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LIFE OF WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, M. P.

William Wilberforce was born at Hull on the 24th of August, 1759. His father dying when he was only nine years of age, he was consigned to the care of an uncle at Wimbledon near London, under whose roof he remained two years. His aunt was a pious woman and a great admirer of the celebrated George Whitfield's preaching, and by her instrumentality, young Wilberforce appears for the first time to have been taught the importance of evangelical religion. His friends alarmed at the report of his becoming earnest in this matter, had him removed to his mother's house in Hull, and here he was introduced into the gay world, in the hope of shaking off his seriousness.— Though the reflection is a melancholy one, yet it is true, that there are guardians to be found, unworthy indeed of the name, who conceive it to be part of their duty to train up youths inheriting a fortune, in the ways of folly and sin. Mr. Wilberforce's mother, whom we find called "an Archbishop Tillotson Christian," a phrase which we suppose means a semi-infidel, unhappily gave her countenance to this course, and had entire success crowned the conspiracy, Britain might still have been a participator in the guilt of the slave trade. Let us hear Mr. W.'s own sentiments as to the conduct of his guardians at this time. The city of Hull "was then as gay a place as was to be found out of London, the theatre, balls, great suppers and card parties were the delight of the principal families in the town. The usual dinner hour was two o'clock, and at six they met at sumptuous suppers. This mode of life was at first distressing to me, but by degrees I acquired a

relish for it, and became as thoughtless as the rest. As grandson to one of the principal inhabitants, I was every where invited and caressed: my voice and love of music made me still more acceptable. The religious impressions I had gained at Wimbledon continued for a considerable time after my return to Hull, but my friends spared no pains to stifle them. I might almost say, that no pious parent ever laboured more to impress a beloved child with sentiments of piety, than they did to give me a taste for the world and its diversions." When he was seventeen years of age, he was sent to one of the Colleges in Cambridge. He was now by the death of his grandfather and uncle left in possession of an independent fortune, and this it appears was a great snare to him in pursuing his academical studies, for both his tutors and fellow students represented to him the folly of taking much concern about science or literature—"What in the world," they would say, "should a man of your fortune trouble himself with fagging?" Arguments of this sort, more especially when combined as they were in the present instance with flattering hints, that he was a youth of so much talent, that he had no need for hard study to arrive at excellence, are as Mr. W. afterwards observed "poison to the mind," and the consequence was, that he appears to have passed this precious season, with little improvement to himself, a circumstance which he much regretted to the end of his life. Mr. Wilberforce, before leaving College, had resolved on being a public man. He accordingly stood candidate for the representation in parliament of the town of Hull, and though oppos-