

# Northern Messenger

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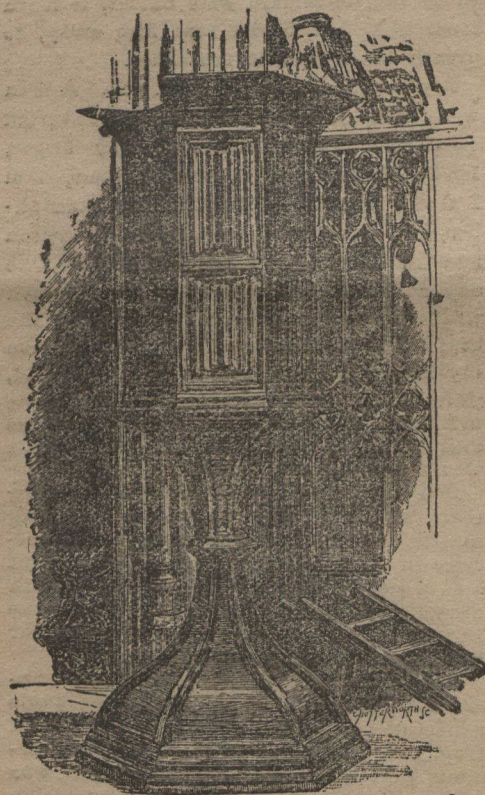
## Some Notable Pulpits.

(Fred. Hastings, in 'Sunday at Home.')

### CRANMER'S PULPIT.

In Westminster Abbey how many relics remain that are dear to the hearts of Englishmen! Who has not visited the venerable pile, and gazed with reverence upon its historic treasures? Many, however, have overlooked one relic of great worth, the pulpit used by Cranmer and by many great preachers of the time of the Reformation. I went to the Abbey thinking to sketch the pulpit from which I had heard Stanley, Kingsley, Westcott, and others preach, but it is modern, and scarcely comes within the scope of these papers.

In the chapel of Henry VII., I came—in a little recess at the east end—upon that pulpit in which Cranmer preached frequently. It is a tall oaken pulpit of the



CRANMER'S PULPIT IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

well-known wine-cup shape, very deep, and arranged so as to hide as much of the preacher as possible. Its panels are of the 'fiddlestick' pattern, and carefully finished. It is entered by steps which have to be lifted and attached by strong hooks. The whole structure looks rather slim though graceful. It is said that Canon Prothero was very heavy and stout, and very nervous about the ability of the pulpit to bear his weight; but he determined to preach from it. It had to be wedged and propped up, then, after much effort and pushing, the heavy Canon was enabled to enter it. He managed to preach therefrom, but his sermon must have been rather tremulous in tone if weighty in matter.

Cranmer preached the sermon at the coronation of Edward VI. from this pulpit. From it also Archbishop Trench, while he

was yet Dean of Westminster, preached in January, 1858, at the first of the special evening services in the nave.

Dean Stanley also several times preached from it. Now it is relegated to this corner, where it may be gazed at by the curious, and preserved for posterity. Echoes of tones that once saluted royal ears may yet linger round that pulpit, anyhow its resting-place is over royal dust.

### JOHN NEWTON'S PULPIT.

Dodging carts and cabs, waggons and omnibuses, I crossed over from the Mansion House to St. Mary Woolnoth. A ministerial friend whom I met said, 'Let us go in and look at the tablet of the old African blasphemer, as Newton called himself.' My friend has himself, like John Newton, been a sailor in early life. He was feeling the pressure of London work, and said, 'When I get downcast I like to go and look at the tablet on which Newton wrote his own epitaph. It always does me good to think of what the grace of God can do; and, however difficult my work, I feel thankful to him who has put me unexpectedly, like John Newton, into the ministry.'

Reverently two London ministerial toilers stand before the tablet, on the left-hand side of the church, and, where a strong light falls upon it. We read:—

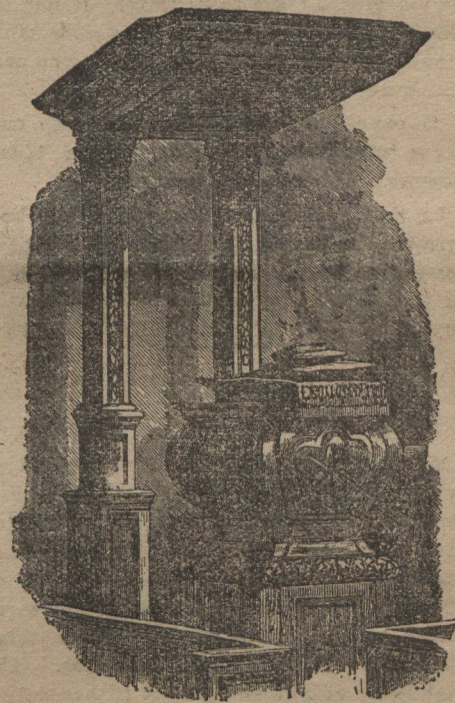
JOHN NEWTON, Clerk,  
Once an infidel and libertine  
A servant of slaves in Africa  
[Was by the rich mercy of our Lord and  
Saviour Jesus Christ,  
Preserved, restored, pardoned,  
And appointed to preach the faith he  
Had long labored to destroy,  
Near 16 years at Olney in Bucks,  
And 28 years in this church.

On Feb. 1, 1750, he married  
MARY,  
Daughter of the late George Catlett  
Of Chatham, Kent.  
He resigned her to the Lord who gave her  
On the 15th of December, 1790.

We turn and look at the pulpit in which he had so frequently preached. Most elaborate, massive, and imposing is the structure. It must have cost an enormous amount, but then it stands in the place where the rich bankers and merchants congregate, and money would be easily found to pay for such a pulpit. We picture to ourselves the venerable old man, leaning over that sacred desk, and persuading earnestly his hearers to love the Saviour who had so marvellously saved him. We think of how his words would come with great force to those who knew anything of the story of his life. We try, in imagination, to catch the tones of the man who had deserted his ship, been caught, whipped, degraded from being a midshipman to become a common sailor, then a servant on a plantation, the half-starved slave, the ship-wrecked mariner, the infidel blasphemer, the slave-trader,

then the man who studied Euclid to draw off his mind from the pangs of hunger, the trusted captain filling up his leisure by studying Juvenal or Horace, the tide-surveyor, and, lastly, the fervent preacher of the Christ's Gospel. What a life the man had! He felt that he was just the one to preach the Gospel. That which stirred him to do so was reading the account Paul gave of himself in Galatians i., 23, 24. As the Apostle had been called from being a persecutor, 'to preach the faith he once destroyed,' so Newton desired to proclaim the glory of that which had lifted him up from despair to delight, from the power of sin to sonship with Christ.

After being ordained by the Bishop of Lincoln, Newton went to Olney as a curate, and there he labored, and was most useful not only in helping the general parishioners but in cheering the despond-



JOHN NEWTON'S PULPIT, ST. MARY WOOLNETH.

ing poet Cowper. Here he remained until he was presented by one who was his great friend, Mr. Thornton, a wealthy city man, to the living of St. Mary Woolnoth.

We are not surprised that, placed in a position of so much influence, he should have written:—

'That one of the most ignorant, the most miserable, and the most abandoned of slaves should be plucked from his forlorn state of exile on the coast of Africa, and at length appointed minister of the parish of the first magistrate of the first city of the world—that he should there not only testify of such grace, but stand up as a singular instance and monument of it—that he should be enabled to record it in his history, preaching, and writings to the world at large—is a fact I can contemplate with admiration, but never sufficiently estimate.'

He did not manage to attract as many of the wealthy sinners to hear him as he