theatres, and renovated dilapidated chapels, that the Gospel might be preached to the untaught masses. Many new chapels were also erected by her liberal aid in England, Ireland, and especially in the principality of Wales. In these philanthropic labours she expended not less than half a million of dollars—a sum relatively much larger then than now.

The practical heathenism of a large portion of Great Britain, notwithstanding the vast organization and immense revenues of the Established Church, appealed strongly to her Christian sympathy. She devised a plan for the evangelization of the kingdom. With a shrewd practical method she divided all England into six districts, to be systematically visited by travelling “canvassers,” as she called them, who were zealously to preach the Gospel in every village, town and hamlet in the country. With her were associated in these pious labours some of the most learned and devout Evangelical clergymen and Dissenting ministers in the kingdom, such as Venn, Madan, Shirley, Romaine, Toplady, Dr. Conyers, Berridge, Howell Harris, Fletcher, Benson, Whitefield, the Wesleys, and many others.

With certain like-minded noble ladies, she made tours through many parts of England and Wales, accompanied by eminent evangelists, who everywhere

preached the Gospel to attentive multitudes. Where they had opportunity, they preached in the parish churches, or in Wesleyan or Dissenting chapels; indeed, some of the evangelists were parish clergymen and had churches of their own. But frequently the churches were closed against the itinerants, in which cases they preached in the church-yards, on the high-ways, or in the fields. Under the burning words of Whitefield, all Yorkshire and the neighbouring counties were kindled to a flame. Then pressing on to Scotland, or over sea to America, he left to his fellow-workers the task of organizing into churches the multitudes of converts quickened into spiritual life by his apostolic labours.

In this good work the Countess of Huntingdon, and the elect ladies who journeyed with her, took a profound interest; yet she never transcended what was deemed the bounds of decorum for her sex by taking any part in the public assemblies. While the Countess counselled the converts privately and assisted the evangelists in planning their labours, she was only a quiet hearer at the public preaching.

The record of a grand "field day," on one of those preaching excursions, is preserved. It was at Cheltenham, in Gloucestershire. The use of the parish church was refused for preaching, but Whitefield mounted a tombstone in the church-yard, and addressed the assembled thousands from the words, "Ho! everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." Many of the hearers fell prostrate on the graves, others sobbed aloud, and all seemed stricken with a solemn

awe. Whitefield's words of exhortation, says Venn, cut like a sword. "A remarkable power from on high," wrote the Countess, "accompanied the message, and many felt the arrows of distress."

Though excluded from the parish church, the Methodist evangelists were not unbefriended. A nobleman of the highest rank, the friend of his sovereign, a member of the Privy Council and Secretary of State—the Earl of Dartmouth—stood by their side among the graves and opened his hospitable mansion for their reception. That night Whitefield administered the sacrament in his house, and the next day, standing on a table beside the door, preached to the multitude that filled the rooms within and thronged the grounds without.

It was this Lord Dartmouth to whom Cowper refers in the lines—

“ We boast some rich ones whom the Gospel sways,
And one who wears a coronet and prays.”

His name is commemorated in America by Dartmouth College, of which institution he was a patron. "They call my Lord Dartmouth an enthusiast," said George III., who always had a profound respect for religion; "but surely he says nothing but what any Christian may and ought to say."

Through the influence of Lady Huntingdon, the friendship of the Wesleys and Whitefield became firmly cemented. These once estranged but now reconciled friends, unable to agree in doctrinal opinion, wisely agreed to differ, but kept up to the close of

their lives a kindly interchange of Christian courtesies. They formed with each other and with the Countess, their common friend and the peacemaker between them, a sort of formal "quadruple alliance," as Charles Wesley called it, whereby they agreed to co-operate in their common work and to knit more firmly the bonds of Christian fellowship between them.

For John Wesley's genius for organization Lady Huntingdon had a profound regard. In this respect he was much superior to his more eloquent colleague, Whitefield. Indeed, the greatest historian of modern times has bestowed on him the eulogy of having had "a genius for government not inferior to that of Richelieu."* The permanent and widespread organization of Arminian Methodism, as contrasted with the comparatively evanescent results of Whitefield's labours, is largely the result of Wesley's superior gifts of ecclesiastical legislation.

Far more than Whitefield did Lady Huntingdon possess this qualification, and had she been a man the history and present status of Calvinistic Methodism might have been very different. She was deeply convinced of the need of a college for the training of ministers for the numerous chapels which, through her zeal and liberality, had sprung up in many parts of the country. She broached her scheme to John Wesley and others, and received their hearty approval. A romantic and dilapidated old castle at Trevecca, in Wales, was accordingly purchased and fitted up as a

* Macaulay, "Review of Southey's Colloquies."

place of residence and instruction for candidates for the ministry. This enterprise exhausted her means, but she was assisted by contributions from titled and wealthy ladies who sympathized with her project.

The saintly and accomplished Fletcher became the first president, and the learned Wesleyan commentator, Joseph Benson, its head-master. The first student was a poor collier, who subsequently became an able and useful vicar in the Established Church. The ancient cloisters were soon thronged with earnest students. No conditions of admission were imposed, other than conversion to God and a purpose to enter the Christian ministry, either in the Established Church or in any Dissenting body. In this truly catholic institution the students received lodging, maintenance, instruction, and an annual suit of clothes, at the expense of the Countess.

The first anniversary of the college was celebrated as a religious festival of holy rejoicing. For nearly a week previously the scattered evangelists of the "Connexion" continued to arrive in the courtyard of the picturesque old castle. Very different was the scene from those of tilt and tourney with which it had resounded in the days of knightly chivalry. Hymns and prayers and sermons, in English and Welsh, echoed beneath the ancient arches. On the great day of the feast, Wesley and Fletcher, Shirley and Howell Harris, Arminian and Calvinist, English and Welsh, preached and prayed, and administered the sacrament and celebrated the "love-feast," together, all differences being forgotten in their com-

mon brotherhood in Christ. The ministers all dined together with Lady Huntingdon, while great baskets of bread and meat were distributed to the multitude in the courtyard. Thus they all kept high festival with gladness of heart before the Lord.

Still it was not the purpose of either Wesley or Whitefield or Lady Huntingdon to establish a new sect. They were all attached members of the Church of England. Not till they were thrust forth from its embrace did they organize separate societies. In order to protect her numerous chapels from suppression or appropriation by the Established Church, Lady Huntingdon was obliged to take advantage of the Act of Toleration, and thus convert her "Connexion" into a Dissenting community. The clergymen of the Establishment who had hitherto been her most influential allies, now withdrew their aid and preached no more in her chapels.

The Countess, not content with the success of her evangelistic plans in Great Britain, resolved to extend her efforts to the New World. Whitefield died in 1769. The support of the orphanage and of the mission work in Georgia, objects of his deepest solicitude, became the cherished purpose of the Countess of Huntingdon. She resolved to send a principal and pastor to the orphanage, and a band of missionaries to labour among the colonists and blacks.

Before they sailed the missionaries preached daily to immense audiences in Whitefield's Tabernacle and in the open air on Tower Hill. At length, amid many prayers, not unmingled with the tears of thousands of

spectators, the "destined vessel, richly freighted," sailed on its voyage. The missionaries had great success, especially among the coloured people, and it seemed probable that Calvinistic Methodism would become the predominant type of religious belief throughout the southern colonies of North America.

But Providence had willed otherwise. The orphanage was destroyed by fire. The Revolutionary War entirely disconcerted the plans of the Countess. Most of the missionaries returned to Great Britain. The Countess had acquired large estates in Georgia, which she held for missionary purposes. She corresponded with Washington for their recovery, and Benjamin Franklin acted as one of her trustees. But the disturbances caused by the prolonged war and severance of the colonies from the Mother Country, prevented the restoration of her estates.

Full of years, as full of honours, like a ripe sheaf waiting to be garnered home, the Countess of Huntingdon drew near her end. Earthly distinctions had been hers, worldly wealth and troops of friends. But as she bent beneath the weight of four and eighty years and faced the mysteries of the spirit world, what was the ground of her confidence and hope? Simply her humble trust in the atonement of her Redeemer. As the outward body failed, the inward spirit was renewed day by day.

Amid the sufferings of a lingering and painful sickness, she exclaimed: "I am well; all is well—well forever. I see wherever I turn my eyes, whether I live or die, nothing but victory. The coming of the

Lord draweth nigh! The thought fills my soul with joy unspeakable—my soul is filled with glory. I am as in the element of heaven itself. I am encircled in the arms of love and mercy; I long to be at home; Oh, I long to be at home!” Almost with her dying breath she exultingly declared: “My work is done; I have nothing to do but to go to my Father.”

“Servant of God! well done,
Rest from thy loved employ,
The battle’s fought, the victory’s won,
Enter thy Master’s joy.”

The very year that this aged saint passed away—1791—John Wesley also died. Thus departed from the toils of earth to the everlasting reward of heaven two of the most remarkable spirits of the eighteenth century, who, more than almost any others, left their impress on the age.

One of the most striking proofs of the moral and intellectual superiority of the Countess of Huntingdon was the influence that she exerted, during a long series of years, over many of the most eminent men of the time. Her private character was one of great simplicity and beauty. Says one who knew her well: “In conversing with her you forgot the earldom in her exhibition of humble, loving piety.” She sometimes asserted her woman’s prerogative in her tenacity of opinion and of purpose, but her opinions were the result of conscientious conviction, and her purposes were purely unselfish. Her contributions to the needy were liberal to excess, so much so as often

to leave herself embarrassed. At her death she left twenty thousand dollars to the poor. The residue of her large fortune was left for the endowment of the sixty-four chapels which had been erected, chiefly through her efforts, in different parts of the kingdom.

It is in the principality of Wales that the influence of the Calvinistic Methodism of "Lady Huntingdon's Connexion" has been the most strongly felt. Largely as the result of the stimulus that it imparted, the thirty Dissenting churches of 1715 have increased to twenty-three hundred, so that "a chapel now dots nearly every three square miles of the country, and a million people—nearly the whole Welsh population—are found attending public worship some part of every Sabbath.



NYON,
LAKE LEMAN, THE BIRTH-
PLACE OF JOHN FLETCHER.

O'REILLY & FUSSELL

IX.

JOHN FLETCHER AND MARY BOSANQUET.

THE picturesque shores of the Lake of Geneva have many religious and literary associations. Calvin and Zwingle, Voltaire and Rosseau, Madame de Staël and Madame Recamier, Gibbon and Byron have given its terraced slopes and vine-clad hills a perpetual interest. At Nyon, the refuge of the persecuted Vaudois, beneath the shadow of its ivy-mantled castle, whose massy walls ten feet thick bear witness of the feudal tenure of the twelfth century, was born one of the most noteworthy of the Makers of Methodism. He was of an ancient family, allied to the princely house of Savoy. The comfortable mansion, conspicuous amid the humbler houses of the village, is still occupied by the descendant Flechères, who continue to maintain the name and religious reputation of the family.

Here Jean Guillaume de la Flechère, or John William Fletcher, as we would say, was born in 1729. He was designed by his pious Protestant parents for the ministry of the Reformed Church. He, therefore, received at the University of Geneva a thorough education in the classical and oriental languages and in philosophy. His scholarship made him the pride

of the university, and he carried off most of its prizes. He could not, however, accept the Calvinistic doctrines of the Genevan Church. He, therefore, declined to enter its ministry.

Like many of the Swiss, he adopted a military life, and sought service with a foreign government. The young soldier of fortune first offered his sword to Portugal, and received a captain's commission in the service of that country, with orders to join an expedition for Brazil. He was, however, by accident, or rather let us say, by an all-wise Providence, prevented from sailing. A servant, on the very morning of his intended embarkation, spilled a kettle of boiling water on his legs. This confined him for some time to bed. The vessel in which he was to sail was lost at sea.

On the invitation of an uncle, who promised to secure a commission for him, he went to Flanders. But the death of his relative and the termination of the war again disappointed his hopes.

He now turned, as did so many of his countrymen, to London, the great world-metropolis. His knowledge of ancient and modern languages well fitted him for the office of tutor, which position he accepted. In London his curiosity being aroused by a casual conversation, he went to hear the Methodists. The doctrine of conversion and of the full assurance of faith came like a revelation to his soul. "Is it possible," he wrote, "that I who have always been accounted so religious, who have made divinity my study, and received the premium of piety from my university for writings on divine subjects—is it

possible that I should be so ignorant as not to know what faith is?" For months he was the subject of intense convictions of sin and deep searchings of heart. Indeed, it was not till after two years of mental struggle that he was able to exercise that faith that saveth the soul.

At the urgent solicitation of John Wesley he accepted orders in the Established Church, in his twenty-eighth year. No man ever adorned the doctrines of the Lord Jesus with more saintly walk and conversation and more utter consecration of soul. He continued for some time in London assisting John Wesley, labouring among the poor in the prisons and among the rich in Lady Huntingdon's mansion. He was offered a living at Dunham, which presented many of the coveted advantages of a rural rectory. "The parish was small, its labour light, the income good, being four hundred pounds." But the zealous evangelist declined the offer, as affording too much money for too little work. He, therefore, accepted, instead of the learned leisure of Dunham, the strenuous toil and meagre income of Madeley.

This was an obscure parish in a densely-peopled mining and manufacturing neighbourhood. It shared the moral degradation only too common in the middle of the eighteenth century; but his tireless zeal and Christian devotion wrought a moral transformation throughout the entire region. The Vicarage of Madeley became second in historic interest throughout the Protestant world only to the Rectory of Epworth in which Methodism was born. The people

of the parish were dull and apathetic, devoted to the coarse amusements of badger-baiting and prize-fighting. But Fletcher, with apostolic fervour, proclaimed the truths of the Gospel, "warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom" from house to house daily.

For months he went about the village at five o'clock on Sunday morning ringing a hand-bell, that no one might be able to excuse his neglect of public worship on the ground of not being awakened in time. "Now he appeared suddenly at vulgar entertainments," says Dr. Schaff, "and with Knox-like earnestness preached to the astounded revellers upon the folly of forbidden pleasure." "Those sinners," says John Wesley, "that tried to hide themselves from him he pursued to every corner of his parish by all sorts of means, public and private, early and late."

This moral earnestness provoked opposition and persecution. While many were reclaimed from their evil lives, the more vicious were exasperated to greater violence. A bull-bait was attempted on one occasion near the spot where he had announced a public service, and a part of the rabble was appointed to "bait the parson; to pull him from his horse, and to set the dogs on him." He escaped only by a providential detention at the funeral of a parishioner.

"His preaching against drunkenness," says Dr. Abel Stevens, whose narrative we abridge, "aroused all the maltmen and publicans of the town against him. A magistrate threatened him with his cane and

with imprisonment, and many of the neighbouring gentry and clergy joined his persecutors. A clergyman posted on the church-door a paper, charging him with schism and rebellion. Some of his friends were arrested. He was, in fine, subjected to the usual treatment of the Methodist clergy of the times, and he laboured with their usual zeal and success. With incessant preaching he combined the most diligent pastoral labours. He went from house to house, sympathizing with the afflicted, helping the poor, ministering to the sick, and admonishing the vicious.

“His liberality to the poor is said, by his successor in the parish, to have been scarcely credible. He led a life of severe abstinence that he might feed the hungry; he clothed himself in cheap attire that he might clothe the naked; he sometimes unfurnished his house that he might supply suffering families with necessary articles. Thus devoted to his holy office, he soon changed the tide of opposition which had raged against him, and won the reverence and admiration of his people; and many looked upon their homes as consecrated by his visits.”

Although of foreign birth and training, he preached in English with marvellous power, and in the opinion of John Wesley, if he had had but physical strength he would have been the most eloquent preacher in England.

“His devout habit of mind,” continues Dr. Stevens, “quickly matured into saintliness itself. We look in vain through the records of Roman or Protestant piety for a more perfect example of the consecration

of the whole life, inward and outward. For a time he erred by his asceticism, living on vegetables and bread, and devoting two whole nights each week to meditation and prayer, errors which he afterwards acknowledged. He received Wesley's Doctrine of Perfection, and not only wrote in its defence, but exemplified it through a life of purity, charity, and labour, which was as faultless, perhaps, as was ever lived by mortal man. Even in theological controversy his spirit was never impeachable." "Sir, he was a luminary," said Venn to a brother clergyman. "A luminary, did I say? He was a *sun*." "I have known," he added, "all the great men for these fifty years, but I have known none like him."

In 1768 Fletcher was invited to become President of Lady Huntingdon's college for the ministerial training of young men at Trevecca, in Wales. He accepted the position, but did not leave his parish. "His frequent visits to the college were received," writes its head-master, Benson, the Methodist commentator, "like those of an angel of God."

The fascination exercised by this saintly soul is reflected in the enthusiastic language of this generally cool and scholarly writer. "The reader," he says, "will pardon me if he thinks I exceed; my heart kindles while I write. Here it was I saw, shall I say, an angel in human flesh. I should not far exceed the truth if I said so. But here I saw a descendant of fallen Adam so fully raised above the ruins of the Fall, that though by the body he was tied down to earth, yet was his whole conversation in heaven;

yet was his life from day to day hid with Christ in God. Prayer, praise, love, and zeal, all-ardent, elevated above what one would think attainable in this state of frailty, were the elements in which he continually lived. Languages, arts, sciences, grammar, rhetoric, logic, even divinity itself, as it is called, were all laid aside when he appeared in the school-room among the students. And they seldom hearkened long before they were all in tears, and every heart caught fire from the flame that burned in his soul!

Closing his addresses he would say, "As many of you as are athirst for the fulness of the Spirit of God, follow me into my room." Many usually hastened thither, and it was like going into the Holiest of Holies. Two or three hours were spent there in such prevailing prayer as seemed to bring heaven down to earth. "Indeed," says Benson, "I frequently thought, while attending to his heavenly discourse and divine spirit, that he was so different from, and superior to, the generality of mankind, as to look more like Moses or Elijah, or some prophet or apostle come again from the dead, than a mortal man dwelling in a house of clay!"

In the judgment of Southey, "No age or country has ever produced a man of more enlivened piety or more perfect charity. No age has ever possessed a more apostolic minister." He was John Wesley's most faithful friend and fellow-helper, and was his choice as his personal successor. But this responsibility he modestly declined, and himself passed away before the death of the founder of Methodism.

The Trevecca College was entirely under the influence of Lady Huntingdon's Connexion or the Calvinistic Methodists. Its growing divergence from Arminian doctrine led to Fletcher's resignation of the presidency, but without interruption of kind and Christian relations.

An unhappy controversy, characterized by only too much bitterness and theological rancour, now arose between the Wesleyan and Calvinistic Methodists. An exception must be made, however, in the case of Fletcher's famous "Checks to Antinomianism." Never has theological discussion been conducted in a more saintly spirit and with more Christian courtesy. "His controversial pamphlets," says Dr. Stevens, "may be read by devout men even as aids to devotion; they are severe only in the keenness of their arguments; they glow with a continuous but unobtrusive strain of Christian exhortation. The argument alternates with pleas for peace, and with directions 'how to secure the blessings of peace and brotherly love.' They are read more to-day," he continues, "than they were during the excitement of the controversy. They control the opinions of the largest and most effective body of evangelical clergymen on the earth."

"His style," says a competent critic, "is clear, forcible, and sometimes ornate. He discusses the highest problems, as theories of the freedom of the will, prescience, and fatalism, in a manner which interests the ordinary reader, and the spiritual argument is cogent and thorough. No writer has so fairly

balanced and reconciled the apparently opposite passages of Scripture."

Fletcher not only stated the position of his opponent with fairness and candour, but in the case of Dr. Berridge, proffered to print a reply with his own pamphlet and circulate it gratuitously, "to show that they made a loving war."

Fletcher afterwards made a personal visit to Dr. Berridge. As he entered the parsonage, Berridge ran to him, took him into his arms, and wept. "My dear brother," he sobbed, "this is indeed a satisfaction I never expected. How could we write against each other when we both aim at the same thing, the glory of God, and the good of souls?" The servants being called in, Fletcher offered up a prayer, filled with petitions for their being led by the Holy Spirit to greater degrees of sanctification and usefulness as ministers.

His broken health compelled the Swiss pastor to return for four years to his native land. Its snow-clad hills became to him the "Delectable Mountains," whence he had nearer and clearer vision of the city of the great King. He walked in the Land of Beulah, quite on the verge of heaven. He preached, as strength permitted, to the peasant people, and drank health and refreshing from the pure air and inspiring scenery of the shores of Lake Lemman.

Like many of the early Methodist preachers, John Fletcher had been too entirely engrossed in evangelistic toil, too much exposed to calumny and persecution, too poor in worldly estate to permit of court-

ship and marriage. Yet he was not insusceptible to the charm and blessedness of wedded love. Five and twenty years before the date of which we write, the youthful beauty and lovely character of Mary Bosanquet had won his heart. But she was rich and he was poor. Travel and study and abounding labours, and perhaps somewhat ascetic notions, postponed for long years the consummation of his dream of domestic happiness. Now these long-severed lives were to meet and flow on side by side with deepened joy.

We have seen by what strange leadings of God's providence John Fletcher had been turned from a life of earthly ambition to one of heavenly zeal. No less remarkable was the divine guidance by which Mary Bosanquet was saved from a career of fashion and of refined selfishness, and consecrated to one of Christian service in the uplifting of the poor, the lowly and the lost. Her memoir, written by herself, is a remarkable record of religious experience; and, as one of the classics of Methodist biography, has helped to mould the character and kindle the piety of successive generations. From this we sketch the salient events of her eventful life.

Mary Bosanquet was the daughter of wealthy and worldly parents. She was born in the year 1739, and in her youth was surrounded by associations unfavourable to a religious life. Nevertheless, she very early became the subject of spiritual influences. When in her fifth year, she says she began to have much concern about her soul. She was a backward

child, she naïvely confesses, and not very well read in the Scriptures at that early age—it would be very remarkable if she were. She could not, however, help observing the careless lives of those around her, till she began to doubt whether the Bible really meant what it said about the future life and the unseen world.

“About this time,” she writes, “there came a servant maid to live with my father who had heard and felt some little of the power of inward religion. It was among the people called Methodists she had received her instructions.” The conversation of this lowly and unlettered girl deepened the religious convictions of Mary Bosanquet. She thought if she could only become a Methodist she would be sure of salvation. But she soon found that it was not being joined to any people that would save her, but being joined by a living faith to Christ.

Still, this way of faith seemed dark to her mind. When between seven and eight years old, as she mused on the question, “What can it be to know my sins forgiven and to have faith in Jesus?” she felt that if it were to die a martyr she could do it, and she wished that the papists would come and burn her, for then, she thought, she would be safe. But soon she was enabled to grasp the vital truth of salvation by faith, and exclaimed with joyful fervour, “I do, I do rely on Jesus; and God counts me righteous for what He has done and suffered, and has forgiven me all my sins!” “I was surprised,” she adds, “that I could not find out this before”—a

common experience of the soul on learning the simplicity of the way of salvation.

Miss Bosanquet's worldly-minded parents, as their strange, unworldly child grew up, instead of fostering her religious feelings, endeavoured to dissipate them by fashionable amusements. She was introduced to the gaieties of London society, and taken to the ball and playhouse and other gay resorts. But she found no pleasure in these, to her, dreary amusements. "If I knew how to find the Methodists, or any who would show me how to please God," she wrote, "I would tear off all my fine things and run through the fire to them." "If ever I am my own mistress," she prophetically exclaimed, "I will spend half the day in working for the poor, and the other half in prayer."

At length she made the acquaintance of some of the Methodists, from whom so much spiritual profit was anticipated. But they did not quite answer the expectations of this earnest soul, hungering and thirsting after religious fellowship. "But we must not form our judgment from the rich," she remarks; "let us wait till we get acquainted with some of the poor among them; perhaps they will be the right Methodists, and more like the first Christians." It is not by concessions to the world, nor by the adoption of its spirit on the part of the Church, that the followers of fashion will be lured from its follies and brought to Christ.

In her fourteenth year Miss Bosanquet received the rite of confirmation in the stately cathedral of

St. Paul's, London. It was to her no idle form, but an intense reality—a solemn renewal of her covenant with God and consecration of herself to His service. She soon felt that she could no longer attend the theatre, a place of fashionable resort to which her parents were addicted.

“I considered the playhouse,” wrote this mature young maiden, “had a tendency to weaken every Christian temper, and to strengthen all that was contrary; to represent vice under the false colour of virtue; and to lead, in every respect, to the spirit of the world—the friendship of which, the Apostle declares, is enmity with God.” She, therefore, begged to be left at home, and on the refusal of her request, laid open her whole heart to her father. Notwithstanding his remonstrance, she was firm in her obedience to the dictates of her conscience. It was a season of great trial, she wrote, but the Lord stood by her and strengthened her.

One incident, recorded as occurring in her seventeenth year, gives us a glimpse of the gay world in the middle of the last century. With her father and a numerous company, she visited the *Royal George* man-of-war, whose subsequent tragic fate was made the subject of Cowper's pathetic ballad.* When they

* It will be remembered that the vessel sank in port, with all her crew, while careened for the purpose of cleaning her copper sheathing. As the ballad has it,—

“His sword was in its sheath,
His fingers held the pen,
When Kempenfelt went down
With twice four hundred men.”

got to the ship "it seemed like a town, such a variety of places like shops were all around." The commander, after doing the honours of the ship, proposed a dance. "Now, Miss Bosanquet, what will you do? You cannot run away," gaily queried one of her friends, for her scruples were well known. Just then the unexpected approach of the Prince of Wales (afterward George III.) and Admiral Anson was announced, and the dance was adjourned *sine die*, to the great relief of Miss Bosanquet.

While in the boat which conveyed them from the ship the party were exposed to imminent peril from a rough sea. "How are you so calm?" one of the votaries of pleasure asked our heroine. "We are in God's hands," she answered; "I am quite ready to sink or to be saved."

Her convictions of duty were exposed to another trial. A gentleman of wealth and religious profession sought her hand in marriage. Her parents, and even her religious advisers, favoured the match. She could not, however, reconcile the fashionable habits of her suitor with his religious professions, and neither her "understanding nor affection could approve the proposal," so his offer was kindly but firmly declined. She was reserved for a nobler destiny than to be a mere leader of fashion.

Through mental worry and physical weakness she fell into a low nervous fever, which her parents attributed to her religion. Severe medical treatment and confinement in a dark room were ordered. "Will you put me in a mad-house, papa?" asked the poor

distraught girl. "No," replied her father, "but you must be shut up at home unless you strive against this lowness."

But God graciously helped her in her extremity. She seemed to see a light and hear a voice, which assured her, "Thou shalt walk with me in white," and she was greatly benefited by the society of some of the wise mothers in Israel of London Methodism. She satisfied herself, by seven good reasons which she records, that she ought no longer to conform, in the matter of dress and personal adornment, with the somewhat imperious requirements of the fashion of the times. "I was perplexed," she writes, "to know how far to conform and how far to resist. I feared, on the one hand, disobedience to my parents, and on the other hand, disobedience to God."

One day her father said to her, "There is a particular promise which I require of you, that you will never, on any occasion, either now or hereafter, attempt to make your brothers what you call a Christian."

"I think, sir," she answered, "I dare not consent to that."

"Then," he replied, "you force me to put you out of my house. I do not know," he continued, "that you ever disobliged me wilfully in your life, but only in these fancies."

She was now twenty-one years of age, and had a small fortune of her own. She, therefore, engaged a maid-servant and took lodgings, but did not go to them, hoping that she might still remain beneath her

father's roof. One day her mother sent her word that she must leave that night for her lodgings, and that the family carriage would convey her personal effects. She bade farewell to the servants, who stood in a row in tears, and went forth from her father's house, banished for conscience' sake.

Her lodgings had, as yet, neither chair, nor table, nor bed ; so, after a supper of bread, rank butter, and water, this delicate child of luxury lay upon the floor in the cold moonlight which streamed through the uncurtained windows into her room, the sweet solemnity whereof, she writes, well agreed with the tranquillity of her spirit.

She thus records her feelings under this trial: "I am cast out of my father's house. 'I know the heart of a stranger.' I am exposed to the world, and know not what snares may be gathering around me. I have a weak understanding, and but little grace." She, therefore, cried unto God, and found a sweet calm overspread her spirit. She remembered the words, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me," and was cheered by the promise, "When thy father and mother forsake thee, the Lord shall take thee up."

She was, however, permitted to visit her home, but the parting as she took leave made, she says, the wound bleed afresh.

She was soon joined by Sarah Ryan, a pious widow, and devoted her life thenceforth to works of Christian charity. She shortly after removed to a house of her own at Laytonstone, her native village, and converted

it into a school for orphan children and home for destitute women. Before long she had received thirty-five children and thirty-four grown up persons. With the aid of her friend, Mrs. Ryan, she devoted herself with enthusiasm to this work. For economical reasons the whole household were clothed in dark purple cotton dresses of uniform pattern. Many, both of the children and adults, were sickly and demanded much physical care, and all received wise moral guidance and control. The children were trained in habits of usefulness. They rose between four and five, had early prayers and breakfast. School, house-work and recreation occupied the day, and by eight at night, after prayers, they went to bed.

Our gentle heroine had great need, she said, of wisdom and patience, as may well be conceived. The novel enterprise met with much criticism and opposition. On Sunday evenings a religious service for the neighbours was held in the house, and sometimes "when the nights were dark a mob used to collect at the gate and throw dirt at the people as they went out; and when they were gone the mob used to come into the yard and, putting their faces to a window which had no shutters, roar and howl like wild beasts."

One night "four shabby-looking men, with great sticks in their hands," the ringleaders of a mob, forced their way into the kitchen, but Miss Bosanquet explained the Methodist "Rules of Society" to them, and asked if they would accept copies. Subdued by her womanly winsomeness and by the unexpected

request, "they received them with a respectful bow, and went out."

This was truly a remarkable work for a young lady of only twenty-three to carry on, but she derived much help from her friend, Mrs. Ryan, who had previously had valuable experience as head of the domestic department of Wesley's Woodhouse Grove School.

At times the expenses of the establishment exceeded its income, but in answer to prayer help always came when most needed, often from anonymous sources. A wealthy Methodist lady, a Miss Lewen, came to live in the family, where, after a time, she became very ill. By her will she made provision for the bequest of two thousand pounds to the orphanage. But Miss Bosanquet, fearing that God's cause might be reproached thereby, prevailed on her to let it be burned, for "what is two thousand pounds," she exclaimed, "or two hundred thousand pounds, when compared to the honour of my God?" When Miss Lewen was dying she called for pen and paper, saying, "I cannot die easy unless I write something of my mind concerning Sister Bosanquet having the two thousand pounds, and renewed the bequest." But the money never was claimed, that the cause of God might be above reproach.

Shortly after this, both of Miss Bosanquet's parents died. She had the privilege of alleviating their last illness by her filial ministrations. She received from them many marks of affection, and on their death found her fortune largely increased. But the

expenses of her growing household more than kept pace with her increase of income.

The orphan institution was now removed to Cross Hall in Yorkshire, where a large farm was secured for it. Miss Bosanquet was now employed, with her characteristic energy, in building, farming, malting, and other operations, in order to meet the growing expenses of the institution. The religious services were continued as at Laytonstone, and worshippers from far and near flocked to the meetings so numerously that there was not room for their accommodation. Miss Bosanquet, therefore, established similar services at convenient places throughout the country. In 1770 Wesley visited the institution, and records in his journal that "it is a pattern and a general blessing to the country."

A gentleman of wealth and of religious character, struck with admiration of her person and disposition, asked Miss Bosanquet's hand in marriage. "Though I had a grateful love toward him," she writes, "I could not find that satisfying affection which flows from perfect confidence, and which is the very spirit and soul of marriage." She therefore declined to give her hand where she could not freely and fully give her heart. She accepted a life of toil and anxiety, rather than one of luxury and ease, at what she conceived to be the call of duty.

Notwithstanding the utmost economy the financial condition of the institution became greatly embarrassed. Although "the strictest account was made of every grain of corn, pint of milk, or pound of

butter, the farm did not pay its way." Miss Bosanquet was greatly perplexed. She wrote, "I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit." She resolved to sell the establishment and live on twenty pounds a year till she could pay her debts.

She felt increasingly laid upon her heart the burden of souls. On account of her health she went to Harrowgate to drink the waters. While stopping at an inn the lodgers on Sunday requested her to address them in the "great ball-room." "This was a trial, indeed," she writes. "Yet, I considered, I shall see these people no more till I see them at the judgment seat of Christ; and shall it then be said of me, 'You might that day have warned us, but you would not.'" She therefore consented to the request, and had much comfort and "some fruit" of her labours.

Similar invitations were now frequently urged upon her. She dared not refuse them. On one occasion she rode twenty miles over the Yorkshire moors to address a meeting in the absence of the regular preacher. To her dismay she found two or three thousand persons assembled. The multitude filled a spacious quarry, from the edge of which she addressed them. The people seemed as if they could never have enough, and said, "When will you come again?"

This remarkable woman seems to have possessed singular ability for addressing an audience. "Her manner of speaking," writes Wesley, "is smooth, easy and natural. Her words are as a fire, conveying

both light and heat to the hearts of all that hear her." But her womanly sensitiveness shrank from the task. Of one occasion she writes: "All the day I kept pleading before the Lord, mostly in these words of Solomon, 'Ah, Lord, how shall I, who am but a child, go in and out before this, thy chosen people?'"

Mary Bosanquet was now to receive a new development of her character and a great increase of her joys. A kindred spirit, in every way worthy of her love, was to win her hand and heart. Rarely, if ever, have two more saintly souls been united in Christian wedlock than John Fletcher and Mary Bosanquet. On Fletcher's return from the continent in 1781, he made the long-cherished object of his affection an offer of his hand. It was accepted, and at the mature age of fifty-two and forty-two respectively, this long-waiting bridegroom and bride kept their honeymoon. In her devout thanksgiving the loving wife exclaims, "My cup runneth over." So well suited to each other were these pious souls that John Wesley was unwilling that either should have married otherwise than as they did.

The wealth of the bride was now at least no barrier to the long-delayed union. To pay her debts all her furniture, except a few trifles, had to be sold. "Deal would do for me," she writes, "as well as mahogany. I felt some attachment to my neat furniture; but love to the order of God made me take the spoiling of them very cheerfully." "I know no want but that of more grace," she adds. "My husband loves me as Christ loved the Church." "My wife," writes

Fletcher, "is far better to me than the Church to Christ."

The following is Dr. Stevens' account of the married life of the generous-hearted John Fletcher :

"His charities to the poor continued to exhaust his income to the last. His wife, equally liberal, assures us that if he could find a handful of small silver when he was going out to see the sick, he would express as much pleasure over it as a miser would in discovering a bag of hidden treasure. He was hardly able to relish his dinner if some sick neighbours had not a part of it. On Sundays he provided for numbers of people who came from a distance to attend his ministrations; and his house, as well as his church, was devoted to their convenience.

"Being called upon by a poor man, who feared God, but who was reduced to great difficulties, he took down all the pewter from the kitchen shelves, saying, 'This will help you, and I can do without it; a wooden trencher will serve me just as well.' During epidemic and contagious diseases, when others fled from the sick and dying, he flew to them, offering his services to watch them by night as well as by day."

The happy union of these twin souls was destined to be of short duration. Four short years passed away in labours more abundant for the glory of God. The zealous pastor established a day-school and a Sunday-school, and soon had three hundred children under religious instruction. The parish became a proverb for its piety, and the saintly influence which came from its humble vicarage was widely felt in

quicken the spiritual life of the neighbouring community.

But this blessed toil, for one of the labourers, at least, was soon to cease. The health of Fletcher, long infirm, broke down. Yet, despite remonstrance, he continued his labours to the last, and died like a hero, at his post. On the last day of his public ministry he conducted a communion service of four hours' length. A divine unction rested upon the assembly. His wife entreated the dying man to desist, but he seemed to know it was the last time, and persisted in preaching and prayer. For several days he suffered much, but with continual praise upon his lips. "God is love! Shout! Shout aloud! I want a gust of praise to go to the ends of the earth!" cried the dying man. When no longer able to speak he repeatedly, by signs and gestures, bore witness to his joy in the Lord. He died 1785, in the fifty-sixth year of his age.

"Many excellent men," said Wesley, "have I known, holy in heart and life, within fourscore years; but one equal to him I have not known: one so uniformly and deeply devoted to God, so unblamable a man in every respect, I have not found either in Europe or America, nor do I expect to find another such on this side of eternity."

In the first outburst of her sorrow the bereaved widow was almost inconsolable. "The sun of my earthly joys forever set," she writes; "clouds and darkness surround both body and soul."

But faith rose triumphant over her fears, and for

thirty years she continued to live her saintly life and maintain the influence of her noble husband. Her home at Madeley became a sanctuary to the poor, to devout women, and to the Methodist itinerants. It became, also, an important centre of religious influence. In her own house and in the neighbouring hamlets the Scripture expositions of this "widow indeed" were accompanied by striking results. The anniversaries of her marriage and of her husband's death were commemorated by holy exercises. On one of these occasions, in loving remembrance she writes thus: "Twenty-eight years this day, and at this hour, I gave my hand and heart to Jean Guillaume de la Flechère—a profitable and blessed period of my life! I feel at this moment a more tender affection towards him than I did at that time, and by faith I now join my hands afresh with his."

Her labours were extremely exhausting, yet she sustained them as long as she had any strength. "I am very weak," she writes, "and yet am oft five times in a week able to be at my meetings, and I have strength to speak so that all may hear, and the Lord is very present with us." In her seventy-sixth year, and a few weeks before her death, she writes: "It is as if every meeting would take away my life, but I will speak to them while I have breath."

The last entry in her faithfully-kept journal is an aspiration to depart and be with Christ. "I seem very near death, but I long to fly into the arms of my beloved Lord." Soon after she entered into her eternal rest. Among her dying utterances were

expressions of triumphant confidence: "There is my home and portion fair;" "He lifts His hands and shows that I am graven there." "The Lord bless both thee and me," she said to a friend who watched by her bedside, and insisted on her retiring to rest. Then in the solemn silence of midnight, unattended in her dying hour by earthly ministrations, but accompanied by angelic spirits, her soul passed away from the travails and trials of earth to the raptures and triumphs of heaven.

Her whole life was a precious box of alabaster broken on the feet of the Lord she loved, the rich perfume of whose anointing is fragrant throughout the world to-day. In the profusion of her beneficence to others she practised toward herself a rigorous self-denial. During the last year of her life her expenditure on her own apparel was less than twenty shillings. The same year her "poor account" amounted to over one hundred and eighty pounds. Her annual personal expenditure on dress, for many years, never amounted to five pounds.

At her death, as at that of Dorcas, there was much weeping and lamentation, not only for the alms-deeds which she did, but for the loss of her spiritual ministrations.

For nearly one hundred years the "Life and Journal" of this sainted soul has been one of the classics of Methodist biography. Being dead, she yet speaks in many lands and in many tongues. She rests from her labours, and her works do follow her.

Intrepid and blessed spirit! may kindred zeal and

devotion and impassioned love for souls never cease from among the women of Methodism till the Church of God, the Lamb's Wife, appear adorned as a bride for her husband, for the eternal blessedness of heaven.

X.

*THE BEGINNINGS OF METHODISM IN THE NEW
WORLD.*

IN the providence of God, times and places most remote from one another are often linked together by chains of sequence—by relations of cause and effect. The vast organization of Methodism throughout this entire continent, in this nineteenth century, has a definite relation to the vaulting ambition and persecuting bigotry of Louis XIV. in the seventeenth century. That dissolute monarch was not sated with the atrocity and bloodshed caused by his infamous revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, whereby half a million of the best subjects of France became exiles forever, and multitudes more became the victims of foulest outrage and wrong. He also twice ravaged the German Palatinate, a region now included in Bavaria, Baden, Hesse-Darmstadt and Rhemish Prussia. In a few weeks the consummate tactician Turenne overran the country, and gave to the flames and sack and pillage thirty thriving towns.

Unable to maintain his conquests against the resolute Protestant inhabitants and their allies, the "Grand Monarque" gave orders from his palace of Versailles for the utter devastation of the country.

The inhuman orders were obeyed with atrocious fidelity. Eighty thousand men, trained in the art of slaughter, were let loose upon the hapless country, which they scourged with fire and sword. Heidelberg, Mannheim, Spires, Worms, Oppenheim, Bingen, and Baden, towns and cities of historic fame, with their venerable cathedrals, their stately palaces, and their homes of industry, together with many a humble hamlet and solitary farmstead, were given to the flames. In the bleak and bitter winter weather a hundred thousand houseless peasants—grey-haired sires, mothers, and helpless children—wandered about in abject misery.*

Thousands of these wretched people took refuge within the lines of the English general, Marlborough, and sought the shelter of the British flag. More than six thousand came to London, reduced from affluence to poverty, and were fed by public charity.

*“The French commander announced to nearly one half million of human beings that he granted them three days of grace, and that within that time they must shift for themselves. Soon the roads and fields, which then lay deep in snow, were blackened by innumerable men, women and children flying from their homes. Many died of cold and hunger, but enough survived to fill the streets of all the cities of Europe with lean and squalid beggars, who had once been thriving farmers and shop-keepers.” The Elector Philip, looking from the walls of Mannheim, counted, in one day, no less than twenty-three towns and villages in flames. In Spires the brutal soldiery, as though to express their contempt for things most sacred, broke open the imperial vaults and scattered the ashes of the emperors. The whole valley of the Rhine, on both its banks, from Drachenfels to Philippsberg, was made the prey of the demon of rapine and destruction.

Nearly three thousand were sent to the American colonies, and formed a valuable addition to the population of New York, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina.

A number, and with these we are at present more particularly interested, immigrated, under the auspices of the British Government, to Ireland, and settled in the County of Limerick, near Rathkeale. In a contemporary list of these "Irish Palatines" occur the names, which afterwards became so familiar in the United States and Canada, of Embury, Heck, Ruckle, Sweitzer, and others.

In the good Protestant soil of those hearts providentially prepared for the reception of the Gospel, the seed of Methodism was early sown. Wesley's itinerant "helpers" penetrated to their humble hamlets, and these poor refugees received the Word with gladness. When John Wesley, in 1758, passed through Ireland, preaching day and night, he records that such a settlement could hardly elsewhere be found in either Ireland or England. The Palatines had erected a large chapel. "There was no cursing or swearing, no Sabbath-breaking, no drunkenness, no ale-house among them."

They were a serious thinking people, and their diligence had turned all their land into a garden. "How will these poor foreigners," he exclaims, "rise up in the Day of Judgment against those that are round about them?"

In this remarkable community was born, in the year 1734, the child destined to be the Mother of

Methodism in the New World. The family seem to have been of respectable degree, and gave the name Ruckle Hill to the place of their residence in Balligarrene. Barbara Ruckle was nurtured in the fear of the Lord and in the practice of piety. She grew to womanhood fair in person, and adorned especially with those spiritual graces which constitute the truest beauty of character. In her eighteenth year she gave herself for life to the Church of her fathers, and formally took upon her the vows of the Lord.

“From the beginning of her Christian life,” records her biographer, “her piety was of the purest and profoundest character. The Wesleyan doctrine of the Witness of the Spirit was the inward personal test of piety among the Methodists of that day; and it was the daily criterion of the spiritual life of Barbara Heck. When, in extreme age, she was about to close her life-pilgrimage, in the remote wilds of Canada, after assisting in the foundation of her Church in that province, as well as in the United States, she could say that she had never lost the evidence of her acceptance with God, for twenty-four hours together, from the day of her conversion.”

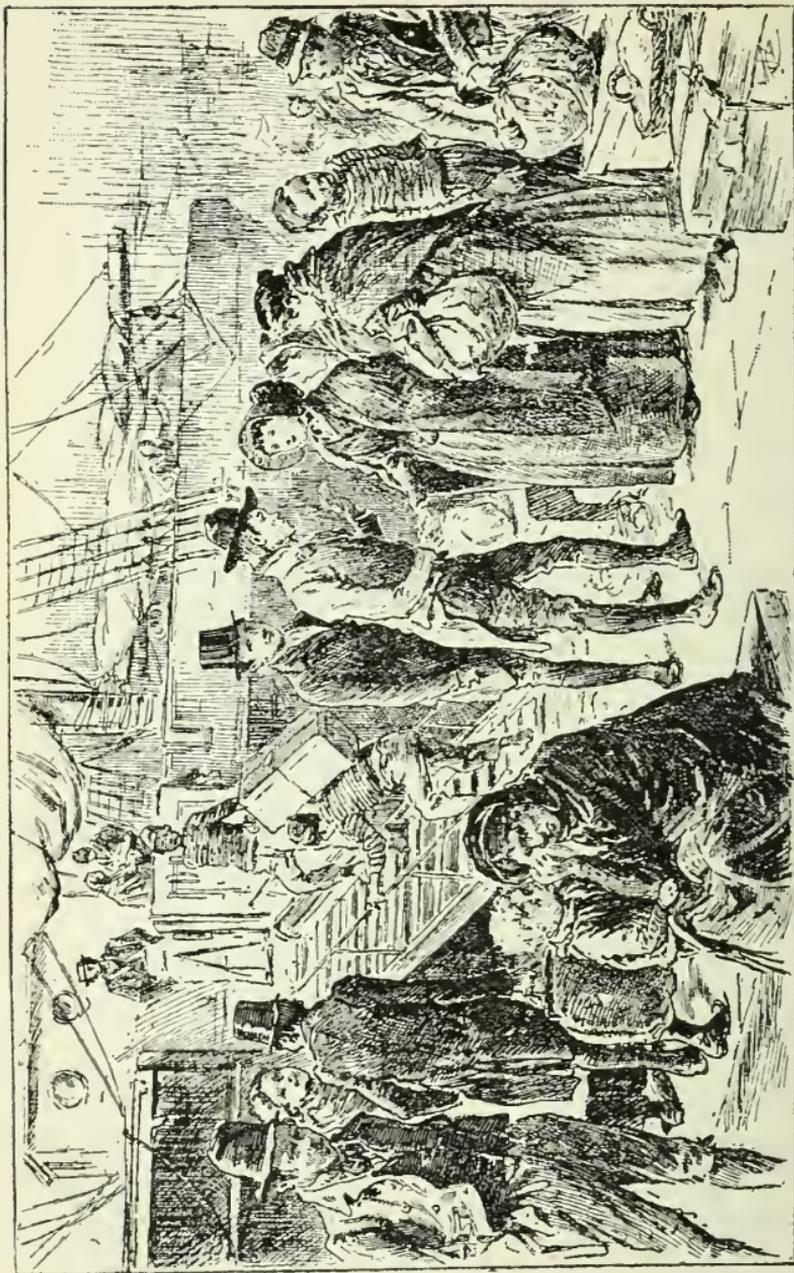
In 1760, in the twenty-sixth year of her age, she was united in Christian wedlock to Paul Heck, who is described as a devout member of the Teutonic community. Ireland then had scarce begun to send forth the swarms of her children who afterwards swelled the population of the New World. Only her more adventurous spirits would brave the perils of the stormy deep and of the untried lands beyond the sea.

It is, therefore, an indication of the energy of character of those Irish Palatines that about this time a little company of them resolved to try their fortunes on the continent of America.



BARBARA HECK.

“On a spring morning of 1760,” writes one who was familiar with the local history of the Palatines, “a group of emigrants might have been seen at the Custom House quay, Limerick, preparing to embark



THE PALATINE METHODISTS LEAVING LIMERICK.

for America. They were accompanied to the vessel's side by crowds of their companions and friends, some of whom had come sixteen miles to say 'farewell.' One of those about to leave—a young man with a thoughtful look and resolute bearing—is evidently leader of the party. He had been one of the first-fruits of his countrymen to Christ, the leader of the infant Church, and in their humble chapel had often ministered to them the Word of Life.

“ And now the last prayer is offered ; they embrace each other ; the vessel begins to move. As she recedes, uplifted hands and uplifted hearts attest what all felt. And none of all that vast multitude felt more, probably, than that young man. His name was Philip Embury. His party consisted of his wife, Mary Sweitzer (remarkable for her personal beauty, and recently married, at the early age of sixteen, to her noble husband), his two brothers and their families, Paul Heck and Barbara his wife, and others. Who among the crowd that saw them leave could have thought that two of the little band were destined, in the providence of God, to influence for good countless myriads, and that their names should live long as the sun and moon endure? Yet, so it was. That vessel contained Philip Embury, the first class-leader and local preacher of Methodism on the American continent, and Barbara Heck, ‘a mother in Israel,’ one of its first members, the germ from which, in the good providence of God, has sprung the Methodist Church of the United States [and Canada]; a Church which has now under its influence about

seven millions [now ten, at least] of the germinant mind of that new and teeming hemisphere!"

The sailing of the little vessel was all unheeded by the great world, which would have reeked little had it foundered in the deep. But that frail bark was freighted with the seed of a glorious harvest which was destined to fill the whole land, the fruit whereof should shake like Lebanon. Those earnest souls, in the flush of youth and hope and love, carried with them the immortal leaven which was to leaven with its spiritual life a whole continent.

After a weary voyage of many weeks the "destined vessel, richly freighted," safely reached New York on the 10th of August, 1760. Amid the disappointments of hope deferred, and the novel temptations by which they were surrounded, deprived, too, of the spiritual ministrations with which they had been favoured in the old home, these humble Palatines appear to have sunk into religious apathy and despondency. Like the exiles of Babylon they seemed to say, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" Embury, for a time, lost his zeal, and, constitutionally diffident, shrank from the responsibility of religious leadership. While he justly ranks as the founder of American Methodism, Barbara Heck, as Dr. Stevens well remarks, may even take precedence over him as its foundress. She nourished, during all this time, her religious life by communion with God and by the devout reading of her old German Bible.

Five years later other Palatines, some of them

relatives or old friends of the Emburys and Hecks, arrived at New York. Few of these were Wesleyans, and some made no profession of religion whatever. In the renewal of social intercourse between the old and new arrivals a game of cards was introduced. There is no evidence that any of the Wesleyans took part in this worldly amusement. But Barbara Heck felt that the time had come to speak out in earnest remonstrance against the spiritual declension of which she regarded this occupation as the evidence. In the spirit of an ancient prophetess she seized the cards and threw them into the fire, and solemnly warned the players of their danger and their duty.

Under a divine impulse she went straightway to the house of her cousin, Philip Embury, and appealed to him to be no longer silent, "entreating him with tears." With a keen sense of the spiritual danger of the little flock, she exclaimed, "You must preach to us or we shall all go to hell together, and God will require our blood at your hand." "I cannot preach, for I have neither house nor congregation," he replied. Nevertheless, at her earnest adjuration, he consented to preach in "his own hired house," and this mother in Israel sallied forth and collected four persons, who constituted his first audience. Its composition was typical of the diverse classes which the vast organization of which it was the germ was to embrace.

"Small as it was," says Dr. Stevens, "it included white and black, bond and free; while it was also an example of that lay ministration of religion which has extended the denomination in all quarters of the

world, and of that agency of woman to which an inestimable proportion of the vitality and power of the Church is attributable. The name of Barbara Heck is first on the list; with her was her husband, Paul Heck; beside him sat John Lawrence, his 'hired man,' and by her side an African servant called 'Betty.' Thus Methodism began its ministration among the poor and lowly, destined within a century to cover with its agencies a vast continent, and to establish its missions in every quarter of the globe."

At the close of this first Methodist sermon ever preached in America, Philip Embury organized his congregation into a class, which he continued to meet from week to week. The little company continued to increase, and soon grew too large for Philip Embury's house. They hired a more commodious room, which was immediately crowded. "No small excitement," says Dr. Stevens, "began quickly to prevail in the city on account of these meetings." Philip Embury, toiling all the week for the bread that perisheth, continued from Sabbath to Sabbath to break unto the people the Bread of Life. As in the case of the Great Preacher, "the common people heard him gladly." He was one of themselves, and spoke to them of common needs and of a common Saviour, and their hearts responded warmly to his words.

One day the humble assembly was a good deal startled by the appearance among them of a military officer with scarlet coat, epaulets and sword. The first impression was that he had come in the King's

name to prohibit their meetings. They were soon agreeably undeceived. In the good and brave Captain Webb they found a firm friend and fellow-labourer in the Lord. He was one of Wesley's local preachers who, sent with his regiment to America,



CAPTAIN WEBB.

found out the New York Methodists and gladly cast in his lot with them. He soon took his stand at Embury's preaching desk "with his sword on it by the side of the open Bible," and declared to the people the Word of Life. The preaching of the

soldier-saint roused the whole city, and promoted at once the social prestige and religious prosperity of the humble church. For the ten years that he continued in America he was the chief founder of Methodism on the continent, preaching everywhere among the seaboard towns and villages. "The old soldier," said President John Adams, "was one of the most eloquent men I ever heard." He had the honour of introducing Methodism into the Quaker City, where to-day it is so powerful, as well as of planting it in many of the towns of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Long Island.

In 1767 the famous "Rigging Loft," in William Street, was hired for the growing New York congregation: but "it could not," says a contemporary writer, "contain half the people who desired to hear the Word of the Lord." The necessity for a larger place of worship became imperative, but where could this humble community obtain the means for its erection? Barbara Heck, full of faith, made it a subject of prayer, and received in her soul, with inexpressible assurance, the answer, "I, the Lord, will do it." She proposed an economical plan for the erection of the church, which she believed to be a suggestion from God. It was adopted by the society, and "the first structure of the denomination in the western hemisphere," says Dr. Stevens, "was a monumental image of the humble thought of this devoted woman. Captain Webb entered heartily into the undertaking. It would probably not have been attempted without his aid. He subscribed thirty

pounds towards it, the largest sum, by one-third, given by one person."

The little Methodist community appealed to the public for assistance, and the subscription list is still preserved, representing all classes, from the Mayor of the city down to African female servants, designated only by their Christian names. A site on John Street, now in the very heart of the business portion of the city, surrounded by the banks of Wall Street and the palaces of Broadway, was procured, and a chapel of stone, faced with blue plaster, was in course of time erected. As Dissenters were not allowed to erect "regular churches" in the city, in order to avoid the penalties of the law, it was provided with a fireplace and chimney. Its interior, though long unfinished, was described as "very neat and clean, and the floor sprinkled over with sand as white as snow." "Embury, being a skilful carpenter, wrought diligently upon its structure; and Barbara Heck, rejoicing in the work of her hands, helped to white-wash its walls." "There were at first no stairs or breastwork to the gallery; it was reached by a rude ladder. The seats on the ground floor were plain benches without backs. Embury constructed with his own hands its pulpit; and on the memorable 30th of October, 1768, mounted the desk he had made and dedicated the humble temple to the worship of God. It received the name of 'Wesley Chapel,' and was the first in the world to receive that honoured name."

Within two years we read of at least a thousand hearers crowding the chapel and the space in front.

It has been more than once reconstructed since then, but a portion of the first building is still visible. A wooden clock, brought from Ireland by Philip Embury, still marks the hours of worship. Marble tablets on the walls commemorate the names and virtues of Barbara Heck and Embury, and of Asbury and Summerfield, faithful pastors whose memory is still fragrant throughout the continent. This mother-church of American Methodism will long continue to attract the footsteps of many a devout pilgrim to the birth-place of the Church of his fathers and of his own religious fellowship.

It is a somewhat remarkable coincidence that shortly after Embury had introduced Methodism into New York, another Irish local preacher, Robert Strawbridge by name, was the means of its introduction into the Province of Maryland. Like Embury, he preached first in his own house, and afterwards in a humble "log meeting-house," the prototype of thousands such which were destined to rise as golden candlesticks amid the moral darkness all over this vast continent.

Methodism having been established by lay agency in the largest city in the New World, it was destined to be planted by the same means in the waste places of the country. John Wesley, at the solicitation of Captain Webb and other Methodists in America, had sent from England as missionaries, to carry on the good work begun in New York, Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor, the pioneers of an army of twenty thousand Methodist preachers on this con-

continent. To these Philip Embury readily gave up his pulpit, and shortly after, in 1770, removed with his family, together with Paul and Barbara Heck and other Palatine Methodists, to Salem, Washington County, New York, near Lake Champlain.

This now flourishing and populous part of the country was then a wilderness. But under these changed conditions those godly pioneers ceased not to prosecute their providential mission—the founding of Methodism in the New World. Embury continued his labours as a faithful local preacher, and soon among the scattered population of settlers was formed a “class,” the first within the bounds of the Troy Conference, which has since multiplied to 288 preachers and 49,000 members.

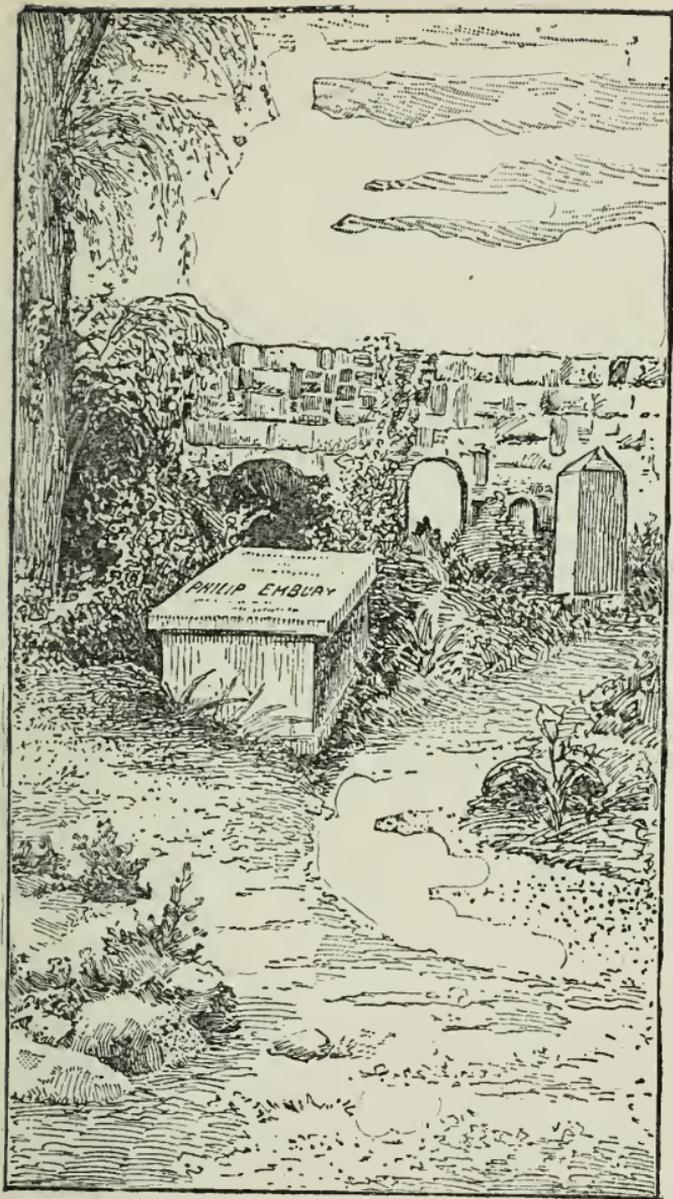
Embury seems to have won the confidence and esteem of his rural neighbours no less for his practical business efficiency and sound judgment than for his sterling piety, as we find him officiating as magistrate as well as preacher.

He received, while mowing in his field in the summer of 1775 so severe an injury that he died suddenly, at the early age of forty-five. “He was,” writes Asbury, who knew him well, “greatly beloved and much lamented.” He was buried, after the manner of the primitive settlers, on the farm on which he had lived and laboured. “After reposing,” writes Dr. Stevens, “fifty-seven years in his solitary grave without a memorial, his remains were disinterred with solemn ceremonies, and borne by a large procession to the Ashgrove burial-ground, where their resting-place

is marked by a monument recording that he 'was the first to set in motion a train of measures which resulted in the founding of John Street Church, the cradle of American Methodism, and the introduction of a system which has beautified the earth with salvation and increased the joys of heaven.'

On the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, many of the loyal Palatines maintained their allegiance to the old flag by removing to Lower Canada. Here they remained for ten years, chiefly in Montreal. In 1785 a number of them removed to Upper Canada, then newly organized as a colony, and settled in the township of Augusta, on the River St. Lawrence. Among these were John Lawrence and Catharine his wife, who was the widow of Philip Embury; Paul and Barbara Heck, and other Palatine Methodists. True to their providential mission, they became the founders and pioneers of Methodism in Canada, as they had been in the United States. A "class" was forthwith organized, of which Samuel Embury, walking in the footsteps of his sainted father, was the first leader. Thus, six years before the advent into Canada of William Losee, the first regular Methodist preacher who entered the country, Methodism was already organized through the energies of those honoured lay agents.

Barbara Heck died at the residence of her son, Samuel Heck, in 1804, aged seventy years. "Her death," writes Dr. Stevens, "was befitting her life; her old German Bible, the guide of her youth in Ireland, her resource during the falling away of her



GRAVE OF PHILIP EMBURY, ASHGROVE, N.Y.

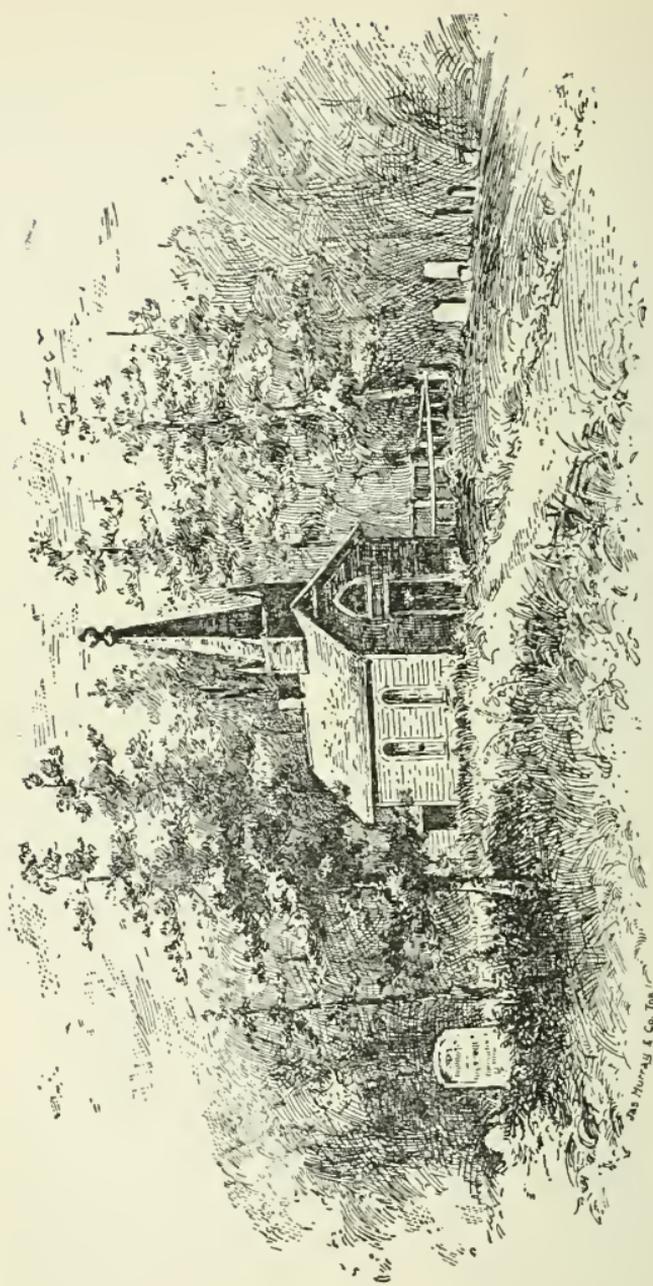
people in New York, her inseparable companion in all her wanderings in the wildernesses of northern New York and Canada, was her oracle and comfort to the last. She was found sitting in her chair dead, with the well-used and endeared volume open on her lap. Thus passed away this devoted, obscure and unpretentious woman, who so faithfully, yet unconsciously, laid the foundations of one of the grandest ecclesiastical structures of modern ages, and whose name shall shine with ever-increasing brightness as long as the sun and moon endure."

In the old "Blue Church" grave-yard, on the banks of the majestic St. Lawrence, slumbers the dust of the founders and of many of the pioneers of Methodism in Canada. The spot takes its name from an ancient church, now demolished, which once wore a coat of blue paint. Thither devout men, amid the tears of neighbours and friends, bore the remains of Paul Heck and of Barbara his wife. Here, too, slumbers the dust of the beautiful Catharine Sweitzer, who, in her early youth, gave her heart to God and her hand to Philip Embury, and for love's sweet sake braved the perils of the stormy deep and the privations of pioneer life in the New World. Here sleep also, till the resurrection trump awakes them, the bodies of several of the early Palatine Methodists and of many of their descendants, who, by their patient toil, their earnest faith, their fervent zeal, have helped to lay the foundations of Methodism on this continent.

As we contemplate the lowly life of this true mother in Israel, and the marvellous results of which

she was the initiating cause, we cannot help exclaiming in devout wonder and thanksgiving, "What hath God wrought!" In the United States and Canada there is at this moment, as the outgrowth of seed sown in weakness over a century ago, a great church organization, like a vast banyan tree, overspreading the continent, beneath whose broad canopy ten millions of souls, as members or adherents, enrol themselves by the name of Methodists, and go in and out and find spiritual pasture. The solitary testimony of Philip Embury has been succeeded by that of a great army of twenty thousand local preachers, and nearly as many ordained ministers. Over two hundred Methodist colleges and academies unite in hallowed wedlock the principles of sound learning and vital godliness. Nearly half a hundred newspapers, magazines, and other periodicals, together with a whole library of books of Methodist authorship, scatter broadcast throughout the land the religious teachings of which those lowly Palatines were the first representatives in the New World.

The Methodists of the United States worthily honoured the memory of Barbara Heck by the erection of a memorial building in connection with the Garrett Biblical Institute at Evanston, Illinois—itsself the gift of a noble-minded American woman—to be known forever as Heck Hall. Thus do two devout women, one the heir of lowly toil, the other the daughter of luxury and wealth, join hands across the century, and their names and virtues are commemorated, not by a costly but useless pillared monu-



OLD BLUE CHURCH-YARD AND GRAVE OF BARBARA HECK.

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ment, but by a "home for the sons of the prophets, the Philip Emburys of the coming century, while pursuing their sacred studies."

"Barbara Heck," writes Bishop Fowler in commemorating this event, "put her brave soul against the rugged possibilities of the future, and throbbed into existence American Methodism. The leaven of her grace has leavened a continent. The seed of her piety has grown into a tree so immense that a whole flock of commonwealths come and lodge in the branches thereof, and its mellow fruits drop into a million homes. To have planted American Methodism; to have watered it with holy tears; to have watched and nourished it with the tender, sleepless love of a mother and the pious devotion of a saint; to have called out the first minister, convened the first congregation, met the first class, and planned the first Methodist church edifice, and to have secured its completion, is to have merited a monument as enduring as American institutions, and, in the order of Providence, it has received a monument which the years cannot crumble, as enduring as the Church of God. The life-work of Barbara Heck finds its counterpart in the living energies of the Church she founded."

Canadian Methodism has not been unmindful of its obligation to this sainted woman, and is erecting as a perpetual memorial a Barbara Heck Woman's Residence in connection with Victoria University, Toronto.



THE REV. DR. THOMAS COKE,

FATHER OF METHODIST MISSIONS.

XI.

DR. COKE, THE FATHER OF METHODIST MISSIONS.

THE special characteristic of Methodism is its missionary zeal. It obeys the exhortation of its founder, to go not only to those who need it, but to those who need it most. It delights to remember the forgotten, to succour the neglected, to seek out the forsaken. As if prescient of the destined universality of the Church which he planted, John Wesley with prophetic soul exclaimed, "The world is my parish."

On many a field of sacred toil have the ministers of the Methodist Church vindicated its distinction of being pre-eminently a missionary Church—amid the cinnamon groves of Ceylon, in the crowded bazaars or tangled jungles of India, among the teeming populations of China, in sunny islands of the Southern Seas, in the Zulu's hut and the Kaffir's kraal, and amid the strongholds of heathen savagery. With a prouder boast than the Roman poet, they may exclaim, "What region in the world is not full of our labour?" In every land beneath the sun this grand old Mother of Churches has her daughters fair and flourishing, who rise up and call her blessed. The Sabbath chant of her hymns engirdles the earth with an anthem of praise, and the sheen of her spires rejoices in the light of a ceaseless morning.

To no man does Methodism owe more its missionary character than to the Rev. Thomas Coke, D.C.L. This marvellous man, of puny form but of giant energy, with a burning zeal kindled at the altar of eternal truth—like the angel of the Apocalypse, flying abroad under the whole heaven with the Everlasting Gospel—preached the glad evangel of God's grace in both hemispheres, became the founder of Wesleyan Missions in the East and West Indies, and the first Bishop of the American Methodism—a Church now boundless as the continent. After crossing eighteen times the stormy sea, he was at last buried in its depths, whose waters, like his influence, engirdle the world. The study of this heroic life will be fruitful at once in lessons of gratitude to God, of inspiration to duty, and of zeal in the service of the Divine Master.

Nestling in the soft valley of the Usk, surrounded by the towering mountains of Wales, lies the old ecclesiastical borough of Brecon, the site of an ancient Dominican priory, whose ivy-mantled walls form one of the most picturesque ruins in Britain. In the oak-roofed, time-stained town hall of the ancient borough, at the middle of the last century, might have been seen, arrayed in the robes and insignia of office, a worthy alderman dispensing justice to the rural litigants of the neighbourhood. This was the chief magistrate of Brecon and the father of Thomas Coke.

The future Apostle of Methodism, unlike many of its early ministers, was the heir of a large patrimony. He was born three years before the middle of the

century, 1747, and spent his early years amid the romantic surroundings of "Usk and Camelot," the scene of the legendary exploits of King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table. In his sixteenth year he was registered as gentleman-commoner at Jesus College, Oxford. Among his college associates were the future Lord Eldon, Chancellor of England, who always retained for him a warm friendship; William Jones, who became the first orientalist of his age; Wharton, the historian of British poetry; and the future bishops, Horne and Kennicott.

The handsome young patrician student was not proof against the seductions of Oxford society. He unhappily fell into evil habits, and even became infected with the infidel principles which were then too much in vogue at the University. But a Divine restraint and guidance prevented him from forsaking his hereditary faith and confirmed him in, at least, an intellectual apprehension of the truths of Christianity, although, as yet, he knew not by experience their saving power. He completed his college course with distinction, and shortly after his coming of age was elected to the chief magistracy of his native town. But, yearning to live a life of Christian service, he entered holy orders in the humble rank of a village curate. Yet his heart was ill at ease, for he felt that the Saviour whom he was called to preach was to himself unknown.

Still his moral earnestness awakened much interest in his parish. His church became crowded, and to accommodate the increased congregation, he erected a

gallery at his own expense. During this time he made the acquaintance of Thomas Maxfield, Wesley's first lay preacher, and by him was led to more spiritual views of religion. He became increasingly diligent in the discharge of parish duty. He met one day in his pastoral visitation, a humble Methodist farm-labourer, who, unlettered in the lore of the schools, was wise in the knowledge of God. From this rustic teacher the Oxford scholar gained a clearer acquaintance with the way of salvation by faith than from the learned divines and bishops of the first university of Europe.

The zeal of the popular curate soon began to exceed the bounds of clerical decorum, as regarded in the Church established by law. He preached with increasing fervour, and without the "regulation manuscript." He held special services out of church hours on Sunday, and on week evenings, in remote parts of his parish. He introduced the singing of the soul-stirring hymns of Watts and Wesley. He was no longer the easy-going card-playing parson of his early incumbency, but a "dangerous fanatic," righteous overmuch, and, in fact, infected with the pestilent heresy of Methodism, whose Arminian doctrines of free grace he proclaimed from the parish pulpit.

The over-earnest curate was soon dismissed by his rector, admonished for his "irregularities" by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, and expelled from his church. His churchly notions were still so exalted that, after a long and profitable correspondence with a Dissenting minister, when invited to a personal

interview he would only consent to its taking place under the neutral ground of a neighbour's house, his scruples preventing him visiting a Dissenter or meeting one under his own roof. To receive himself the obnoxious brand of a Methodist was therefore particularly distasteful. He had just obtained his highest academical degree—that of Doctor of Civil Law. Church preferment was proffered him by a nobleman of powerful influence. But the authority of conscience was supreme, and he faltered not for a moment in his loyalty to the convictions of his soul. Neither worldly hopes nor ignoble fears could make him swerve from what he deemed the path of duty.

A personal interview with John Wesley convinced Dr. Coke that for scholarship and saintliness the despised Methodists possessed the very paragon of clergymen. Mr. Wesley thus records his impressions of the young Doctor of Law: "I had much conversation with him, and a union then began which, I trust, shall never end."

The zealous curate soon experienced the brunt of persecution. The sentence of his expulsion from the parish church was abruptly announced at the close of the morning service in the presence of the congregation. By a preconcerted scheme, as he passed out of the door the bells rang out a dissonant peal—a sort of ecclesiastical "rogue's march"—by way of valediction to the expelled pastor. Cider barrels were broached, and a general rejoicing at his expulsion took place. To a man of his keen sensitiveness and churchly sympathies, the indignity must have been poignant in the extreme.

But the expelled pastor could not be restrained from proclaiming the message of salvation. The next Sunday he preached in the street near the church, immediately after the morning service, and announced that he would preach again the following Sunday. He was warned that it would be at the peril of his life if he did. "To render these menaces more significant," says his biographer, "sundry hampers of stones were brought to the spot, like a park of artillery drawn up on a field marked out for battle."

But the little Doctor, with that heroic courage which characterized him to the end of his life, was not to be daunted by brute force. He was sustained also by the presence of friends, who stood by him in this hour of peril. Among these were a Miss Edmunds and her brother, whose hearts had been touched by the earnest preaching of the persecuted pastor. The brave girl stood on one side of him and the brother on the other. Their undaunted bearing cowed the craven spirits of the mob, who shrank from their intended assault and possible murder; and, like Paul before Felix, the feeble unarmed man spoke words of power which made his persecutors tremble.

Notwithstanding this rude initiation into his life-work, Dr. Coke not for a moment hesitated in his purpose. He resolved to cast in his lot with the despised and persecuted Methodists, and to espouse the toils and hardships of an itinerant preacher. He therefore, in 1777, made application to Mr. Wesley for admission to the Conference. That judicious man did not at once grant his request, but gave him time for

consideration, while he made him the companion of his journeys and the sharer of his labours.

Dr. Coke visited the Bristol Conference, and his desire to be numbered with those godly men in the work of spreading "Scriptural holiness" throughout the land became more intense. Wesley yielded to his wish, and wrote in his Journal: "I went to Taunton with Dr. Coke, who has bidden adieu to his honourable name and determined to cast in his lot with us."

He was soon preaching in the old Foundry, London, at Seven Dials, and to immense multitudes of eager listeners in the public squares. Providence was opening for him a wider career than addressing a few rustics in an obscure hamlet. He was soon to become a mighty missionary organizer, whose influence was to be felt on earth's remotest shores and to the end of time.

Wesley was now bowed beneath the weight of eighty years. The care of all the churches and his vast correspondence was a burden which he gladly shared with this energetic son in the Gospel, now in the vigour of his thirtieth year. He used to say that Dr. Coke was his right hand.

The zealous preaching of the young evangelist often provoked the attacks of mobs. As he stood in the public square of Ramsbury, Wiltshire, he was assailed with sticks and stones, and his gown torn to shreds. The vicar of the parish, who headed the riot, bethought him of a more ingenious expedient. "Bring out the fire-engine," he shouted; and the preacher and congregation were soon dispersed by a

few volleys of "liquid artillery." It was noticed as a remarkable coincidence, that within a fortnight that very engine proved powerless to suppress a fire which destroyed a great part of the village.

In the course of his itinerations Dr. Coke revisited his former parish, from which he had been heartlessly expelled. The simple rustics found that they had lost their best friend, and welcomed him back with joy. The bells that rang him out, chimed merrily at his return. He preached to two thousand people who flocked to hear him from all the neighbouring villages, and wept over them as the Saviour wept over Jerusalem. From that day the despised Methodists had a foothold in the parish, and soon after the Doctor had the pleasure of building a Methodist chapel where he had been cast out of the Established Church.

In his somewhat impulsive zeal Dr. Coke arraigned Joseph Benson and Samuel Bradburn, first by correspondence and then before the Conference, for a presumed tinge of Arian heresy. Their orthodoxy being vindicated, the Doctor asked permission to beg pardon publicly for his offence, and thus make public amends for the wrong he had done.

In the celebrated Deed of Declaration, Mr. Wesley vested in the "Legal Hundred" all the authority of the Connexion. Dr. Coke was accused of influencing the choice of this "centurion band." Mr. Wesley, however, completely exculpated him by the laconic defence, "*Non vult, non potuit*—he would not if he could, he could not if he would," and assumed the personal responsibility of the choice.

Dr. Coke was soon to enter on what might be called his foreign missionary work. On the second day of September, 1784, John Wesley, feeling himself providentially called of God thereto, solemnly set apart by imposition of hands Dr. Thomas Coke, to be Superintendent of the Methodist societies in America. Into the controversy to which that act gave rise, we shall not enter. In our sketch of Francis Asbury we have given Mr. Wesley's own account of the transaction. Suffice it to say, that the extraordinary development of American Methodism, under Episcopal jurisdiction, seems a providential vindication of his procedure.

In three weeks Coke, with his companions Whatcoat and Vesey, were on their way to America. The voyage was stormy and tedious, but he redeemed the time by study. He refreshed his classic lore by reading Virgil in a little nook between decks, and remarks in his Journal: "I can say in a much better sense than he—

"Deus nobis haec otia fecit,
Namque erit ille mihi semper Deus."*

He laboured zealously for the conversion of the sailors on shipboard, and believed that God had given him at least one soul as his reward.

"I want," he wrote, "the wings of an eagle, and the voice of a trumpet, that I may proclaim the Gospel through the east and the west, the north and the south"—a prophecy of his future life-work.

* "God has provided for us these hours of retirement, and He shall be my God forever."

He forthwith began ranging through the continent from Massachusetts to Georgia, a true bishop of souls, feeding the flock scattered through a primeval wilderness. Not unfrequently was he exposed to the perils of fording swollen rivers or crossing rugged mountains. Some of his escapes from danger were very narrow. He met with prejudice and opposition in the western wilds as well as in an English parish, and records being excluded from a dilapidated church to which, nevertheless, cattle and hogs had free access.

He preferred the rugged grandeur of the Blue Ridge Mountains to any part of America, it was so much like his native Wales. He bore his testimony boldly against the sin of slavery, and provoked thereby much persecution. One lady offered a mob £50 if they "would give the little Doctor a hundred lashes." Many emancipated their slaves, but others became more virulent in their opposition. In company with Asbury he visited General Washington at Mount Vernon, to seek his influence in favour of negro emancipation. But, their Master's business requiring haste, they could not accept an invitation to lodge under the presidential roof. During this seven months' visit Dr. Coke greatly consolidated and strengthened American Methodism, and laid the foundation of Cokesbury College, the pioneer of its grand educational system.

The importance of foreign missions was not then felt in the churches of Christendom. When Carey, at a meeting of ministers, urged the duty of giving the Gospel to the heathen, the president exclaimed,

“Sit down, young man ; sit down. When God pleases to convert the heathen He will do it without your aid or mine.”

But already Coke was meditating the vast missionary enterprises which are the glory of the Methodist Church. He opened a correspondence with India and America, and visited the Channel Islands as a key to missionary operations in France. The first field for the extension of the Gospel, however, that seemed indicated by Providence was Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Canada. Thither, in 1768, Dr. Coke and three fellow-preachers were sent by the English Conference.

The voyage lasted thirteen weeks, and was almost one continued tempest. The sails were rent, the timbers strained, and, half a wreck, the vessel sprung a leak, and, falling on her beam ends, threatened instant death to all on board. The superstitious captain, attributing his disasters to the presence of the black-coats, exclaimed, “There is a Jonah on board ; a Jonah on board !” Rushing to Dr. Coke’s cabin, he threw into the sea his books and papers, and seizing the diminutive Doctor, threatened to throw him after them if he were caught praying again. The passengers were put on short rations, and, worst of all, the Doctor thought, the supply of candles gave out, so that his hours of study were curtailed. He solaced himself, till he lost his books, with reading French, Virgil, and “every day a canto of the English Virgil, Spenser.” “With such company,” he continues, “I could live comfortably in a tub.”

The project of reaching Halifax had to be abandoned, and running before the storm, they made, on Christmas Day, the port of Antigua, in the West Indies. It was, indeed, a happy day for the sable myriads of those islands, for it brought them a glad evangel of redemption—of peace on earth and goodwill to men. As Dr. Coke walked up the street of the town, he met a ship-carpenter and local preacher, John Baxter by name, who had under his care a Methodist society of nearly two thousand souls, all blacks but ten.

How came this native church in this far-off tropic isle? Twenty-eight years before an Antigua planter, Nathaniel Gilbert, heard John Wesley preach at Wandsworth, in England. The good seed took root in his heart, and he brought the precious germs to his island home, where they became the source of West India Methodism. This, in turn, was one of the chief means of negro emancipation, and the beginning of the great movement of African evangelization. On the death of Nathaniel Gilbert, a pious shipwright took charge of the native church, which eight years later was found so flourishing.

Dr. Coke ranged from island to island, sowing the seed of the Kingdom in the good ground of those faithful African hearts. On every side he found evidence of the quickening power of the leaven of Methodism conveyed by strange means to those scattered islands—by converted soldiers or sailors. by pious freed negroes, and at St. Eustatius by a fugitive slave, whose ministry was a marvel of spiritual

success. Under the preaching of the black apostle, many of his hearers fell down like dead men to the earth, and multitudes were converted from their fetish worship to an intelligent piety.

The Dutch officials of the island, however, scourged and imprisoned Black Harry, and passed an edict inflicting thirty-nine lashes on any negro found praying. With a fidelity worthy of the martyr ages these sable confessors continued steadfast amid these cruel persecutions. Dr. Coke subsequently interceded at the court of Holland for the religious liberty of the blacks: but, for the time, in vain. Yet he lived to see St. Eustatius a flourishing Wesleyan mission, and, ten years after, met Black Harry a freed and happy man.

Again and again the indefatigable evangelist revisited those sunny islands, which seem to have possessed a strange fascination to his soul. And well they might, for nowhere has missionary success been more glorious. At Barbadoes an Irish soldier recognized one of the missionaries as an old pastor, and in a transport of delight threw his arms about his neck. At Jamaica Dr. Coke received some insults from a number of drunken "gentlemen," but persisted in his apostolic labour of preaching the Gospel. Persecution here, as elsewhere, fostered the growth of the Church. The chapel was attacked by a mob, the Bible hanged to a gibbet, and the Methodists hooted at by the nickname of "hallelujah" in the street. In Bermuda John Stephenson, for preaching the Gospel to negroes, was imprisoned for six months and fined £50.

Soon the work of evangelization was extended to Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts, Nevis, the Bahamas, the Carib Islands, Hayti, and the Bermudas. Amid privations, pestilence, shipwrecks, and sometimes bitter persecution, the missionaries toiled on till a free Christian civilization took the place of slavery, superstition, cruelty and barbarism. As a result of the work thus inauspiciously begun, Methodism now numbers in those islands over a score of missionaries and over twenty thousand members.

Dr. Coke was in America when he heard of the death of John Wesley. Overwhelmed with sorrow, he hastened home to England. He was soon associated with Henry Moore in the preparation of a Life of the patriarch of Methodism. An edition of ten thousand was published, and in two months cleared a profit of £1,700.

The French Revolution and the fall of the Bastile inspired a hope that in France the barriers to the Gospel had been broken down. Dr. Coke and M. De Queteville, a Guernsey Methodist, proceeded to Paris to open, if possible, a mission. In that city of amusements and pleasure, where, as one of its own wits has said, four-fifths of the people die of grief,* they could only get a congregation of six persons, and were warned to depart or they would be hanged on a lamp-post. They felt that the opportunity for the evangelization of France had not yet come.

* "Paris, ville d'amusemens, des plaisirs, ou les quatre cinquièmes des habitans meurent de chagrin."—CHAMFORT, "Caractères et Anecdotes."

Dr. Coke had been requested by the English Conference to prepare a commentary on the Holy Scriptures. On his fifth voyage to America he devoted himself with energy to the task. "I find a ship a most convenient place for study," is his rather exceptional experience, "although," he adds, "it is sometimes a great exercise for my feet, legs, and arms to keep myself steady to write." Proceeding from New York to St. Eustatius in company with the sainted "Bishop" Black of Nova Scotia, he found the vessel exceedingly loathsome from the filthy habits of the crew, yet he was able, he said, to become a contented Hottentot, and the consolations of God superabounded.

He found the Methodist missionary in jail for preaching the Gospel, and negro women publicly flogged for attending prayer-meeting. The penalty for the second and third offence of preaching was banishment or death, but the imprisoned missionary still preached through his grated windows to the negroes without, who listened with tears flowing down their cheeks. The Doctor might well denounce these cruel edicts as rivalling those of the pagan emperors of Rome. He zealously interceded with the Dutch and English Governments for the repeal of these infamous laws, and eventually with success.

In Jamaica he preached the first sermon ever heard in the town of Falmouth, although it had for years a parochial clergyman with a handsome stipend. As he declared the necessity of the new birth, a sea captain exclaimed, "Sir, if what you say be true, we must all be damned. I don't like your doctrine at

all," and the sermon was continued amid tumult and confusion. While on his return to England, Coke's ship was chased by a French privateer, but was rescued by the appearance of Lord Hood's fleet.

The publication of Wilberforce's evidence concerning the African slave trade was to the heart of Dr. Coke an appalling revelation of the horrors of that "sum of all villanies." He therefore, in his yearning pity for the dark continent of Africa, projected a mission colony to that unhappy country, then seldom sought but for purposes of cruelty and crime. The expedition sailed for Sierra Leone in 1796, but although the pioneer of successful missions, it was itself a failure.

The same year he again embarked to attend the General Conference at Baltimore. Travelling nowadays has lost much of the adventure and peril and discomfort it had in the last century. Dr. Coke describes the ship as a "floating hell" and his ill treatment by the captain as too infamous to describe. He believed that the tyrant wished to cause his death, out of hatred to Methodism. With a single shirt in his pocket, and refused the request for a little bread and pork, although he had paid eighteen guineas for his passage, Dr. Coke left the vessel in Chesapeake Bay in a small schooner, on whose bare deck he slept all night.

With much privation and vexatious delays, travelling by boat, on horseback, or on foot, he reached Baltimore just in time for the Conference. On the way he was joined by a Methodist preacher from beyond

the Alleghanies, who had been lost for sixteen days in crossing the mountains. His horse had perished, and he himself had nearly died of hunger. Such were some of the episodes of the itinerancy a century ago.

On Coke's succeeding voyage the vessel was captured by a French privateer and confiscated, with all the Doctor's baggage except his private papers. He was landed at Porto Rico, with scarcely raiment enough for his personal necessities, but escaped the horrors of a French prison, and at length found his way to Conference "on a borrowed horse with a great boy riding behind him."

During the terrible insurrection of '98 in Ireland, Dr. Coke was in that distracted country, frequently exposed to personal peril, but providentially protected. It was a Methodist class-leader in Dublin who gave warning of the outbreak, and thus saved the capital from capture and pillage by the insurgents. The horrors of this civil war, for such it was, can never be fully recorded. A French invasion was invited by the rebels, and attempted under General Humbert. In cabins, in turf heaps, in peat mosses, pikes were concealed for the massacre of the Protestants. Beacon lights flashed the signal of the rising from peak to peak. The houses of the many Protestants were burned, their cattle harried, and multitudes of non-combatant men, women and children were cruelly massacred. Bands of armed ruffians, maddened with whiskey and fanaticism, ravaged the country with fire and sword. Thirty-seven thousand

of the marauders encamped near Ross, and the next day seven thousand were slain in a conflict with the King's troops.

The Methodists, especially the itinerant preachers, were, for their loyalty, particularly obnoxious to the rebels, and several were cruelly piked with aggravated barbarity. During this reign of terror the Irish Conference met, through the influence of Dr. Coke with the Lord Lieutenant, in the city of Dublin, "O God, shorten the day of our calamity," he wrote, "or no flesh can be saved." With the magnanimity of a Gospel revenge, that very Conference set apart Charles Graham and James McQuigg, as Irish evangelists, who, subsequently joined by Gideon Ouseley, preached and prayed and sang the Gospel in the Irish tongue into the hearts of thousands of their fellow-countrymen. Dr. Coke it was who proposed the measure, pledged its pecuniary support, and obtained for the missionaries the protection of the military authorities.

Soon after, he organized the missions among his Welsh fellow-countrymen, and had the happiness of seeing multitudes thereby brought to a knowledge of the truth. Two years later he formed a plan for the home missions which have carried Methodism to the remotest hamlets of the island, and eight men were designated to destitute parts of England unreached by the regular circuits.

Two continents were now contending in friendly rivalry for the services of this modern apostle. Alternately President of the English and of the American

Conference, his presence seemed so manifestly needed in both countries that he was continually crossing the ocean on his missionary voyages, as if either hemisphere were too narrow for his energies. At last the American General Conference of 1800 yielded to the request of the British Conference to allow Dr. Coke to remain in England.

“We have, in compliance with your request,” it wrote, “lent the Doctor to you for a season, to return to us as soon as he conveniently can, but at furthest by the meeting of the next General Conference.” Only once more was he permitted to visit his American brethren, to whom he was endeared by most sacred ties, and who mourned his death as that of the “greatest man of the eighteenth century.”

Amid the many wanderings of his active life, Dr. Coke found leisure for much literary work, as even the busiest may do if he will only improve his spare hours—the *hora subseciva*, which many think not worth saving. Among his useful writings are his “History of the West Indies,” in three volumes, octavo; five volumes of records of his missionary journeys; a history of philosophy, and numerous occasional pamphlets, sermons, and the like.

His great work however, was his “Commentary on the Scriptures,” begun by request of the British Conference in 1798, and finished, after nine years’ labour, in 1807. It reached the somewhat portentous size of six quarto volumes, splendidly printed on the University Press. The book, however, was not a success. It was probably too costly for the times, and

was superseded by the more popular work of Dr. Adam Clarke. Disappointed at its failure, he offered the entire edition, worth at trade price £10,000, to the Conference for £3,000. This offer was accepted, and he bade farewell to literature for the more congenial field of missionary toil.

With zeal redoubled, as the years fled by, he traversed Great Britain from end to end on behalf of his Irish, Welsh, and Home Mission enterprises. He threw himself with vigour into the then novel work of promoting Sunday-schools and the temperance reform. The spiritual necessities of the soldiers and sailors of Great Britain, of whose trials and temptations, virtues and vices he had seen so much during his wanderings, lay like a burden on his heart.

At length, in 1804, a Methodist missionary and his wife were sent to the Rock of Gibraltar. They were well-nigh wrecked in the Bay of Biscay, and driven to the Barbary coast. Reaching at last their destination, it yielded them only the asylum of a grave. Yellow fever wasted the little community, and the missionary and his wife soon fell victims to its power. An infant daughter survived, who, adopted into the family of Dr. Adam Clarke, became the wife of a Methodist minister and the mother of the distinguished Dr. James H. Rigg, twice President of the Wesleyan Conference. But the historic rock was not abandoned; and a succession of faithful missionaries have ministered to the wants, temporal and spiritual, of multitudes of England's redcoats quartered at Gibraltar.

The unhappy condition of the French sailors and soldiers, pent up in the prison-ships of the great naval depôts, also appealed strongly to that loving heart whose sympathies were as wide as the world. In the Medway alone was a prison population of 2,000; and altogether in England not less than 60,000 crowded into unventilated and often infected ships. Sometimes the friendless, hopeless, and often half-naked wretches sought escape from their despondency by suicide.

The Rev. William Toase, the father of French Methodist Missions, gained admission to the hulk *Glory*, and preached to the prisoners in their own language till forbidden by the commissary. Dr. Coke hereupon appealed to the Earl of Liverpool, and obtained permission to have preaching at all the naval stations, with characteristic generosity meeting the enlarged expenditure himself.

Through this exhibition of love to enemies, many French prisoners—among them some of noble rank—carried back to their native land not only kindly recollections of their “hereditary foe,” but Christian fellowship in that kingdom which embraces all races of men. William Toase had also the honour of planting in France that Methodist Church which has survived the overthrow of successive dynasties, and is contributing greatly to the moral regeneration of that lovely land.

At length Dr. Coke was permitted to see the successful inauguration of an African mission—the precursor of subsequent moral victories among the

Kaffirs, Hottentots, Fingoes, Bechuanas, Zulus, and other tribes of the Dark Continent. On the abolition of the slave trade the British Crown established in Sierra Leone the colony of Freetown, as an asylum for stolen negroes rescued from recaptured slave ships. Hither, in 1811, four volunteer missionaries were sent. Notwithstanding the more than decimation of the missionary ranks by the deadly climate, the work has been maintained, till in thirty chapels assemble more than twenty thousand native Methodists who have abandoned their vile fetishism for a pure spiritual worship, and five thousand children crowd the mission schools.

We now approach a romantic episode in the already venerable missionary's history. The flower of love, like the night-blooming cereus, blossomed late in his life; but its beauty and fragrance were all the more grateful to his lonely heart. He was in his fifty-eighth year. His brow was bronzed by eighteen transatlantic voyages and by sojourn beneath a tropic sun, and his once raven hair was silvered by time. In his busy life he had never found leisure for courtship and marriage. But now in its quiet eventide, he found the solace of communion with a kindred spirit in the tenderest and most sacred of earthly relationships.

The growing claims of the vast and increasing missionary enterprises of the Church called for active efforts for their support. Dr. Coke not only exhausted his own large patrimony in their aid, but "toiled," says his biographer, "from day to day like

a common mendicant." While at Bristol on a begging tour, he was introduced to a Methodist lady of large fortune, who subscribed for his mission two hundred guineas. The generous gift led to an acquaintance which, in time, resulted in the union of their hearts and lives and fortunes for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. "Unto Thee, O God," wrote the lady on her wedding day, "we give up our whole lives—all we have and all we are—to Thee wholly and entirely."

But marriage made no change in the soul-absorbing pursuits of the zealous missionary organizer. He seemed to feel that the time was short, and it remained that they that have wives be as though they had none. He continued to travel, preach, write, and beg with unintermitting energy. His devoted helpmate was not long permitted to aid with her love, her sympathy, and her fortune her noble husband. After six years of married life he was again left alone in the world.

His heart, sore-stricken by her loss, having tasted the solace of domestic happiness, again sought an aftermath of joy in a second marriage. But in a few days from the anniversary of the wedding day, he was again left solitary.

"With the presage," writes his biographer, "that these bereavements had been designed to leave him the more untrammelled for the tasks that might remain, he dedicated himself afresh to God alone. Henceforth he would think, preach, write, labour, and pray more fully than ever for one object—the extension of Christ's kingdom among men."

And faithfully he performed his vow. He was now about to inaugurate his last and greatest missionary enterprise. For many years the spiritual destitution of India had lain heavy on his heart. On the banks of the Indus, where the foot of an Alexander had faltered, a merchant's clerk had conquered an empire. With three thousand troops, on the Plain of Plassey, Clive had routed an army of sixty thousand, with the loss of only two and twenty men, and laid the foundations of Britain's Indian Empire of 250,000,000 souls.

Though open to English commerce, India, by the decree of the Company of Leadenhall Street, was closed to Christ's Gospel. But "India," wrote Dr. Coke, "still cleaved to his heart; he could give up all for India." Parliament, wrote Wilberforce, was especially "set against granting any countenance to Dissenters or Methodists in favour of sending missionaries to India." Dr. Coke, therefore, rather than fail in his long-cherished purpose, was willing to go in his character as a clergyman of the Established Church, and as such offered his services.

For this he has been censured, as if self-seeking and ambitious, and disloyal to the Church in whose service he had spent forty years of his life. The prudence of his course may well be questioned; of a hallowed ambition for the salvation of souls, he is certainly gloriously convicted; but of sordid self-seeking he was absolutely incapable. "He was already," writes Dr. Stevens, "wielding an episcopal power compared with which an Indian see would be

insignificant." Salary, he sought not, only permission to spend and be spent for India.

The proposition, however, was not accepted. But Dr. Coke's faith and zeal and courage were not to be overcome. Ceylon, "the threshold before the gate of the East," was more accessible than India, and thither he was determined, by God's grace, to go. Friends remonstrated against a man in his sixty-sixth year, worn with toil and heavy cares, braving the perils of a long sea voyage and residence in the torrid zone; but it was in vain.

"I am now dead to Europe," he wrote, "and alive to India. God himself has said to me, 'Go to Ceylon.' I am so fully convinced of the will of God, that methinks I had rather be set naked on the coast of Ceylon, without clothes and without a friend, than not go there. I shall bear all my own expenses, of course," he adds.

He eagerly began the study of Portuguese, which was largely spoken in Ceylon; a study which he subsequently prosecuted on shipboard to the day of his death. The letter just quoted was written from Ireland, and he sought first the sanction of the Irish Conference to his purpose. Revering him as an apostle, and almost as the father of Irish Methodism, it supported with enthusiasm his project. Fired by his example, Gideon Ouseley begged, with tears, to be allowed to accompany him, but his providential work was too manifestly at home for the Conference to grant its permission.

Dr. Coke now sought the sanction of the English

Conference. Unmoved by their fears for his health, he declared that "their consent, he believed, would add years to his life, while their refusal would infallibly shorten his days." "Many rose to oppose it"—we quote the narrative of Dr. Stevens—"Benson, with vehemence, said it would 'ruin Methodism,' for the failure of so gigantic a project would seem to involve the honour of the denomination before the world.

"The debate was adjourned to the next day. Coke, leaning on the arm of one of his missionaries, returned to his lodgings in deep anguish, the tears flowing down his face in the streets. He was not at the ante-breakfast session the next day. The missionary hastened to his chamber, and found that he had not been in bed; his dishevelled silvery locks showed that he had passed the night in deep distress. He had spent the hours in prayer, prostrate on the floor. They went to the Conference, and Coke made a thrilling speech. He not only offered to lay himself on the altar of this great sacrifice, but, if the Conference could not meet the financial expense of the mission, he offered to lay down thirty thousand dollars toward it.

"The Conference could not resist longer without denying its old faith in the providence of God. It voted him authority to go and take with him seven men, including one for southern Africa. Coke immediately called out from the session Clough, the missionary who had sympathized with him in his defeat the day before, and walking down the street,

not now with tears, but with joy beaming in his eye, and with a full heart, exclaimed, ' Did I not tell you God would answer prayer ? ' "

Among the missionaries who accompanied him was William Martin Harvard, who, after five years' residence in India and Ceylon, became subsequently Superintendent of Missions in Canada, residing for ten years at Montreal, Quebec, Toronto, and other important centres of influence.

Soon the missionary band assembled at Portsmouth for embarkation. Dr. Coke made his will, and bequeathed all his property to the fund for aged and worn-out ministers. The Sunday before sailing he preached his last sermon in England, from the text, " Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." With prophetic faith he exclaims, " It is of little consequence whether we take our flight to glory from the land of our nativity, from the trackless ocean, or from the shores of Ceylon.

" I cannot go
Where universal Love not shines around ;
And where He vital breathes there must be joy.' "

Like these are the exultant words of the monk Jerome, in the fourth century : " Et de Hierosolymis et de Britannia æqualiter patet aula cœlestis," thus paraphrased by Horatius Bonar :

" Not from Jerusalem alone
The path to heaven ascends :
As near, as sure, as straight the way
That leads to the celestial day,
From farthest climes extends
Frigid or torrid zone."

“On the 30th of December, 1813,” continues the narrative of Dr. Stevens, “they departed in a fleet of six Indiamen and more than twenty other merchant vessels, convoyed by three ships of war. Coke and two of the missionaries were on board one of the Indiamen, and the rest of the party on board another. All were treated with marked respect by the officers and the hundreds of troops and other passengers who crowded the vessels. In about a week a terrific gale overtook them in the Bay of Biscay, and a ship full of people, in which Coke had at first designed to embark, was lost.

“Severe gales still swept over them, especially at the Cape of Good Hope. Several sailors were lost overboard, and the missionaries suffered much in their health. In the Indian Ocean Coke’s health rapidly declined. On the morning of the 3rd of May his servant knocked at his cabin door to awake him at the usual time of half-past five o’clock. He heard no response. Opening the door he beheld the lifeless body of the missionary extended on the floor. A placid smile was on his countenance. He was cold and stiff, and must have died before midnight.

“Consternation spread among the missionary band, but they lost not their resolution. They prepared to commit his body to the deep, and to prosecute, as they might be able, his great design. One of the missionaries read the burial service, and the moment the sun sunk below the Indian Ocean the coffin was cast into the depths.”

In his last letter written a few days before his

death, Coke earnestly asks for additional missionaries, sketches his work in Ceylon and India, and anticipates tracing the work of "that holy and celebrated man, Francis Xavier."

The missionaries with heavy hearts proceeded on their journey, and after a voyage of twenty weeks reached Bombay. But God raised them up friends and opened the way before them. On reaching Ceylon they were hospitably lodged in the Government House. Lord Molesworth, the commandant, who, with his troops, attended the first service, was so deeply impressed by the sermon that he left a dinner party to kneel in prayer with the missionaries till he found peace in believing. Soon after, returning to England, his ship was lost with all on board save two or three. While it was sinking he walked the deck, pointing the terrified passengers to the Saviour of men. Embracing Lady Molesworth, they sank into the waves, locked in each other's arms, and thus folded together they were washed ashore. Such were the first-fruits of the Methodist Mission in Ceylon.

Another trophy of that first sermon became the first native missionary to Asia. Many of the priests also believed. One of these introduced Mr. Harvard, afterward Canadian Superintendent, into a temple where, in front of a great idol, he preached from the text, "We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one." The good work rapidly spread, till there are in Ceylon 60 missionaries and assistants, 120 preaching places and over 3,000 church members.

The death of Dr. Coke was the beginning of a new era in the history of Methodist missions. All the branches of Methodism have their missionary societies, which have become the most vigorous propaganda in the world of the Christian religion among the heathen. In Ceylon, in India, in China, in Japan, in South and West Africa, in the West Indies, in South America, in continental Europe, in Australia and Polynesia, multitudes of degraded and superstitious pagans have been raised from abject depths of degradation to the dignity of men and prepared for the fellowship of saints. And this glorious result is in large part the monument and memorial of the life and labours of Dr. Thomas Coke, the Father of Methodist Missions.

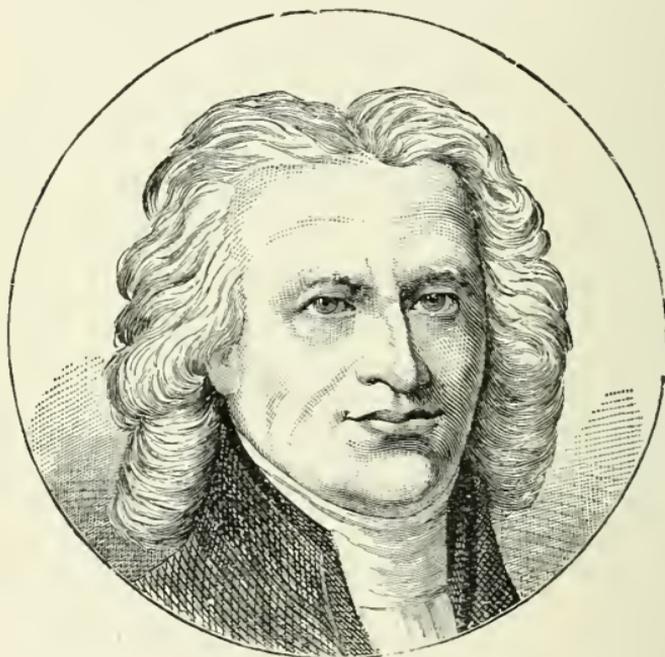
XII.

*FRANCIS ASBURY, THE PIONEER BISHOP
OF AMERICA.*

“Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.” Such were the words with which the Son of Man, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister, rebuked the worldly ambition and self-seeking of His disciples. The sovereign pontiffs of Rome, who, surrounded by halberdiers, received the homage of princes, subscribed themselves, even in their most imperious edicts, “*Servus servorum Dei*” (the servant of the servants of God). These words, which only in the strongest irony could be addressed to these spiritual potentates, describe in sober truth the character of Francis Asbury, the pioneer bishop of America.

At the mention of that name there rises the vision of an aged man with snow-white hair and benignant aspect, worn with toil and travel, brown with the brand of the sun and with exposure to the vicissitudes of fair and foul weather. His brow, the home of high thoughts, is furrowed by the care of all the churches coming upon him daily. No prelatie lawn, like “samite, mystic wonderful,” invests with its

flowing folds his person. Clad in sober black or homespun brown, he bestrides his horse, his wardrobe and library contained in the bulging saddle-bags which constitute his sole equipage. Instead of lodging in an episcopal palace, he is glad to find shelter



FRANCIS ASBURY.

in the hut of a backwoods settler, or to bivouac beneath the open sky.

With much of their original force he might adopt the words of the first and greatest missionary of the Cross, and exclaim : " In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of wilderness, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in

hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." With no less truthfulness than Saint Paul himself might he declare, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." He was an heroic soul in an heroic age. He united, in a rich garland of graces, the fervour of an apostle, the boldness of a confessor, the piety of a saint, the tenderness of a woman, and the self-sacrifice of a martyr. His life and labours will well repay our study.

Francis Asbury was a gift from the Old World to the New, from the mother to the daughter land. He was born in Staffordshire, near Birmingham, in 1745, the year of the Scottish rising in favour of the Pretender. He was early sent to school, but suffered much from the petty tyranny of the pedant pedagogue, who, "clothed with a little brief authority," made the lives of his pupils bitter unto them. But even as a child he carried his troubles to the throne of grace. He records that "God was very near to him, a very present help in time of trouble."

In his fourteenth year he left home to learn a trade. His religious impressions deepened, and hearing the Methodists spoken against as a people righteous overmuch, he sought their acquaintance. His desire was soon gratified. He expressed some surprise that the service was not in a church. It was probably in a private house or barn. "But," he records, "it was better than a church; the people were so devout; men and women kneeling and all saying 'Amen.'"

This simple spiritual worship took hold of his soul. He engaged with zeal in religious work, holding prayer-meetings on heath and holt, in cottage and on common. He was rewarded by seeing many converted from their sins. He was soon licensed as local preacher, and held forth the Word of Life in the Wesleyan chapels of the vicinity to "wondering, weeping thousands." Multitudes were attracted by his extreme youth, he being then not more than seventeen years of age. Besides his Sabbath services, he often preached five times during the week, faithfully attending meanwhile to his daily toil.

In his twenty-first year he was received into the Wesleyan Conference and appointed to circuit work. As an obedient son in the Gospel he laboured faithfully on his several circuits. At the Bristol Conference, in 1771, John Wesley called for volunteers for the work in America. His heart still lingered on the shores where he had toiled and endured great trial of affliction a quarter of a century before. Whitefield, with tongue of fire and heart of flame, had traversed the continent, like an angel—trumpet-tongued—calling on men everywhere to repent. Philip Embury and Captain Webb had begun to organize Methodist societies in the New World, and thither Pilmoor and Boardman had been sent two years before. Among the first to respond to Wesley's call was Francis Asbury, unknowing of the toil and trial he thus espoused, or of the glorious reward and abiding renown that he should win.

With tears and many prayers he took leave of his

beloved parents, whom he was never to see again. His outfit was of the slenderest kind, and on ship-board he was obliged to sleep on the bare planks. Full of zeal he preached to the sailors when it was so stormy that he had to seek support from the mast. His heart yearned for the multitudes wandering in



BIRTH-PLACE OF FRANCIS ASBURY.

the wilderness of the New World, as sheep having no shepherd.

After a weary eight weeks' voyage he reached Philadelphia. He began forthwith his active work, and his labours were followed by a "great awakening." He had been thoroughly steeped with the principle of John Wesley—"to go to those who needed him

most." From an entry in his Journal we learn what manner of a man he was. "My brethren seem unwilling to leave the cities, but I will show them the way. I have nothing to seek but the glory of God; nothing to fear but His displeasure. I am determined that no man shall bias me with soft words and fair speeches; nor will I ever fear the face of man, or know any man after the flesh if I beg my bread from door to door; but whomsoever I please or displease, I will be faithful to God, to the people, and to my own soul." There spoke the hero heart. In this man dwelt the spirit of John Knox, or of John the Baptist. He was evidently a God-appointed captain of Israel's host, and true over-shepherd of souls.

Forthwith Asbury began to range through the country, everywhere preaching the Word. At New York he preached to five thousand people on the race-course, and exhorted the multitude to run with patience the race set before them.

In 1772 Wesley appointed Asbury Superintendent of the societies in America, which had considerably increased in number. The next year the first Conference was held in Philadelphia. So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed, that for several years the membership was nearly doubled annually. Great revivals took place, especially in Maryland and Virginia. Multitudes were stricken to the earth as by a supernatural power, and rose to praise God.

The unhappy conflict with the Mother Country now broke out. The bruit of war was abroad in the land. Some of the English preachers felt constrained

by their loyalty to old England to return home. But Asbury declared: "I can by no means leave such a field for gathering souls to Christ as we have in America; neither is it the part of a good shepherd to leave his flock in time of danger; therefore I am determined, by the grace of God, not to leave them, let the consequence be what it may."

During a fit of sickness in 1776, he went to recuperate at Warm Sulphur Springs, Virginia. His lodgings, he said, though only sixteen feet by twenty, contained seven beds and sixteen persons, besides some noisy children. His plan of duty as an invalid was this: "To read a hundred pages a day, pray in public five times a day, preach in the open air every other day, and lecture in prayer-meeting every other night." Under this regimen, with the blessing of God, he soon recovered his health.

Suspected, apparently, of sympathy with the Mother Country, he was required to take the oath of allegiance to the State of Maryland. Its form, however, was such that he could not conscientiously accept it. He was, therefore, obliged to leave the State, and take refuge in Delaware, where the State oath was not required of ministers of religion. He found an asylum for a time in the house of a friend. He soon discovered, however, that he must seek safety elsewhere, and he went forth as a fugitive, not knowing whither he went. He had not gone many miles before he met a funeral. Although it increased his danger, he did not hesitate to stop and give an address full of Christian sympathy.

He was compelled to take refuge in "a wild and dismal swamp," which he likened to "the shades of death." Three thousand miles from home and kindred, regarded as an enemy to his adopted country, and, worst of all, obliged to remain in hiding when the Word of God was a fire in his bones, and his soul was longing to range the country and proclaim the Gospel to perishing multitudes, his heart was much depressed. Yet did he sing his "Sursum Corda" in the wilderness, and, under the special protection of the Governor of the State—who knew and honoured his worth—he was allowed to come forth from his hiding and engage, without hindrance, in his work.

That work was no holiday amusement. The following extracts from his Journal will indicate its character: "We set out for Crump's over rocks, hills, creeks, and pathless woods. The young man with me was heartless before we had travelled a mile. With great difficulty, after travelling eight or nine hours, we reached the settlement, the people looking almost as wild as the deer in the woods. I saw little else in these parts but cabins built with poles. I crossed the river in a ferry-boat, and the ferry-man swore because I had not a shilling to give him."* Swimming his horse across another river, he found shelter in the cabin of a friendly settler. "His resting place, however," says Strickland's record of his

* On another occasion a ferry-man declined to take any fee, saying he never charged ministers or babes, for if they did no good, they did no harm. "Nay," replied Asbury; "that is not true, for the minister who does no good does much harm."

life, "was on the top of a chest, and his clothes his only covering. This, however, was better far than he often had. Frequently, when benighted in the wilderness, he slept on the ground, or on rocks, or on some boards in a deserted cabin, with nothing to eat." Day after day he travelled over the broken spurs of the Alleghanies without food from morning to night. His mind was raised to loftiest contemplation by the sublime scenery, and his heart was cheered by his opportunities of breaking the Bread of Life to the lonely mountaineers.

A change in his relations to the Church was now to take place. "Fifteen years," says Dr. Strickland, "had elapsed since Asbury began preaching in America. He was now forty years of age, and more than half of his life had been spent in preaching the Gospel. Yet up to this time he was an unordained man. No ordinances of the Church had ever yet been administered by his hands, and he consented, with the rest of his brethren in the ministry, to receive the sacrament at the hands of the Episcopal priesthood. There were now in America 104 Methodist ministers, and the membership had risen to fifteen thousand."

It was felt that the time had come when the anomalous condition of these men should cease. John Wesley, therefore, wrote a memorable epistle—often quoted—to the American societies, from which we make the following extracts :

"Lord King's 'Account of the Primitive Church' convinced me many years ago that bishops and presbyters were the same

order, and, consequently, had the same right to ordain. For many years I have been importuned, from time to time, to exercise this right by ordaining part of our travelling preachers, but I have still refused, not only for peace' sake, but because I was determined as little as possible to violate the established order of the national Church to which I belong.

“But the case is widely different between England and America. Here there are bishops who have legal jurisdiction. In America there are none, and but few parish ministers, so that for some hundred miles together there is none either to baptize or to administer the Lord's Supper. Here, therefore, my scruples are at an end, and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order and invade no man's right by appointing and sending labourers into the harvest.

“I have, accordingly, appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be joint Superintendents over our brethren in North America ; as also Richard Whatecoat and Thomas Vasey to act as elders among them, by administering baptism and the Lord's Supper.

“If anyone will point out a more rational and Scriptural way of feeding and guiding those poor sheep in the wilderness, I will gladly embrace it. At present I cannot see any better method than I have adopted.

“As our American brethren are now totally disentangled both from the State and the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive Church ; and we judge it best they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free.

“JOHN WESLEY.”

This document exhibits at once the wise judgment and lofty Christian expediency of the founder of Methodism. His challenge to be shown a more excellent way of dealing with the question has not yet

been accepted. We cannot but regard it as a providential blessing that the Bishop of London declined to ordain Dr. Coke as a Bishop for America, thus breaking forever the superstitious bond of so-called Apostolic Succession, so far as concerned the free Methodism of the New World.

In the gathering of the itinerant preachers assembled at Baltimore, December 24th, 1784,* this figment of priestcraft, which makes validity of ordination depend on a shadowy succession through the Dark Ages as the only vehicle of apostolic grace, was boldly repudiated. It was felt that the true anointing was that of the Holy Ghost—that the real successors of the Apostles were those who received their inspiration and authority from the same Master and Lord.

This Conference, therefore, organized itself into "The Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States," and Dr. Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury were elected the first Bishops thereof. As Asbury was up to this period an unordained man, he was first, on Christmas Day, ordained by Dr. Coke, deacon; on the 26th, elder; and on the following day, Bishop or "Superintendent," as he is called in the official document.

Such rapid ecclesiastical promotion is, we believe, unprecedented since the days of St. Ambrose, who, notwithstanding his vigorous "*nolo episcopari*," was, though but a catechumen, elected Bishop of Milan, A.D. 374.

* It is known as the Christmas Conference. It lasted from December 24th, 1784, to January 2nd, 1785.

The new title of Asbury, however, increased neither his power nor his influence among his brethren. He already ruled by love in all their hearts. His elevation of office gave him only pre-eminence in toil. The day after the Conference he rode fifty miles through forest and snow; the next day he rode forty more, and so on till the Sabbath, when he halted for labour, not for rest. This was his initiation into the office of Bishop.

True to its original genius, American Methodism promoted zealously the cause of higher education. With much effort, Cokesbury College—commemorating in its name the two superintendents of the Church—was established in the lovely valley of the Susquehanna, overlooking the broad Chesapeake Bay. The curriculum was comprehensive, embracing English, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French and German. To preachers' sons and indigent students, tuition, board and clothing were free. Others were expected to pay a moderate fee. The "recreation" of the students consisted in agricultural labour and building—"both necessary," it is remarked, "in a new country." After a useful and successful existence for ten years, it was burned to the ground. A heap of smouldering ruins was all that marked its lovely site.

Asbury, on whom devolved the chief toil of finding funds for its maintenance, thus writes, date 1796: "Cokesbury College is consumed to ashes, a sacrifice of £10,000 in ten years" (An immense sum in those days.) "If any man would give me £10,000 per year to do and suffer again what I have done for that

house, I would not do it." His salary at this time was sixty-four dollars a year. It was evidently, therefore, not for the emolument that he "did and suffered" all this.

Undaunted by disaster, the Methodists of Baltimore purchased, at a cost of \$22,000, a building in that city, and established Asbury College. The change of name, however, brought no change of fortune, and it, too, was soon destroyed by fire.

A Methodist Academy was also established in Georgia, and another in the West; but the difficulty of maintenance was great. "We have the poor," writes Asbury, "but they have no money, and the wicked rich we do not wish to ask."

Asbury's labours during this period were excessive, his lodgings were often wretched, and his fare was meagre and poor. He and Dr. Coke sometimes rode three hundred miles a week, preaching every day. Asbury's Journal recounts his riding seventy-five miles in one day, reaching a cabin at midnight, and leaving it at four in the morning. Sometimes he slept in the woods, sometimes on the floor of a cabin, whose walls were often adorned with coon or wildeat skins, and sometimes he fared even worse, for he writes, "Oh, how glad should I be of a plain clean plank to lie on as preferable to the beds!" It was his misfortune to have a delicate skin and a keen sense of smell. It was considered a lucky day when he dined on raccoon or bearsteaks, cooked by a fire that the wind and rain often extinguished.

In some of his distant missionary excursions—at

times travelling fifty miles without seeing a house — for protection against wild beasts and wilder men, Asbury used to travel with armed bands of mounted hunters. It was a time of Indian massacres. The fate of the victims was most tragical; one wretched survivor was four days dragging herself a distance of only two miles. Sometimes Asbury's party were pursued by bands of infuriated savages, to escape from whom they had to travel all night through the tangled wilderness.

Asbury never married. In his quaint Journal he gives the following reasons for what could scarcely be called his choice: "Among the duties of my office was that of travelling extensively, and I could hardly expect to find a woman with grace enough to enable her to live but one week out of fifty-two with her husband. Besides, what right has any man to take advantage of the affections of a woman, make her his wife, and by voluntary absence subvert the whole order and economy of the marriage state by separating those whom neither God, nature, nor the requirements of civil society permit long to be put asunder? It is neither just nor generous. I may add to this that I had but little money, and with this I administered to the necessities of a beloved mother till I was fifty-seven. If I have done wrong, I hope God and the sex will forgive me."

"He often impoverished himself," writes his biographer, "to relieve the wants of others. At one time we find him with only two dollars in the world, and his poor preachers ragged and destitute. First

his little purse was drained, and then followed his cloak, and watch and shirt." His own clothes were often threadbare and faded, and he has been known to start on a journey of two thousand miles with an outfit of only three dollars. He was almost as dependent on the providence of God as was Elijah when fed by ravens. These were no times for marrying or giving in marriage. He who did so was almost invariably compelled to "locate" in order to earn a living for his family. "We have lost the labours," writes Asbury, "of two hundred of the best men of America from this cause."

As a discreet unmarried man, who was destined by his own choice to live and die in celibacy, Asbury, when he could do so, avoided the society of ladies. But sometimes he could not do so. Dr. Strickland, in his biography, relates one instance which we give largely in his own words :

Asbury was travelling in a wild western country, and was in danger of missing his way and becoming lost in the woods. The daughter of his host proposed to pioneer him through the wilderness. He did not positively decline the offer of his fair guide, though it would have suited his notions better to have gone alone, even if he had missed his way. Roads there were none; nothing but blind or "blazed" paths. The horses were soon ready and the bishop in his saddle. With the celerity for which the Western girls were famous, Mary sprang to the back of her spirited steed and was at once by his side. They soon entered the forest and were lost to sight. Mary knew the route and led the way.

They came at length to a deep and narrow ravine, whose rugged and precipitous banks seemed to forbid a passage. The bishop at beholding it felt relieved as he thought he had arrived at a Rubicon which his fair companion could not pass. Spurring his horse he cleared the ravine at a bound. He congratulated himself that he was now rid of what he felt rather an encumbrance, as he had considerable qualms of conscience about going to the appointment, where he was a stranger, in company with a young lady.

Turning on his horse he was about bidding her good-bye, with the exclamation, "Mary, you can't do that"—a most unhappy suggestion for him to make to a proud-spirited Western girl. "I'll try," was her prompt and fearless response, and suiting the action to the word, horse and rider were in a moment at his side. Faithful to her task she accompanied the bishop to the end of his journey, and after the preaching returned with him to her father's house.

Asbury was the father of missions in American Methodism, sending out preachers to the destitute settlements, and soliciting funds all over the country for their support. He also established "The Preachers' Fund" for the aid of superannuates, widows and orphans. He organized the Book Concern which has been such a source of diffusion of religious light and knowledge. He was the first man in America to introduce Sunday-schools, 1786. The schools, according to the discipline of 1792, were held "from six in the morning until ten, and from two in the afternoon until six," where it did not interfere with public worship.

The early years of this century were times of great religious revival, especially in the Middle and Southern States. The immense gatherings known as camp-meetings took their origin from the open-air sacramental services held by the Presbyterian ministers, which lasted several days. Sometimes from ten to fifteen thousand persons were assembled, and the Presbyterian and Methodist ministers laboured side by side in their work of faith. So vast were the crowds that several preachers, from different stands, proclaimed at the same time the Word of Life, and hundreds might have been seen prostrate on the earth or wild with joy, shouting the praises of God. Sometimes thirty preachers were present and four hundred persons were converted.

Toil, travel and exposure wore down Asbury's strength, yet he gave himself no rest. In his fifty-seventh year he crossed the rugged Cumberland Mountains for the fiftieth time. He was suffering from acute pain in his whole body and with swelling of his knees, which he attributed to sleeping uncovered in the woods. By the aid of laudanum he got two hours' sleep in the forest beneath a blanket stretched out like a tent. His companions slept beneath a cloak thrown over a branch. He had to be lifted on his horse like a child. Scarce able to refrain from crying out in his agony, he writes, "Lord, let me die, for death hath no terrors." Yet the heroic soul so sustained the frail body that through mountains and forests he completed his usual yearly journey of six thousand miles.

He deeply commiserated the wretched emigrants journeying by hundreds over the mountains—almost foodless, shelterless, clotheless, toiling along on foot, those who were best off having only one horse for two or three children to ride at once. Yearning over these lost sheep in the wilderness, he writes in his Journal, "We must send preachers after these people."

Methodism in those days was to many an object of intense aversion. Let one example of this suffice: Dr. Hinde was the military physician of General Wolfe. At the close of the French war he settled in Kentucky. His wife and daughter joined the Methodists. The latter he banished from home. The former he put under medical treatment for what he feigned to regard as insanity. His remedy was a blister plaster extending the whole length of the back. The fortitude and meekness with which the Christian wife bore her persecutions resulted in the doctor's conviction and subsequent conversion. He became one of Asbury's best friends. "He will never again," wrote the bishop, "put a blister on his wife's head to draw the Methodism out of her heart."

In his sixty-third year the indomitable pioneer writes: "I am young again and boast of being able to ride six thousand miles on horseback in ten months. My round will embrace the United States, the territory and Canada." At this age he frequently rode three hundred miles a week. On his "round" he was attacked with inflammatory rheumatism. But he provided himself with a pair of crutches and rode on through a shower of rain. He had to be lifted from his horse and carried into the house.

The Rev. Henry Boehm thus describes Bishop Asbury's visit to Canada in 1811: "Having crossed Lake Champlain the bishop preached in a bar-room at Plattsburgh, and the next day entered Canada. The roads over rocks, gullies and stumps were enough to jolt a hale bishop to death, let alone a poor infirm old man. On entering St. Regis, as Bishop Asbury was leading his horse across a bridge made of poles, the animal got his feet between them and sunk into the mud and water. Away went the saddle-bags; the books and clothes were wet, and the horse was fast. We got a pole under him to pry him out; at the same time the horse made a leap and came out safe and sound.

"We crossed the St. Lawrence in romantic style. We hired four Indians to paddle us over. They lashed three log canoes together and put our horses in them, their fore feet in one canoe, their hind feet in another. We were a long time crossing, for some part was rough, especially the rapids, and reached shelter about midnight.

"The bishop was delighted with the people and the country. 'Here is a decent, loving people,' he wrote. 'My soul is much united to them. Surely this is a land which God the Lord hath blessed.' He called on the Heck family, the Methodist pioneers of Canada, as of the United States, and travelled over the rough roads, suffering like a martyr with inflammatory rheumatism. He crossed Lake Ontario from Kingston to Sackett's Harbour in an open sail-boat. A tremendous storm broke upon them. In order to

make the bishop as comfortable as possible," continues Mr. Boehm, "I made him a bed, covered him with the blankets we carried with us, and fixed the canvas over him like a tent, to keep off the wind and the rain. Then I laid down on the bottom of the boat on some stones placed there for ballast, which I covered with some hay I procured at Kingston for our horses. At midnight a sudden squall struck our frail bark; the canvas flapped and awoke and alarmed the bishop. He cried out, 'Henry! Henry! the horses are going overboard.' I told him all was safe, that it was merely the flapping of the sail in the midnight winds. Reaching land the feeble old bishop, with inflamed and swollen foot, set out on horseback in a heavy rain for Conference, 'sore, lame and weary.' 'But Bishop McKendree,' he wrote, 'nursed me as if I had been his own babe.'"

His growing infirmities now compelled him to use a carriage, and this is the way the grand old veteran writes: "We are riding in a poor thirty-dollar chaise in partnership, two bishops of us—[himself and Bishop McKendree]—but it must be confessed it tallies well with our purses. What bishops! Well, but we have great names; each Western, Southern and Virginia Conference will have a thousand souls truly converted to God, and is this not an equivalent for a light purse, and are we not well paid for starving and toil? Yes, glory to God!"

Yet he felt the weight of years and travail. A little later he writes: "I am happy; but I am sick and weak and in heaviness by reason of suffering and

labour. Sometimes I am ready to cry out, 'Lord, take me home to rest.' Courage, my soul!"

His work seemed to increase as his time for toil grew shorter. In his seventieth year he travelled six thousand miles in eight months, met nine conferences and attended ten camp-meetings, and at these meetings he toiled above measure, often sleeping but two hours out of the twenty-four. Even when he had to be carried into the church he would preach with unquenchable zeal. From one of these services he was carried to his lodgings and "thoroughly blistered," says the record, "for high fever." Two days after, he rode thirty miles through the bitter cold, and next day thirty-six more, when he was again carried to the pulpit to preach the Word of Life. But the frail body was borne up by the strong soul that seemed as if it would not let him die.

But the end was approaching. In his seventy-first year he attended his last conference. Like a faithful patriarch, leaning upon his staff he addressed the elders of the tribes of the Methodist Israel, being assured that he would ere long be called away from their councils. A sense of loneliness came upon him as he remembered the friends of other days who had passed away. Five and forty years of toil and travail in cities and villages, in the log-cabins and wildernesses of the far West and South, travelling round the continent, with but few exceptions, every year—he crossed the Alleghanies sixty times—subject to every kind of itinerant hardship and privation, wasted away the frail body but left his indomitable spirit

strong in immortal youth, preening its wings for its everlasting flight to that land where they grow not weary evermore.

When unable longer to stand, he sat in the pulpit and poured out the treasures of his loving overflowing heart to the weeping multitude, who sorrowed most of all at the thought "that they should see his face no more." He writes at this time in his Journal, "I die daily; am made perfect by labour and suffering. There is no time nor opportunity to take medicine by day-time. I must do it at night. I am wasting away."

By slow and difficult stages, continues Dr. Strickland, whose account we condense, he passed through South and North Carolina till he reached Richmond, Virginia. "I must once more deliver my testimony in this place," he urged in reply to remonstrance. It was a bright spring Sabbath, glorious with all the beauty of the South. The venerable bishop, with his silvery hair flowing down his shoulders, announced in tremulous tones his last text: "For he will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness." He seemed like one who was waiting for the summons of the heavenly bridegroom. From time to time he was compelled to pause from sheer exhaustion. Nevertheless he preached for nearly an hour, during which time, says the narrator, a deep and awful stillness pervaded the entire assembly, broken only by the sobs of sympathetic hearers. The spectacle was one of moral sublimity.

Eager to attend the General Conference at Balti-

more, the dying man pressed on. But near Fredericksburg, on ground since deluged with blood shed in civil war, he reached his last earthly resting-place. He was carried into the house which he was never to leave till his worn and weary body should be carried to the tomb. On the last Sabbath of his life he called the family together for worship. The twenty-first chapter of the Revelation was read; and doubtless by the eye and ear of faith he beheld the Holy City coming down out of heaven and heard the blessed assurance that God would wipe away all tears forever. As the service closed the spirit of the patriarch passed away, and thus,

Like some broad river widening toward the sea,
Calmly and grandly joined eternity.

Beneath the pulpit of the Eutaw Street Methodist Church in Baltimore, where he had so often preached in life, sleep the remains of the Pioneer Bishop of America. In labours he was more abundant than even the apostolic Wesley himself, since the conditions under which he toiled were so much more arduous. He ordained upwards of three thousand preachers. He preached seventeen thousand sermons. He travelled 300,000 miles—from the pine-shadowed St. Lawrence to the savannas of Georgia, from the surges of the Atlantic to the mighty Father of Waters—through pathless forests, over rugged mountains and across rapid rivers. He had the care of a hundred thousand souls and the appointment of four hundred preachers.

His character was one of the most rounded and complete, and his life one of the most heroic recorded in the annals of the Church. Says one who knew him well: "He was great without science and venerable without titles. He pursued that most difficult course as most men pursue their pleasures. The delights of leisured study and the charms of recreation he alike sacrificed to the more sublime work of saving souls. Prayer was the seasoning of all his avocations. It was the preface to all business, the conclusion of whatever he undertook. He never suffered the cloth to be removed from the table till he had given thanks to God in prayer."

His preaching was attended with a divine unction which made it refreshing as the dew of heaven. His words were at times "a dagger to the hilt at every stroke," and at times so tender that they made the hearts of listening thousands

"Thrill as if an angel spoke,
Or Ariel's finger touched the string."

He was a man dead to the world, a man of one work. The zeal of the Lord's house consumed him till he wore out in the work and died at his post. "If I can only be instrumental," he was wont to exclaim, with streaming eyes, "in saving one soul in travelling round the continent, I'll travel round till I die."

His devotion and tenderness towards his parents were exceedingly beautiful. In their old age he regularly remitted to them a portion of his meagre income.

“My salary,” he writes, “is sixty-four dollars. I have sold my watch and library and would sell my shirts before you should want. I spend very little. The contents of a small pair of saddle-bags will do for me and one coat a year. Had I ten thousand pounds per year, you should be welcome if you needed it.”

To his aged and widowed mother he wrote, with tender recollections of his boyhood: “Were you to see me and the colour of my hair—nearly that of your own—my eyes are weak even with glasses. When I was a child and would pry into the Bible by twinkling firelight, you used to say, ‘Frank, you will spoil your eyes.’ Hard wear and hard fare—but I am healthy and lean, grey-headed and dim-sighted. I wish I could come to see you, but I see no way to do it without sinning against God and His Church.”

Asbury could not be called in the strictest sense a scholar. He never enjoyed the university training of the Wesleys, Fletcher, and Coke. But he was better read than many a college graduate in theology, Church history and polity, civil history and general literature. In his saddle-bags he carried his Hebrew Bible and Greek Testament, and in his long and lonely rides, and in the smoky cabins of the wilderness, he diligently studied the oracles of God in their original tongues.

His Journals give evidence of his shrewd observation, keen wit, and strong idiomatic English. “Be the willing servant of slaves,” he was wont to say, “but the slave of none.” At the Virginia salt works he writes, “Alas! there is little salt here, and when

Sister Russell is gone there will be none left." He describes a journey in New Jersey as "over dead sands and among a dead people." Yale College in his day was considered the "seat of science and sin." Yet with all his wit did he never in the pulpit stoop

"To court a grin when he should save a soul."

His keen sense of the beautiful in nature is shown in his sympathetic descriptions of the "noble Hudson," the "lofty Catskills with their towering cliffs," the "beautiful Ohio," the "wild Potomac," the "lovely Shenandoah," "the thundering Niagara," "the interminable forests," and the "broad prairies," with whose varied aspects he was so familiar.

Bishop Asbury had an intense antipathy to the drinking customs so rife in the community, which he denounced as the curse of the country. The vile whiskey of the day he denominated "the Devil's tea." He described the drovers and their herds whom he met on the roads, as "beasts on four legs and beasts made by whiskey on two." "Keep whiskey out of your cabins," he was wont to exhort the settlers, "and keep them clean, for your health's sake and for your soul's sake; for there is no religion in dirt, filth and fleas."

Few men were more revered and beloved. Beyond the sea, as well as at home, his character was honoured, and the British Conference requested him to visit that body, engaging to pay all the expenses of his journey. Few have had so many children named after them. Many of these became his sons in the ministry. To

all who bore his name he left by his will a handsome copy of the Scriptures. Without wife or child, the Church of God was his spouse, which he loved and cherished better than his own life, and a great multitude of spiritual offspring rose up to call him blessed.

The record of such a life is an inspiration to duty ; a summons, like a clarion call, to blessed toil for the Master and to increased zeal in His service. It is a scathing rebuke to self-seeking, or apathy, or indolence in the most glorious of callings. Asbury has lived out his threescore years and ten on earth, but his work, behold it remaineth for evermore.

The struggle and grief are all past,
The glory and worth live on.

On the Methodism of this broad continent, from the region beneath the Northern Bear to that which sees the Southern Cross, from the crowded cities on the Atlantic to the far-off lonely regions

Where rolls the Oregon and hears no sound
Save his own dashings,

he has impressed the stamp of his powerful mind, his mighty faith, his unconquerable will. And down the ages the tide of his influence shall roll in ever-increasing volume till Time shall be no more.

XIII.

GIDEON OUSELEY: THE APOSTLE OF IRELAND.

METHODISM won some of its most remarkable triumphs among the warm-hearted and sympathetic Irish people. John Wesley crossed the Irish Channel forty-two times, and Dr. Coke more often still. In Cork, where Wesley was mobbed and maltreated, and burned in effigy, he was afterward received with gladness as a popular hero. Some of the most devoted, eloquent and successful Methodist preachers have gone from the Green Isle to every land where Methodism is known. Few lands have profited more by their ministry than the United States and Canada, where the germs of Methodism were planted by Barbara Heck and the Irish Palatines.

The name and fame of the Rev. Gideon Ouseley linger in the memory of thousands of Irish Methodists scattered throughout the world. The story of his remarkable life has been sketched by the skilful pen of the Rev. William Arthur, the author of "The Tongue of Fire." From that book we reproduce some of the characteristic scenes of his heroic ministry.

This apostle of Methodism in Ireland was born in the town of Dunmore, County of Galway, 1762, and

there he spent the first thirty years of his life. He was of "gentle blood," as it is phrased, which gave him a passport to the affections of the Irish peasantry. Sir Ralph Ouseley distinguished himself in the Peninsular campaign, and once fought a duel for the honour of his brother Gideon, whose street preaching had been ridiculed by an officer of his mess.

The future evangelist, in his early years, was a typical rollicking Irish blade, full of fun and frolic, at home at a horse-race or a dance, and only too prone to the hilarious social habits of his class and country at that time. Shortly after his marriage, which was a genuine love-match, the accidental discharge of a fowling-piece in the hands of a comrade, who had been drinking at the village inn, destroyed the sight of one of his eyes. During his long confinement, his wife beguiled the tedium of his convalescence by reading the Scriptures, Young's "Night Thoughts," and other serious books. Though his outer vision was darkened, the eyes of his understanding were opened, and he became an earnest seeker after God, "if haply he might find Him." It is at this moral crisis of his life that we take up the genial narrative of William Arthur from which we abridge the following sketch:

When a detachment of the Fourth Royal Irish Dragoon Guards marched into the cavalry barracks of Dunmore, it did not strike anyone in the town that the event was to have any connection with the future religious life of Gideon Ouseley. But it had not long been there before the little place was ringing

with news of strange doings at the head inn. This was kept by Mrs. Kennedy, a Roman Catholic, who had a large room, called in the place "the public room," which she let to showmen, conjurers, and such other worthies as were candidates for an audience in Dunmore. Some of the new soldiers, headed by Quartermaster Robinet, came to inquire about the room, and engaged it for frequent use to hold meetings. That dragoons should resort to a public-house was nothing new, and as to what kind of meetings theirs would be, few people would think it worth while to guess.

When the new soldiers assembled, there was something strange about their proceedings. Voices and singing were heard, and there was no drink. What could they be doing? The people of the inn listened, and others gathered; and it came to be credibly reported in the town that the troopers met to pray, and that they sang hymns and read the Bible and did something like preaching. The Quartermaster seemed to be a kind of parson for them, but he had no prayer-book. This was enough to excite a place more exposed to events than Dunmore. What could they be?

The clergy of both "church and chapel" combined to lead the laugh against the praying soldiers; but some of the people, perhaps, thought that the parsons themselves had better be more given to prayer. Some affirmed that the Quartermaster and his band were Methodists, and the bulk of the people asked, what was that? to whom the wiser replied that it was a

new religion. But the great question was, What could lead men to act so? And each very wise man in the place had his own view as to that deep secret. Had they met for any kind of folly and wickedness, the town-folk would not have found it necessary to seek below the surface for motives. But meetings for worship! It was, however, remarked that, whatever else the men might be, they were steady.

The soldiers seemed open enough, and asked everybody to come and see. Presently one and another of the poorer classes did come, and the plain words of the Quartermaster told upon both heart and life. But the oddity of a man in that military array, such as the cavalry uniform then was, standing up and preaching, and that without any book to preach from, passed everything; and still the wonder grew.

Mr. Ouseley, of course, heard the talk, shared in the wonder, and adopted some wise man's notion that they had an underhand design, to cover which all this show was adopted. Still he wanted to know what their design could be, and no two agreed on that point. But he was so sure that there was something of the kind that he would not venture into their meetings. After a time, however, he resolved to do so, feeling perfectly confident that he would detect "some design, some trick."

It was in April, 1791, that the powerful man of twenty-nine years of age, with one eye blind, and the other full of shrewdness and roguery, came in and faced the Quartermaster, determined to find him out. With the one keen eye he watched every movement,

and with both ears he hearkened to the exhortation and to the prayers of Robinet and of some of his men. When all was over, what had he found out? He was compelled to confess, nothing—not even a new religion.

Gradually he felt that he had done injustice to the Quartermaster, and that, whatever he might be, he really had no design or trick covered under his appearances, but, on the contrary, was a true man. Soon esteem and confidence replaced his old suspicions. He invited Mr. Robinet to his house. Encouraged by the appearances in the place, the Quartermaster at length appealed to the Methodist preachers to visit Dunmore.

Ouseley was soon under deep conviction of sin. “But,” he said, “I must count the cost. I am a young man, and may live, say, forty years, and to be under restraint all that time, as if buried alive, would be dreadful. I am not willing to undertake to be tied down to obey that book (the Bible) for the remainder of my life. Then I considered the possibility that I might die before the morning; and even should I survive for forty years, and then be cast into hell for all eternity! This decided the matter. I had such a view of eternity, of being cast into everlasting misery, never—never—never to be released! I fell upon my knees, and cried, ‘O God, I will submit!’

“Now,” said I, “what shall I begin to do? I do not know, unless somebody teach me. Then three classes of Christian teachers passed in review before me. The first, the Roman Catholic priests. No, no;

they are a set of mercenaries. Secondly, the Church clergy. They won't do; they are as careless as I am. Thirdly, the Methodist preachers. They look very smooth, but they may have some evil among them, and I had better not have anything to do with them. They won't do."

Some time in the month of May, 1791, on a week evening, after the Methodist meeting, the preacher invited any "seriously disposed person" to remain for the meeting of the society. Mr. Ouseley had determined not to have anything to do with their society; but he was now so anxious for every ray of light, that he thought he would try even what this might bring.

"I will wait and see," he said, "what they are about; but if I find any juggling, any Freemason's tricks among them, I will have nothing to do with them."

Thus agitated, and yet led onwards, Mr. Ouseley was nearing the foot of the Cross. One Sunday morning, about the middle of May, 1791, when in his own house seeking his Saviour as he long had sought Him, he was enabled to behold the Lamb of God slain for him, and felt that the load and darkness were taken away, and the long-sought peace had been bestowed at last. At the meeting of the class, the leader asked him, "Do you believe that the Lord has pardoned you?" "Yes; 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit doth rejoice in God my Saviour.'" The blessed Spirit had put a new song in his mouth, which all along the wind-beaten path he travelled to the grave was sung and sung anew.

Now the news ran that Gideon Ouseley had joined the Methodists, and no doubt he was going mad. The change which had passed upon him was naturally matter of remark among all his friends. His wife was pleased with it so long as it remained within bounds; but the intensity of his religious feelings, and the absorption of mind which followed, alarmed her. His zeal was very objectionable, and still more so his Methodism. Could he not have gathered the strawberries without bending his back to that plant growing so low?

Gradually his prayers, the frequent conversations she heard between him and his new friends, and the books that were continually in his hand, told upon her own mind. She, too, feeling that she was a sinner even as others, sought mercy as he had done. In about a twelvemonth after his own conversion, she became a partaker of like precious faith, happy in the Saviour who had made him happy. Thenceforth husband and wife were as one soul. It would be very hard to conceive of union more sympathetic and practical. If he was the one to brave the storms, she bore the cold. It is hard to know which to admire most, the husband in his labour or the wife in her solitude, so well did both fulfil the peculiar parts to which they were called by the common Master.

Ouseley soon began to feel an inward call to go out into the highways and the hedges, and summon the people to repentance. Even his private efforts brought ridicule. "I was laughed at, and looked upon as an enthusiast, and ridiculed for giving myself

to such a people. But the call to go forth publicly resounded louder and louder within. What could he do? He felt that he neither knew how to begin a sermon nor how to "carry it on." The Voice said, "Gideon, go and preach the Gospel!" Then it rushed into his mind, "Do you not know the disease?" "Oh, yes, Lord, I do." "And do you not know the cure?" "Oh, yes, glory be to Thy name, I do." "Go, then, and tell them these two things, the disease and the cure; never mind the rest; the rest is only talk." "So," he would say, "here I am, these forty years, telling of the disease and the cure."

The parish burying-ground lay within view of his own residence. While his heart was full of these feelings, the funeral of a neighbour entered it. The wild "keena" rose from the women and rang in his ears; and no doubt the whole bearing of the crowd showed that the mourning was, as he says, formal and ceremonial. The hour had come. Forth he went, entered the sacred enclosure, and began to address the crowd. "The priest told them not to heed me," he writes, "that I had lost my senses; but they replied to him, 'If you would hear him, sir, you would find there is good sense in every word he says.'"

Ouseley's father told him that he had disgraced the family, and insisted that he should give up preaching, or he would disown him. He gently replied, that to give offence was no design of his, but at any risk he would obey God rather than man. One day his father came to his house and asked, "Where is

Gideon?" When Mrs. Ouseley told him that he was away somewhere preaching. "He looked at me," she said, "and replied, 'I pity you, my child; indeed I do. That fellow will ruin himself and bring you to beggary.' I replied, 'Sir, why are you so violent against your son? When he has spent nights in sin, and when you have seen him scarce able to walk home, you administered no reproof, evinced no displeasure; but now that he is striving to serve God, you speak against him and oppose him.'" But if his father rated him, he would not let others speak ill of him, and behind his back would say, "Gideon is right and we are wrong."

Gradually Gideon extended the sphere of his efforts, pushing out to neighbouring places, and even into neighbouring counties, preaching in the grave-yards and the streets, wherever he could find hearers. He sweetly used the Irish tongue, which won a way to the ear of the multitude as nothing else could do. He did not forget either the "stations" or the wakes.

The latter formed one of the most striking features of the community in the midst of which he lived. However poor might be the family at the "dead house," they were bound to furnish pipes, tobacco and snuff for as many as would come—generally as many as the house would hold—and who spent the entire night in revelry. If whiskey was not also provided, the people were mean, and if plentifully supplied, they were excellent. All the fellows in the neighbourhood who were wits, or thought themselves such, looked on the wake as the stage for the develop-

ment of their talent. Whoever could invent the most boisterous sport was the greatest man. It was a theatre for the antics of which the grotesque side of the Irish character is capable, and for training the young to think that such foolery has a kind of sacred sanction. The anguish of the death-wail mingled, at least repeatedly alternated, with indecorous songs and jokes, and many a wild oath found its place between. Folly and vice were formally presented in the chamber of death, and installed there as fit for any presence. This mixture of the deepest sorrows of humanity with the grossest levity was enough to undermine all depth of character and form a people governed only by impulse, taking up any feeling for the moment and trifling with them all.

Into scenes of this kind Mr. Ouseley would make his way, and kindly greeting the people would, with solemnity and pathos, entreat them to prepare to meet their God. Before the interment took place, the scene at a wake was often varied by the presence of a priest, who said mass and collected "offerings" for the soul of the departed. On one occasion, as the priest was reading mass and the multitude were on their knees, Ouseley suddenly rode up. Dismounting, he knelt in the midst of the congregation with manifest solemnity. As the priest went on reading in a tongue of which the people knew not a word, the stranger caught up passage after passage, selecting, though unknown to his hearers, those portions which conveyed directly scriptural truth or solemn warning. He suddenly turned the words from Latin into Irish,

and repeated aloud after the priest. Then with deep feeling he cried at the end of each passage, "Listen to that."

As he was taking his departure, the crowd cried to the priest, "Father ——, who is that? Who is he at all?"

"I do not know," said the priest; "he is not a man at all; sure he is an angel. No man could do what he has done."

In 1797 Gideon Ouseley settled in the little town of Ballymote, in the County of Sligo. He was soon put into the black hole of the barracks in Sligo for disturbing the peace by preaching.

He seems to have had no idea of anything short of constant itinerancy. In every one of the five counties of Connaught, in Leinster and Ulster, he made his appearance on horseback, the people wondering who he was, where he came from, what had sent him, and altogether feeling as if a voice from the unknown had reached them, and brought strange things to their ears. In fair or market, at burial or patron, that is, the festival of a patron saint, he took his stand and cried aloud. He also succeeded in gaining access to the jails, visiting both the debtors and criminals.

While he preached Christ to a convict sentenced to death, the man at first heard with sullen and stupid disregard; but after some time, looking up at him with a feeling of astonishment, inquired, "Are you an angel or a man: or who or what are you?"

In the next year, 1798, the memorable year of the

last great Irish rebellion, Ouseley took up his residence in Sligo, and there opened a school. Perhaps, during this interval, he was not so much occupied in itinerant labours as at other times; yet we have hints of his being here and there, falling in with parties of rebels by night, having the shoes taken off his horse's feet to make pikes' heads, and so on, as if he had nothing else to do but scour the country, preaching everywhere.

He would often begin his preaching by talking about the Virgin and St. Peter. "The Virgin," he would say, "had the best religion in the world." This was enough to fix attention and conciliate feeling. Then he would say how Peter, too, had the true religion, and what Peter's religion was. He would go on to tell how both Mary and Peter had learned it all from the one perfect Teacher, and how they owed everything that they had to simply obeying and listening to Him. He would also show that they taught us to render to Jesus just the same absolute obedience and implicit trust. Thus, in the name of Peter and Mary he preached the glory of Jesus alone.

During his residence in Sligo the rebellion came to a crisis. North and South were in a flame. The chronic tidings of broils and murders were now exchanged for news of battles here and there. Wherever the Roman Catholics gained a temporary advantage, horrid slaughters were perpetrated on the Protestants. Methodists, particularly the Methodist itinerants, were, of course, objects of the special malignity of the rebels, for they were noted for their

loyalty. Their societies were thrown into general confusion, their families scattered, and their preachers, travelling and local, hunted and imprisoned. Yet, in the midst of all this, the faithful itinerants were enabled to hold on their course, traversing the most disturbed districts, and, though sometimes seized and doomed to death, in the end escaping as if an unseen hand turned danger from their heads.

It is to the credit of the Roman Catholic priests that they sometimes interfered at the risk of their lives to prevent the massacres with which the Protestants were menaced. A young priest, Father Corrin, returning from some parochial duties, boldly rushed in between an Irish mob and its victims and commanded the executioners to their knees. Down they knelt instinctively, when in a loud voice he dictated a prayer which they repeated after him—that God might show to them the same mercy that they were about to show to the prisoners; which so awed and terrified them that they immediately stopped the executions.

At the meeting of the Irish Conference following the rebellion, Dr. Coke, who presided, with the nobility of a gospel revenge, insisted upon the formation of a general mission directed to the Irish-speaking population, notwithstanding their persecutions of the Protestants. The leaders of this new crusade were Charles Graham and Gideon Ouseley. They soon began to be heard of far and wide. Their appearance at fairs, markets and patrons; their preaching on horseback; their wonderful gift of the Irish tongue;

their courage, love and mysterious power over conscience, and especially the unheard-of changes in heart and life wrought through their preaching became the theme of common conversation. Swiftly as they travelled, they almost everywhere found some prepared by report to welcome, and some to oppose them.

Ouseley laboured with great success; but often the baser sort bitterly opposed him. Once when preaching in the street an old man gathered up a handful of dirt and threw it over the crowd right into Ouseley's face. When he got his mouth cleaned he cried out, "Now, boys, did I deserve that?" "No! no!" was the cry from all sides; and shortly after the same fellow came again and attempted the same thing: but the people fell upon him, and they beat him soundly, and he lost his hat in the fray, and had to travel many miles without it on Christmas eve.

It was about this time that Mr. Campbell fixes the date of the conversion of Terry McGowan, the cock-fighter, one which, in the phrase of the people, "became the talk of the country-side." Terry lived near Maguire's Bridge, and one market-day, making for the cock-pit, he entered the town with a game-cock under his swallow-tail coat. On turning a corner he found two men before him on horseback with black caps, and making the streets resound with the accents of his mother-tongue. Terry stood and listened, eyes and all; they called loudly on every sinner there to lose no time, but surrender at once to the Lord Jesus Christ before it was too late. Terry knew not, but a

finger had touched him. The cock-pit had gone clean out of his mind, and he thought that the Judgment Day was fast coming. He wanted to lift up both hands and call upon God, and the one which had been keeping guard under his coat-tail, forgot its charge. The two hands went up together to present the publican's prayer, and the game-cock was gone. Terry prayed and wept, and cried aloud again and again. A peace and gladness such as he never knew were shed abroad in his heart.

Home he went bounding, to tell his wife and children the strange way in which he had been made a winner to-day. They heard but did not understand. His wife told one of the children to go to the house of a neighbour and beg them to hasten away for the priest, because Terry had come home from the market out of his mind. When the priest arrived he inquired what was the matter.

"Never better in my life," said Terry.

"Nonsense," replied his reverence; but he soon saw further into the case than the poor wife had done. "Did you hear the Black Caps?"

"I did, thank God."

"So I thought. These fellows would turn the world mad. Well, now, Terry, just mind your own business, and go to your duty next Sunday."

"But the Lord has said to me, 'Terry McGowan, your sins, which are many, are all forgiven you.'"

This was more than the priest could stand.

"I give you up as a lost case," he said to Terry, and took his leave.

At Enniscourt, as Ouseley began to preach, missiles began to fly—at first, refuse vegetables, potatoes, turnips, etc., but before long brickbats and stones, some of which reached him and inflicted slight wounds. He stopped, and, after a pause, cried out :

“Boys, dear, what’s the matter with you to-day? Won’t you let an old man talk to you a little?”

“We don’t want to hear a word out of your old head,” was the prompt reply from one in the crowd.

“But I want to tell you what, I think, you would like to hear.”

“No, we’ll like to hear nothing you can tell us.”

“How do you know? I want to tell you a story about one you will say you respect and love.”

“Who’s that?”

“The Blessed Virgin.”

“Och, and what do you know about the Blessed Virgin?”

“More than you think; and I’m sure you’ll be pleased with what I have to tell you, if you’ll only listen to me.”

“Come then,” said another voice, “let us hear what he has to say about the Holy Mother.”

There was a lull, and the missionary began: “There was once a couple to be married, belonging to a little town called Cana. It’s away in a country where our Blessed Saviour spent a great deal of His life among us. The decent people, whose children were to be married, thought it right to invite the Blessed Virgin to the wedding-feast, and her Blessed Son, too, and some of His disciples; and they all thought it right

to come. As they all sat at table, the Virgin Mother thought she saw that the wine provided for the entertainment began to run short, and she was troubled lest the decent young people should be shamed before their neighbours. So she whispered to her Blessed Son, 'They have no wine.' 'Don't let that trouble you, ma'am,' said He. And in a minute or two after, she, knowing well what was in His good heart, said to one of the servants that was passing behind them, 'Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.'

"Accordingly, by-and-by, our Blessed Lord said to another of them—I suppose they had passed the word amongst themselves—'Fill those large water-pots with water.' There were six of them standing in a corner of the room, and they held nearly three gallons apiece, for the people of those countries use a great deal of water every day. Remembering the words of the Holy Virgin, they did His bidding, and came back and said, 'Sir, they are full to the brim.' 'Take some, then, to the master at the head of the table,' He said. So they did, and the master tasted it, and lo, and behold you, it was wine, and the best of wine, too; and there was plenty of it for the feast, aye, and, it may be, some left to the young people setting up house-keeping.

"And all that, you see, came of the servants taking the advice of the Blessed Virgin, and doing what she bade them. Now, if she was here among us this day, she would give just the same advice to every one of us, 'Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it;' and

with good reason, too, for well she knows there is nothing but love in His heart to us, and nothing but wisdom comes from His lips. Now I'll tell you some of the things He says to us." And straightway the preacher briefly, but forcibly, expounded the nature of the gate of life, its straitness, and the dread necessity for pressing into it, winding up with the Virgin's counsel, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it."

"But, no," at last he broke forth, "no; with all the love and reverence you pretend for the Blessed Virgin, you won't take her advice, but will listen willingly to any drunken schoolmaster that will wheedle you in a public-house, and put mischief and wickedness into your heads."

Here he was interrupted by a voice, exclaiming, "True for you! true for you! If you were tellin' lies all the days of your life, it's the truth you're telling now." So the preacher got leave to finish his discourse with not a little good effect.

When he was travelling in the north of Ireland one day, as he jogged along on horseback he heard the voices of young girls blithely singing, and through an open doorway at the roadside saw a group of them in the house, employed in "scutching" flax. Ouseley, quickly alighting, entered the house, taking off his hat and saying:

"God save you, children."

"Save you kindly, sir," was the cheerful response.

"What is this you are doing?"

"Scutching flax, sir."

“Scutching flax! What’s that for?”

“Ah, don’t you know what flax is, sir? Sure it’s what your shirt is made of.”

“What my shirt is made of! How can that be?”

“Don’t you see, sir,” said one of the girls, holding up a bunch of flax—which had been partially scutched, and showing Mr. Ouseley the fibre. “That’s what we spin into yarn, and the weavers make the yarn into the kind of cloth your shirt is made of.”

“Oh, I see, I see!” said Mr. Ouseley: “thank you, my dear. And what is all this lying about the floor?” pointing to the heap of chaff which lay at the feet of each of the workers.

“Them’s the shows, sir.”

“Shows, my dear! And what will you make of them?”

“Make of them, sir?” and there was a little laugh among the girls. “Why, nobody could make anything of them.”

“And weren’t they a part of the flax awhile ago?” asked he.

“To be sure, sir; but they’re good for nothing now, except to be burnt; and a bad fire they make.”

“Oh, I understand, I understand,” said the preacher; and then very solemnly went on: “And, children dear, just so will the Lord Jesus Christ—and here every head was bowed—“come one day with all His holy angels, and He will scutch the world, and He will gather together all that is good, everyone that is fit for His kingdom, and take them to Himself; and the rest—the shows, the chaff—He will cast into unquenchable fire.”

“The Lord save us!” was whispered around.

“Amen!” said the preacher; “let us pray.”

All were promptly on their knees, while Mr. Ouseley, in fervent petitions, pleaded for the salvation of the young workers. Rising up, he blessed them in the name of the Lord, mounted his horse and rode away, leaving them hardly sure that an angel had not visited them.

One fine summer’s day Mr. Ouseley saw some men cutting peat. He said, “What are you doing, boys?”

“We are cutting turf, sir,” was the reply.

“Sure you don’t require it this fine weather?”

“No, sir, we don’t want it now, but we will want it in the cold days of winter, and in the long nights.”

“And won’t it be time enough to cut it when you want it, and let the winter provide for itself?”

“Oh, musha, it will be too late then.” It will be readily seen that he had been working for a text, and having now got it proceeded with his sermon.

In small towns, before preaching indoors, he would select an hour when the labouring men were sauntering about before supper; and, getting under a tree, if possible with seats round it, would begin singing the plaintive air of “Molly Asthore” to a hymn in Irish or English. In larger towns, on the other hand, keeping to the saddle he would place himself before a shop window, if possible that of an apothecary, and, above all, of a Roman Catholic, for both of these circumstances helped to deter the mob from throwing stones. In county towns he aimed at being present during the assizes, and by this time his name was so generally known that lawyers, magistrates, jurors,

yeomen, and the lower orders crowded into the outdoor congregations. The field-meetings—sometimes by barns, and occasionally on the lawn beside a mansion—were among his favourite preaching places.

So he laboured on for forty years, and even in extreme old age we find in his journal such entries as the following: “From Sunday morning, August the 27th, to Thursday morning, September the 21st, I was enabled by my Lord to preach fifty-four times in and out of doors—not far from my seventy-seventh year.”

In his last illness his sufferings became intense, and he would cry: “My Father, my Father, support thy suffering child. Thy will be done, my Father, God.”

Being asked by his nephew, “What do you think of the Gospel which you have preached all your life?” he replied, “Oh, it is light and life and peace.”

About three hours before his death he asked his nephew to read the 14th chapter of St. John’s Gospel. He spoke upon discipleship, upon being one with Christ, and upon the teaching of that chapter as to the Holy Spirit, dwelling on which, he said: “I have no fear of death. The Spirit of God sustains me. God’s Spirit is my support.” Apparently this was the last word that he ever uttered. Soon after he entered into the everlasting light. A few days later the old Methodist chapel in Whitefriars Street beheld an unusual solemnity, and presently men with full breasts stood round the grave in Mount Jerome, and there returned to Mother Earth all that was now earthly of one of the best sons of Erin that the green sod ever covered.

XIV.

EGERTON RYERSON.

DURING the Revolutionary war a considerable number of the American colonists remained faithful to the Mother-Country. Their condition, after the war, was one of extreme hardship. They were exposed to suspicion and insult, and sometimes to outrage and spoliation. They were denounced by the Local Assemblies as traitors. Many of them were men of wealth, education, talent and professional ability; but they found their property confiscated, their families ostracized, and often their lives menaced. The fate of these patriotic men excited the sympathy of the Mother-Country. Their zeal for the unity of the Empire won for them the name of the United Empire Loyalists, or, more briefly, U. E. Loyalists.

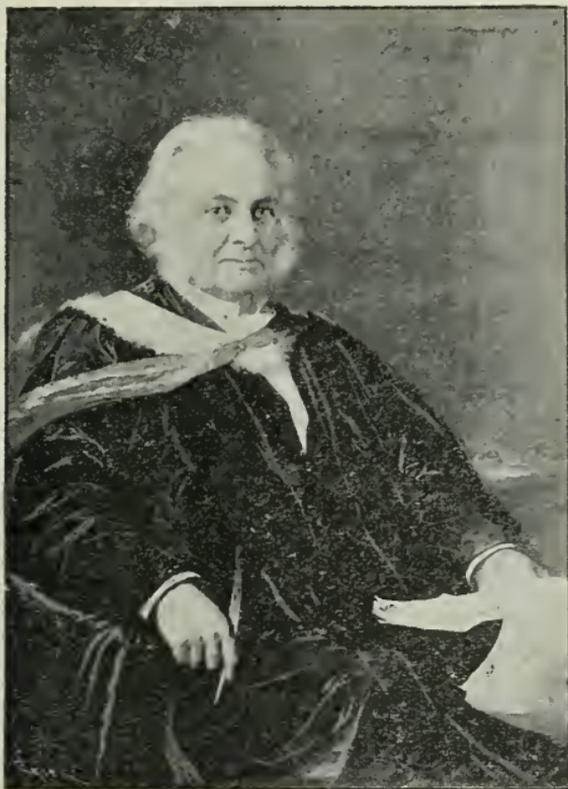
The British Government made liberal provision for their settlement in the seaboard provinces and Canada. The close of the war was followed by an exodus of these faithful men and their families, who, from their loyalty to their King and the institutions of their fatherland, abandoned their homes and property, often large estates, to encounter the discomforts of new settlements, or the perils of the pathless wilderness. The British Parliament voted £3,300,000 for

the indemnification and assistance of the patriotic Loyalists, of whom twenty-five thousand are estimated to have sought refuge in the British colonies. If it be true, as has been averred of the early Puritan colonies of New England, that the wheat of the earth was sifted for the seed of that planting, then it is also true that that wheat was twice sifted for the planting of the Canadian commonweal. No country ever had more high-minded, patriotic and Christian fathers and founders than those who, at the call of duty, forsook their homes and pleasant fields and went into exile for conscience' sake.

The U. E. Loyalists came chiefly from New England and the State of New York. But a considerable number came from the Middle and Southern States of the Union. Several thousand settled near Halifax and on the Bay of Fundy. They were conveyed in transport ships and billeted in churches and private houses till provision could be made for their settlement on grants of land. Many of them arrived in wretched plight, and had to be clothed and fed by public or private charity. A large number established themselves on the St. John River, and founded the present city of St John.

What is now the Province of Ontario, at the close of the Revolutionary war was almost a wilderness. The entire European population is said to have been less than two thousand souls. These dwelt chiefly in the vicinity of the fortified posts on the St. Lawrence, the Niagara and the St. Clair rivers. It was proposed by the Home Government to create, as a refuge

for the Loyalist refugees, a new colony to the west of the older settlements on the St. Lawrence, it being deemed best to keep the French and English populations separate.



THE REV. DR. EGERTON RYERSON.

To each United Empire Loyalist was assigned a free grant of two hundred acres of land, as also to each child, even to those born after immigration, on their coming of age. The Government, moreover,

assisted with food, clothing and implements those loyal exiles who had lost all on their expatriation. Each settler received an axe, hoe and spade; a plough and one cow were allotted to every two families, and a whip-saw and cross-cut saw to each group of four households. Sets of tools, portable corn-mills, with steel plates like coffee-mills, and other conveniences and necessaries of life were also distributed among those pioneers of civilization in Upper Canada.

Many disbanded soldiers and militia and half-pay officers of English and German regiments took up land; and liberal land grants were made to immigrants from Great Britain. For three years the Government granted rations of food to the loyal refugees and soldiers. During the year 1784, it is estimated that ten thousand persons were located in Upper Canada. In course of time not a few immigrants from the United States took up land. The wilderness soon began to give place to smiling farms, thriving settlements and waving fields of grain; and zealous missionaries threaded the forest in order to minister to the scattered settlers the rites of religion. The country steadily prospered, undisturbed in its isolation by the great European war against Napoleon Bonaparte.

For its social organization the chief needs were a paper currency and banking facilities. The lack of money led to a system of barter, which proved an unsatisfactory method of exchange. Popular education was at a low ebb, although a Grammar School had been established in each of the eight districts into which

the Province was now divided. From the almost untaxed importation of intoxicating liquors, intemperance, with its attendant evils, was the prevailing vice. The people lived in rude abundance, the virgin soil brought forth plentifully, deer roamed in the forest, wild-fowl swarmed in marsh and mere, and the lakes and rivers teemed with the finest fish. Home-spun and often home-woven frieze or flannel furnished warm and serviceable clothing.

The houses, chiefly of logs, rough or squared with the axe, though rude, were not devoid of homely comfort. The furniture, except in towns and villages, was mostly home-made. Open fireplaces and out-of-door ovens were the popular substitutes for stoves. Oxen were largely employed in tilling the soil and dragging the rude waggons over rough roads. The fields were studded with blackened stumps, and the engirdling forest ever bounded the horizon or swept around the scanty clearing. The grain was reaped with the sickle or scythe, threshed with the flail, and winnowed by the wind. Grist-mills being almost unknown, it was generally ground in the steel hand-mills furnished by the Government, or pounded in a large mortar, hollowed out of a hardwood stump, by means of a wooden pestle attached to a spring beam.

The roads were often only blazed paths through the forest, supported on corduroy logs where they passed through a swamp or marsh. By the liberal and paternal policy of the Government toward the Indian tribes, the colonists were relieved of all apprehensions of danger from the red man. The judges

and Crown lawyers made their circuits, when possible, in government schooners, and the assize furnished an opportunity of reviving for a time in the county towns the half-forgotten gaieties of fashionable society. In the aristocratic circles of York, a mimic representation of Old World court life was observed, with only partial success.

Before the war of 1812 there were only four clergymen of the Church of England in Upper Canada. The oldest church in the Province was at the Indian settlement near Brantford. Its history can be traced back to 1784. It is still occupied for public worship. It possesses a handsome communion service of beaten silver, presented by Queen Anne to the loyal Mohawk Indian tribe. A few Methodist and Presbyterian ministers toiled through the wilderness to visit the scattered flocks committed to their care. Amid these not altogether propitious circumstances were laid the foundations of that goodly civilization amid which we live to-day.

One of the most noteworthy of the U. E. Loyalist families which sought refuge in Canada was that of the Ryersons. They were originally of Danish origin, but during the seventeenth century became domiciled in Holland. During the early colonial period a number of the Ryersons emigrated from Holland and settled in what is now the State of New Jersey. Notwithstanding their foreign origin they were stalwart supporters of the British Crown. On the outbreak of the Revolutionary war they bore arms on the side of Great Britain. Two brothers, Samuel and Joseph

Ryerson, took military service in a Royal regiment sent to take part in the siege of Charleston. After three years' service, of the five hundred and fifty loyal volunteers, only eighty-six survived. Both of the Ryerson brothers had many hair-breadth escapes from death or capture.

At the close of the war, in 1783, the Ryerson family, their New Jersey estate having been confiscated, received, with many other faithful Loyalists, grants of land in New Brunswick, near the site of the present city of Fredericton. Here Joseph Ryerson married Mehebtabel Stiekney, who was the first child of English stock born in the colony after its surrender by the French. She was thence known as the Mother of Nova Scotia. She became also the mother of six stalwart sons, five of whom became ministers of the Methodist Church.

In 1794 the elder Ryerson removed to Norfolk County, in Upper Canada, receiving a grant of 2,500 acres of land. On account of the misspelling of the name in his commission, this branch of the family has been known as the Ryerses.

Five years later the younger brother also came to Upper Canada and settled in the township of Charlotteville. He served three successive sovereigns, and reached the rank of colonel in the militia, and of High Sheriff of the District. He passed away at the age of ninety-four, having drawn a pension from the Government for more than seventy years. The doughty old colonel was a staunch church and king man, with little sympathy for dissent

or disloyalty. But the faithful preaching of the Methodist ministers appealed to the sense of truth and righteousness of the sturdy Loyalist's stalwart sons, and five of them, as we have mentioned, became pioneer preachers of the Methodist Church.

The eldest son, George, was born in New Brunswick. In 1828 he joined the Methodist Conference, and was for a time a missionary to the Indians on the Credit and the Grand rivers. During a visit to England he came under the spell of the eloquent Edward Irving, and embraced the doctrines of what is known as the Irvingite or Catholic Apostolic Church. For many years he was the head of that denomination in Canada, and survived to the venerable age of over ninety.

The second son, William Ryerson, also became a Methodist. He began to preach in 1821, and rose to eminence in the Wesleyan body. For fifty years he was one of the most powerful orators in Upper Canada, a man in great request at camp-meetings, and a strenuous advocate of temperance reform. He became president of the Conference, district chairman for many years, and after his superannuation became a member of the Canadian Parliament. He passed away in 1872, at the age of seventy-five years.

John Ryerson, the third son, was the first to enter the ministry, in his twentieth year. He, too, rose to eminence, became presiding elder, was Book Steward at Toronto for four years, and president of the Conference, and was a district chairman for over a score of years, thrice representative to the British Confer-

ence, and twice to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States. In the year 1854 he made a missionary journey to the Hudson Bay territory. His interesting volume on that little known region is one of the first on the subject, and attracted much attention on both sides of the sea to that Great Lone Land. This venerable man passed away in 1878 at the patriarchal age of seventy-nine. These three brothers saw active service on behalf of their country during the war of 1812-15. They fought all over the Province wherever there was any fighting to be done—at Detroit, Fort Erie, Beaver Dams, Lundy's Lane and elsewhere.

Of Egerton Ryerson, the fourth son, we shall speak more at length.

The fifth son, Edwy, for six and twenty years exhibited the characteristic eloquence and energy of the family as a Methodist minister.

There was still another son, Samuel; he did not, however, live long enough to win any special distinction.

Of the early life of Egerton Ryerson we have the following sketch written by his own hand on his seventieth birthday:

I was born on the 24th of March, 1803, in the township of Charlotteville, near the village of Vittoria, in the then London District, now the County of Norfolk. My father had been an officer in the British army during the American revolution, being a volunteer in the Prince of Wales' Regiment of New Jersey, of which place he was a native. His fore-

fathers were from Holland, and his more remote ancestors were from Denmark.

At the close of the American revolutionary war, he, with many others of the same class, went to New Brunswick, where he married my mother, a descendant of one of the early Massachusetts Puritan settlers.

Near the close of the last century my father, with his family, followed an elder brother to Canada, where he drew some 2,500 acres of land from the Government, for his services in the army, besides his pension. My father settled on 600 acres of land lying about half-way between the present village of Vittoria and Port Ryerse, where my Uncle Samuel settled, and where he built the first mill in the County of Norfolk. My father devoted himself exclusively to agriculture, and I learned to do all kinds of farm work.

That to which I am principally indebted for any studious habits, mental energy, or even capacity or decision of character, is religious instruction poured into my mind in my childhood by a mother's counsels, and infused into my heart by a mother's prayers and tears. When very small, under six years of age, having done something wrong, my mother took me into her bedroom, told me how bad and wicked what I had done was, and what pain it caused her, kneeled down, clasped me to her bosom, and prayed for me. Her tears falling upon my head, seemed to penetrate to my heart. This was my first religious impression, and was never effaced. Though thoughtless, and

full of playful mischief, I never afterwards knowingly grieved my mother, or gave her other than respectful and kind words.

At the close of the American war, in 1815, when I was twelve years of age, my three elder brothers, George, William and John, became deeply religious, and I imbibed the same spirit. My consciousness of guilt and sinfulness was humbling, oppressive and distressing; and my experience of relief, after lengthened fastings, watchings and prayers, was clear, refreshing and joyous. In the end I simply trusted in Christ, and looked to Him for a present salvation. As I looked up in my bed, the light appeared in my mind, and, as I thought, to my bodily eye also, in the form of one, white-robed, who approached the bedside with a smile, and with more of the expression of the countenance of Titian's Christ than of any person whom I have ever seen. I turned, rose to my knees, bowed my head, and covered my face, rejoiced with trembling, saying to a brother who was lying beside me, that the Saviour was now near us. I henceforth had new views, new feelings new joys, and new strength.

“Jesus, all the day long,
Was my joy and my song.”

From that time I became a diligent student, and new quickness and strength seemed to be imparted to my understanding and memory. While working on the farm I did more than an ordinary day's work, that it might show how industrious, instead of lazy, as some said, religion made a person. I studied

between three and six o'clock in the morning, carried a book in my pocket during the day to improve odd moments by reading or learning, and then reviewed my studies of the day aloud while walking out in the evening.

To the Methodist way of religion my father was, at that time, extremely opposed, and refused me every facility for acquiring knowledge while I continued to go amongst them. When I had reached the age of eighteen I gave in my name for membership in the Methodist Church. Information of this was soon communicated to my father, who, in the course of a few days, said to me :

“ Egerton, I understand you have joined the Methodists. You must either leave them or leave my house.”

He said no more, and I well knew that the decree was final : but I had formed my decision in view of all possible consequences, and I had the aid of a mother's prayers, and a mother's tenderness, and a conscious divine strength according to my need. The next day I left home and became usher in the London District Grammar School, applying myself to my new work with much diligence and earnestness, so that I soon succeeded in gaining the good-will of parents and pupils. During two years I was teacher and student, advancing considerably in classical studies.

As my father complained that the Methodists had robbed him of his son, and of the fruits of his labours, I wished to remove that ground of complaint as far as possible by hiring an English farm labourer, then

just arrived in Canada, in my place, and paid him out of the proceeds of my own labour for two years. But although the farmer was the best hired man my father had ever had, the result of his farm productions during these two years did not equal those of the two years that I had been the chief labourer on the farm, and my father came to me one day, uttering a single sentence—

“Egerton, you must come home,” and then walked away.

My first promptings would have led me to say, “Father, you have expelled me from your house for being a Methodist; I am so still. I have employed a man for you in my place for two years, during which time I have been a student and a teacher, and unaccustomed to work on a farm. I cannot now resume it.”

But I had left home for the honour of religion, and I thought the honour of religion would be promoted by my returning home, and showing still that the religion so much spoken against would enable me to leave the school for the plough and the harvest-field, as it had enabled me to leave home without knowing at the moment whether I should be a teacher or a farm labourer.

I relinquished my engagement as teacher within a few days, engaging again on the farm with such determination and purpose that I ploughed every acre of ground for the season, cradled every stalk of wheat, rye, and oats, and mowed every spear of grass, pitched the whole first on the waggon, and then from

the waggon on the hay-mow or stack. While the neighbours were astonished at the possibility of one man doing so much work, I neither felt fatigue nor depression, for "the joy of the Lord was my strength," both of body and mind, and I made nearly, if not quite, as much progress in my studies as I had done while teaching school.

My father then became changed with regard both to myself and the religion I professed, desiring me to remain at home; but having been enabled to maintain a good conscience in the sight of God, and a good report before men, in regard to my filial duty during my minority, I felt that my life's work lay in another direction. I had refused, indeed, the advice of senior Methodist ministers to enter into the ministerial work, feeling myself yet unqualified for it, and still doubting whether I should ever engage in it, or in another profession.

I felt a strong desire to pursue further my classical studies, and determined with the kind counsel and aid of my eldest brother, to proceed to Hamilton and place myself for a year under the tuition of a man of high reputation both as a scholar and a teacher. I applied myself with such ardour, and prepared such an amount of work in both Latin and Greek, that my teacher said it was impossible for him to give the time to hear me read all that I had prepared, and it was impossible for any human mind to sustain long the strain that I was imposing upon mine. In the course of some six months his apprehensions were realized, as I was seized with a brain fever, and on par-

tially recovering took cold, which resulted in inflammation of the lungs, by which I was so reduced that my physician pronounced my case hopeless, and my death was hourly expected.

In that extremity, while I felt even a desire to depart and be with Christ, I was oppressed with the consciousness that I should have yielded to the counsels of the chief ministers of my Church, instead of refusing to speak in public as I had done. I then and there vowed that if I should be restored to life and health, I would not follow my own counsels, but yield to the openings and calls which might be made in the Church by its chief ministers. That very moment the cloud was removed; the light of the glory of God shone into my mind and heart with a splendour and power that I had never before experienced. My mother, entering the room a few moments after, exclaimed :

“Egerton, your countenance is changed; you are getting better!”

My bodily recovery was rapid, but the recovery of my mind from the shock which it had experienced was slower, and for some weeks I could not even read, much less study. While thus recovering I exercised myself as I best could in writing down my meditations.

My father so earnestly solicited me to return that he offered me a deed of his farm if I would do so and live with him. But I declined acceding to his request under any circumstance, expressing my conviction that even could I do so, I thought it unwise and

wrong for any parent to place himself in a position of dependence upon any of his children for support so long as he could avoid doing so. One day, entering my room and seeing a manuscript lying on the bed, he asked me what I had been writing, and wished me to read it. I had written a meditation on part of the last verse of the 73rd Psalm: "It is good for me to draw near to God." I read what I had written, when my father rose with a sigh, remarking, "Egerton, I don't think you will ever return home again." And he never afterwards mooted the subject, except in a general way.

My brother William was laid aside from his ministerial work by bleeding of the lungs. The presiding elder asked if I would come on the circuit to supply the place of my brother. I felt that the vows of God were upon me, and I was for some moments speechless from emotion. On recovering I said I had no engagements beyond my own plans and purposes; but I was yet weak in body from severe illness, and I had no means for anything else than pursuing my studies, for which aid had been provided.

One of the stewards replied that he would give me a horse, and the other that he would provide me with a saddle and bridle. I then felt that I had no choice but to fulfil the vow which I had made on what was supposed to be my death-bed. I returned to Hamilton, settled with my instructor and for my lodgings, and made my first attempt at preaching at or near Beamsville, from the 5th verse of the 126th Psalm, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy," and in the after-

noon at "The Fifty," on "The Resurrection of Christ." (Acts xi. 24.)

Such was the sketch of my life which I wrote on Sabbath in my Long Point Island cottage, on the seventieth anniversary of my birthday.

Thus Egerton Ryerson entered upon his life-work of the Christian ministry. In his twenty-third year he made his first appearance as an author, and from that time to the day of his death he continued to wield his powerful pen. The occasion of his first pamphlet was as follows: Archdeacon (afterwards Bishop) Strachan had published a sermon reflecting strongly on the dissenting ministers of the country as subverting its political and religious institutions. Young Ryerson was asked to reply to this pamphlet. He did so in a remarkably sturdy and trenchant manner. Three years later, while yet a very young man, he was appointed editor of the *Christian Guardian*. This position he held for nine years in all, with, however, two considerable intermissions. Under his vigorous administration the *Guardian* became a power in the land, and took an active part in fighting the battle for civil and religious liberty, which has long since been won.

In 1835 Egerton Ryerson was sent to England to obtain a Royal charter for the Upper Canada Academy, which soon developed into the University of Victoria College. Of this institution he became first president.

In a famous debate in the British House of Com-

mons on the colonial question in 1836, Mr. Ryerson "coached" Mr. Gladstone, then in the beginning of his parliamentary career, on the subject. Mr. Gladstone made a vigorous speech in opposition to Mr. Joseph Hume's championship of the Radical faction, and the fate of their "petition of right" was sealed.

In 1844 Dr. Ryerson entered upon what was really to be his great life-work, the organization of the public school system of his native province. He was appointed by the Government Superintendent of Education, and entered upon an extensive tour of the United States, Great Britain and Continental Europe to study the educational systems of these lands. For thirty-two years Dr. Ryerson continued to administer the school system of the Province of Upper Canada, now Ontario, "with a zeal, a disinterestedness and an efficiency which have received the highest encomiums, not only from Canadians, but from persons connected with educational matters in Great Britain and the United States."

Bishop Fraser, of Manchester, stated in 1865 that the Canadian educational system was far in advance of that of Great Britain, and adds: "What national education in England owes to Sir J. K. Shuttleworth, what education in New England owes to Horace Mann, that debt education in Canada owes to Egerton Ryerson. Through evil report and good report he has resolved, and he has found others to support him in the resolution, that free education shall be placed within the reach of every Canadian parent for every Canadian child."

Dr. Ryerson took an active part in promoting the union of the Methodist Churches in Canada, and was elected President of the first General Conference. This office he held for four years, and performed its arduous duties with unwearied fidelity and zeal. With characteristic energy he impressed his character upon the legislation of the united Church. In 1878 he was sent a third time to represent Canadian Methodism in Great Britain. He was received by the British Conference with every possible mark of respect and affection, and reference was made to his having appeared before that venerable body as the representative of the Canadian Conference forty-three years before.

He was also five times sent as a representative to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States.

Dr. Ryerson continued to administer the duties of Chief Superintendent up to his seventy-third year, when by his own request he was allowed to retire, after thirty-two years of incessant and devoted labour. The appreciation of his distinguished service to his country was expressed by the vote of the Legislature for the continuance of his full pay during the rest of his life. He devoted his leisure to the preparation of an elaborate history of the United Empire Loyalists, of whom he was such a distinguished representative; to writing the Story of his Life; and also to writing a volume on Epochs and Characteristics of Canadian Methodism, and an important work on the later history of England. The last is yet in manuscript.

Dr. Ryerson maintained in a serene and sunny old age much of the vigour and activity of his youth. He used to retire to his cottage at Long Point for the purpose of seclusion and study. We have heard the venerable Doctor say that when the Marquis of Lorne and a number of friends come to Long Point, then a famous resort for wild-fowl, on a hunting excursion, he was persuaded to go out gunning with them, and in half a day made a better bag than any others of the party made in a whole day. He used to cross the wide Long Point Bay when the ice was forming or breaking up, sometimes at the peril of his life. But he knew no such word as fear, though more than once he was exposed to extreme danger.

Thus full of years and full of honours, surrounded by "love, obedience, troops of friends," he rounded out nearly fourscore of years—he lacked only a few days of entering his eightieth year. These were not years of "labour and sorrow," but of gladsome, mellow, happy old age.

The following words of his most intimate friend of many years, Dr. J. George Hodgins, Deputy Minister of Education, describe his closing hours :

"To such a man death had no terrors—the heart had no fear. It was cheering and comforting to listen to him, as I often did alone, and to hear him speak of his near departure as of one preparing for a journey—ceasing from duty in order to be ready to be conveyed away, and then resuming it when the journey was over.

"Thus he spoke of the time of his departure as at

hand, and he was ready for the messenger when he should call for him. He spoke of it trustfully, hopefully, cheerfully, neither anxious nor fearful ; and yet on the other hand, neither elated nor full of joy. He knew whom he believed, and was persuaded that he was able to keep that which he had committed unto him against that day.

“ Gradually the weary wheels of life stood still, and at seven o'clock on Sunday morning, February 19th, 1882, in the presence of his loved ones and dear friends, gently and peacefully the spirit of Egerton Ryerson took its flight to be forever with the Lord ! ”

“ Servant of God, well done !
Thy glorious warfare's past ;
The battle's fought, the race is won,
And thou art crowned at last.”

Not merely in his own country was Dr. Ryerson's character revered and his loss deplored. Such men as William Arthur and Dr. Fraser, Bishop of Manchester, paid eloquent tribute to his memory in the Old Land. In the United States, also, Dr. Edwards, editor of the *Northwestern Christian Advocate*, writes thus of this distinguished man: “ We believe that Canada owes more to him than any man, living or dead. Men like Wellington and Washington ‘ save their countries.’ But men like Ryerson make their countries worth saving. The death of such a man is a loss to the world greater than when the average president or king passes away.”

No man ever passed away in Canada whose

true grandeur was more universally recognized. He lived in the hearts of his countrymen, and

“Read his history in a nation’s eyes.”

Even envy and detraction could not lessen his grandeur nor tarnish the lustre of his name.

Dr. Ryerson possessed in a marked degree the faculty of commanding the confidence and winning the friendship of distinguished men of every rank, of every political party and religious denomination. He enjoyed the confidence and esteem of every Governor of Canada for forty years, from Lord Sydenham to the Marquis of Lorne. No native Canadian ever had the *entrée* to such distinguished society in Great Britain and the continent. When making his educational tours, Dr. Ryerson was furnished by the Home Government with special introductions to the British ambassadors of the principal countries of Europe, and was by them introduced to the leading statesmen and educational authorities of those countries.

The late Pope Pius IX. having heard of Dr. Ryerson’s educational work in Canada, wished to see the man who had devised a system of such equal justice to all denominations. We once heard the Doctor describe this interview as he beguiled the tedium of a railway journey with his reminiscences of the past. Several foreign dignitaries were waiting in an ante-room for an audience with the Pope, but the Methodist preacher received precedence of them all.

“Are you a clergyman?” asked the Chancellor, who conducted him to the Pontiff’s presence.

“I am a Wesleyan minister,” he replied.

“Ah! John Wesley. I’ve heard of him,” said the Chancellor, as he shrugged his shoulders in surprise that this heretic should be so honoured above orthodox sons of the Church.

After an interview of some length the Pope, addressing two young ladies by whom Dr. Ryerson was accompanied—his daughter, and a daughter of Earl Grey—who had rolls of paper in their hands, said, “What have you there, my children?” They replied that they wished to obtain his autograph, when the fatherly old man wrote in Latin the benediction: “Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord,” and then kindly gave them also the pen with which it was written.

With all his catholicity of sentiment and charity of spirit, Dr. Ryerson was a man of strong convictions, and he always had the courage of his convictions as well. When it came to a question of principle he was rigid as iron. Then he planted himself on the solid ground of what he believed to be right, and said like FitzJames:

“Come one, come all! this rock shall fly
From its firm base, as soon as I.”

Dr. Ryerson’s controversies were for great principles, not for personal interests. Hence no rancour, no bitterness disturbed his relations with his antagonists. Even his old and conquered foe, Bishop Strachan, after the controversy was over became his personal friend.

Such benefactors of his kind and of his country as Dr. Ryerson deserve to be held in lasting and grateful remembrance. His imperishable monument, it is true, is the school system which he devised. The bronze statue of Dr. Ryerson in the grounds of the Educational Buildings, Toronto, where he so long administered the school system which he had devised, exhibits the noble presence, the benignant countenance, the dome-like and majestic brow of this great Canadian. Thus shall the future generations of the boys and girls in the schools, of the teachers who shall pass through those educational halls, and the foreign visitors to our land learn what manner of man was he whom Canada delights to honour.

To future generations of Canadian youth the career of Dr. Ryerson will be an inspiration and encouragement. With early educational advantages far inferior to those which he has brought within the reach of every boy and girl in the land, what a noble life he lived, what grand results he achieved! One great secret of his success was his tireless industry. As a boy he learned to work—to work hard—the best lesson any boy can learn—and he worked to the end of his life. He could not spend an idle hour. The rule of his life was “no day without a line,”—without something attempted, something done. In the discharge of his official duties the amount of work that he got through was an amazement to the clerks of the Department. Over sixty distinct publications came from his busy pen. Over a score of times he crossed the Atlantic on official duties.

But again we remark, his moral greatness was his noblest trait—his earnest piety, his child-like simplicity, his Christ-like charity, his fidelity to duty, his unfaltering faith. Not his intellectual greatness, not his lofty statesmanship, not his noble achievements are his truest claim upon our love and veneration—but this—

“The Christian is the highest style of man.”

His labours for the Church of his early choice were performed in every position, from that of a missionary to the Indian tribes, to that of the chief officer of its highest assembly. As one of the original founders and first president of Victoria University; as one of the originators and first editor of the *Christian Guardian*, and as repeatedly the representative of Canadian Methodism in important crises of its history, before the British Conference and the General Conference of the United States, he rendered services of the greatest value to the Church of which he was an honoured son.

But by those who knew him best, his memory will be cherished and revered, not for what he did, but for what he was. Dr. Ryerson was one of the most lovable men we ever knew. Few men grow old so gracefully as did he. He had been, we may say, a man of war from his youth, and was the hero of many a hard-fought fight; yet he was without a particle of bitterness or guile. We never knew a man so simple in his greatness, so generous in recognition of merit in others, so tender in the bestowment of sympathy, so wise in the giving of counsel.

Above all, he was the guileless, earnest, sunny-minded Christian. We have heard him speak with great warmth of feeling of the absorbing joys and consolations of God in his soul, when driven, for his fidelity to conscience, from his father's house; and when toiling with his hands in the harvest-field. And we have often heard him say that not when receiving the highest dignities and honours that were conferred upon him, has he experienced such rich enjoyment as in preaching the Gospel to the Indians or to the scattered settlers of the backwoods. It was not for earthly reward that he laboured. In the early days of his ministry his salary never exceeded a hundred dollars a year, and for many years later not more than six hundred dollars.

Our revered and honoured friend once submitted to the present writer a collection of his early diaries. They were most minutely and faithfully kept during a long series of years, recording his early studies, the texts from which he preached, and his later travels in foreign lands. The first one we opened described his appointment as assistant Methodist preacher in the town of York. In it he expressed the most humble deprecation of his own ability to preach to the intellectual and cultured Methodist society of the capital of the Province. He also wrote many bitter things against himself for non-improvement of his time—although a lady, who knew him well, has told the writer that he used to rise at four in the morning to study by the light of pine knots on the hearth.

His religion had nothing ascetic in it. It was a

calm, confident, holy trust. "He felt that he had no merit—no desert," he said, in his latest days. "He was simply resting by faith on the atonement of his Redeemer." He quoted, as expressing the experience of his soul, the words of Wesley :

" I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me."

What is the lesson of this life but this : "The good alone are great." Not rank, station, nor adventitious circumstances command the truest homage of the soul, but the supreme excellence of moral worth.

"The memory of the just
Smells sweet and blossoms in the dust."

To write the life of Dr. Ryerson would be largely to write the history of Upper Canada. No man in Canada ever fought such brave battles for civil and religious liberty as did he. No man ever played a more prominent part in securing the rights and privileges which the country now enjoys.

In whatever sphere he was called to labour he threw himself with energy into its hardest toil. When appointed a missionary among the Indians at the Credit, he says : "I became head carpenter, head farmer, as well as missionary among these interesting people, during the first year of their civilized life. In one of their bark-covered and brush-enclosed wigwams I ate and slept for weeks, my bed consisting of a plank, a mat and a blanket, and a blanket also for my covering, yet I never was more comfortable and

happy. God, the Lord, was the strength of my heart. Maintaining my dignity as a minister, I showed the Indians that I could work and live as they worked and lived."

"On my arrival at the mission," writes his brother William, describing a visit to the Credit, "I found Egerton about half a mile from the village, stripped to the shirt and pantaloons, clearing land with between twelve and twenty of the Indian boys, who were all engaged in chopping and picking up the brush."

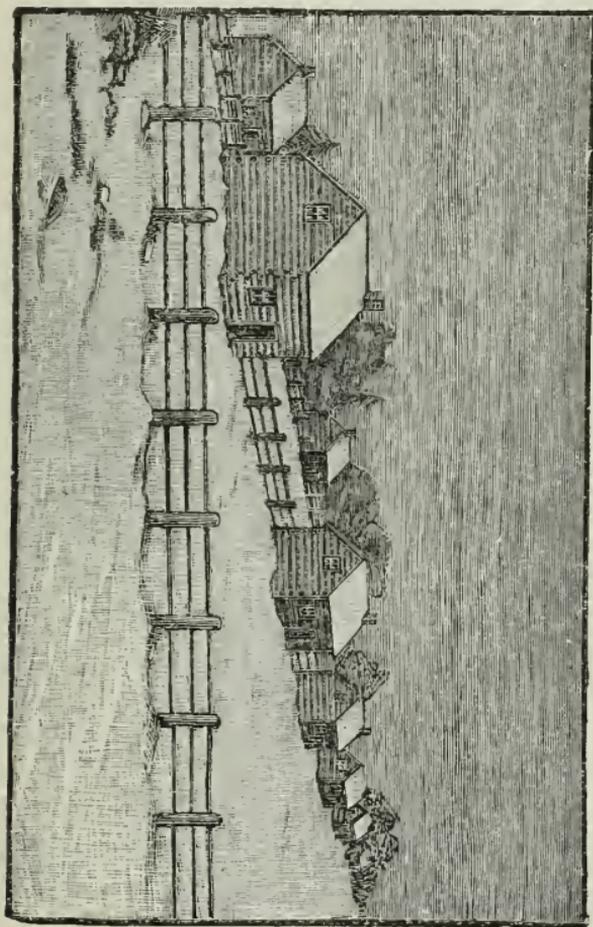
The following episode of deep interest is mentioned in his journal: "June 7th, 1826. The first quarterly conference ever held amongst Indians in British America was held to-day. Their hearts seemed fired at the thought of carrying the news of salvation to their benighted brethren. At their own suggestion \$12 was soon taken up to help pay expenses."

His own story of his life, written in his closing years, goes on describing his work among the Indians, his ministry among the whites, his initiation into controversial writings, his active part in conference work, his frequent visits as a delegate to the English and American conferences, and later his educational tours in Europe and educational work in Canada. It was a full and overflowing life. The words of the Scripture were fulfilled, "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men." His early industry was a preparation for his after life.

“THE BRIGHT SIDE OF SEVENTY-FIVE.”

In his cottage at Long Point, on his seventy-fifth birthday Dr. Ryerson wrote the following paper. It

INDIAN MISSION AT THE CREDIT.



was read at his funeral, and with it we close our sketch of his life :

“I am this day seventy-five years of age, and this day fifty-three years ago, after resisting many solici-

tations to enter the ministry, and after long and painful struggles, I decided to devote my life to the ministry of the Methodist Church.

“The predominant feeling of my heart is that of gratitude and humiliation; gratitude for God’s unbounded mercy, patience and compassion, in the bestowment of almost uninterrupted health and innumerable personal, domestic and social blessings for more than fifty years of a public life of great labour and many dangers; and humiliation under a deep-felt consciousness of personal unfaithfulness, of many defects, errors, and neglects in public duties.

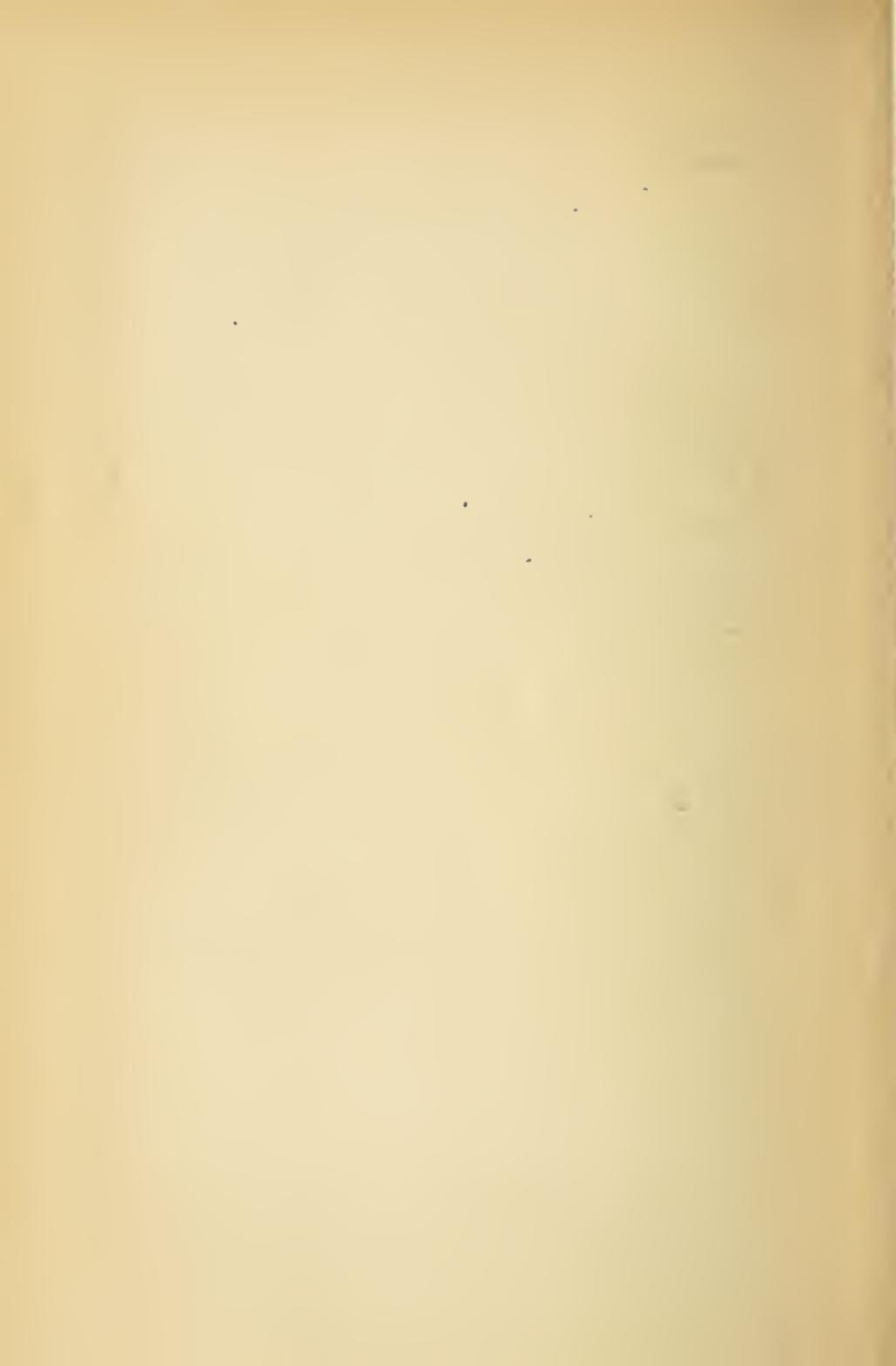
“Many tell me that I have been useful to the Church and the country; but my own conscience tells me that I have learned little, experienced little, done little in comparison to what I might and ought to have known and done. By the grace of God I am spared; by His grace I am what I am. All my trust for salvation is in the efficiency of Jesus’ atoning blood. I have no melancholy feelings or fears. The joy of the Lord is my strength. I feel that I am now on the bright side of seventy-five. As the evening twilight of my earthly life advances, my spiritual sun shines with increased splendour. With increased sense of my own sinfulness unworthiness, and helplessness, I have an increased sense of the blessedness of pardon, the indwelling of the Comforter and the communion of saints

“Here, upon bended knee, I give myself, and all I have and am, afresh to Him whom I have endeavoured to serve, but very imperfectly, for more than

threescore years. All helpless myself, I most humbly and devoutly pray that divine strength may be perfected in my weakness, and that my last days on earth may be my best days—best days of implicit faith and unreserved consecration, best days of simple Scriptural ministrations and public usefulness, best days of change from glory to glory, and of becoming meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, until my Lord shall dismiss me from the service of warfare and the weariness of toil to the glories of victory and the repose of rest.

“E. RYERSON.”





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