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NOTICE.

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GEORGE WHITFIELD.

One day in the year of 1714 there was born in the Bell Inn, at Gloucester, a child who was named George Whitfield. There was nothing peculiarly thoughtful or studious about his childhood that would lead any one to believe that his future would be a particularly honorable one. He was simply an intelligent active boy both in mind and body. At the grammar school at which he received his early education, however, he was remarkable for his facility at declamation, and in expressing his thoughts on any subject. This gift was often called into requisition, and to the early training thus obtained Whitfield often attributed the self-possession in speaking before immense audiences for which in after days he became remarkable.

His school days in Gloucester were not many. His mother was the hostess of the Bell Inn at that place. Times had not gone well with her. George Whitfield became general servant at the inn, in that city of glorious remembrances. These latter must have had a great influence on his character and career. In Gloucester Tyndall had translated the Bible into English. Here also Hooper was burnt at the stake, and by such a testimony to the truth of his belief did more to extend it than many years of life. At the door of that cathedral which George Whitfield used to attend, Bishop Miles Smith, not so very many years before, protected against the Romanist practices of Laud the dean, and refused to cross the threshold unless the signs of Popery were swept from the building. These were glorious memories to accompany through childhood such a boy as the one of whom we write, and it is extremely likely that they influenced his future history; and even while the "boy at the inn" he grew to understand something of the truths to be found in the Gospels.

He did not remain long the servant at the inn. Some rich friends who saw that his life would be wasted there, used their influence in his behalf, and before long he was a student at Pembroke College, Oxford. John Wesley was at Oxford at that time waking up the spiritual life of the old city. The two young men became friends, and although afterwards differing very widely in opinions, never ceased to entertain that relationship to each other. Whitfield soon became known as the comforter of the poor, the sick and the afflicted. The meanest hovels and garrets were lightened by his sympathy and presence, though persons of all classes and ages were led by him to the Saviour.

His character at Oxford became known to Bishop Benson of Gloucester, and on his return to that city he was ordained at the age of twenty-two. He preached his first sermon to his own townsmen, and even at this time the people were charmed and drawn by earnest loving words. He took a curacy of the village of Sumner in Hampshire, a place too small to suit his energy and zeal. He therefore soon after resigned this position, and on the invitation of Wesley went with him to America to visit a colony of the latter's followers in Georgia. He preached in America with remarkable success, and helped to found the town of Savannah.

On his return to England he was ordained priest, and soon after was accidentally led to begin what became his special life work. One day while walking near Bristol he saw a num-

ber of colliers lounging about. It struck him that here there were many people who never were to be seen in the church and chapel, and that the Gospel's truths must be brought to them. He then and there preached to them with such power that tears were soon flowing down their grimy cheeks, and from those lips too long accustomed to sinful words, perhaps for the first time, came words of prayer. He soon after went to London and began his ministry, and there did not forget his experience amongst the colliers at Bristol.

But his open air meetings were not long confined to laborers. Soon the fame of these spread abroad, and whether attracted by curiosity, a genuine desire to obtain good or other object, his meetings were soon attended by court ladies and courtiers, professional men, actors, and the great masses of the poorer classes. Here were Bollingbroke and Chesterfield and Hume, those who served for a crust of bread and to whom a holiday meant something less

kindness, over the sinner. It is so clear that it is heard at the further end of the wide assembly, and yet so sweet that music is the only word that can give an idea of its tones. His face, too, and his figure have changed since we last looked at him. Meaning has come into every movement of his hand, each feature answers to the theme that is upon his lips, as does the lake to the lights and shadows in the sky above, his form seems to have grown majestic, and to be like that of the desert prospher, or of him who cried against Nineveh.

When he speaks of heaven, we almost believe that he has been there, when he tells of the Saviour's love and sufferings, it seems to us that he must have walked with Peter and John at His side, when he tells a story by way of illustration, as he often does, the description is so vivid that we listen breathlessly, as though we really saw the scene he paints with our bodily eyes. For two hours the



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to eat, the sturdy laborer, and the mechanic—every one drawn by the inimitable eloquence of that man who told his Master's message. These are all gathered together and many more. The audience numbers thousands. The *Sunday Magazine* gives the following vivid description of the meetings:—

"Suddenly the murmur of voices, which has been running through the vast assembly, is hushed. The drooping and countenances incline their heads a quarter of an inch forward, the fans of the actresses cease to flutter, the mass of the people make a little rush all in the same direction. Every eye is fixed on a man who is ascending slowly a green bank near at hand.

"At first sight, there is nothing very remarkable in his appearance. His figure is tall and spare, his dress is homely, when he turns towards the audience we see that he squints, and he has no special beauty of feature.

"But the moment he begins to speak his face is forgotten in his voice. How does it thrill with holy passion as he tells of his dear Lord: how does it ring with stern indignation against sin, and yet how does it melt with

side of eloquence flows on unceasingly, and still the listening crowd remains enthralled. Different signs of emotion appear among them. The daughters of the people stand with clasped hands, looking up at the preacher as though he were an angel bringing them the good tidings which are the especial birthright of the toil-worn and weary; the actresses sob and faint, the great ladies actually sit upright to listen.

"The sterner sex, too, are affected in their own way. The hard faces of the mechanics work with unvoiced feeling, the brow of Hume grows smooth; even Chesterfield, who hitherto has stood like a statue of ice of his own accosters, so far forgets himself when the preacher, in a divinely parable, is describing a blind beggar on the edge of a precipice, as to start forward and murmur, 'O save him, save him!'

"No wonder they are thus moved, for the preacher himself acts them the example. Sometimes his voice trembles so much in his intense earnestness, that he can hardly go on, sometimes he even weeps.

"At length the sermon ends in a grand wave of heaven-aspiring prayer, then the crowd disperses, some to spend the night at a masquerade or at the gaming-table, some to criticise, some to forget, some to keep the good seed silently in their hearts."

It must not be supposed for an instant that Whitfield had no faults. He had many, most prominent among which were his hastiness in judgment, and his bitter language in controversy. His married life too was unhappy.

His work was not of very long duration; at the age of fifty-six he died. He had an appointment to preach in Newbury Port, Massachusetts, in the United States, on a certain occasion. When going to it he was asked to preach at Exeter, although weary he accepted the invitation, and the service was a long one, and on his arrival at Newbury Port he was almost worn out. He was met at the house at which he was to remain, by a few of his most intimate friends in that town, and sat up with them till a late hour, even lingered on the stairs before retiring and exhorted them until the candle burned down in his hand. That night he was attacked by spasmodic asthma and before morning his voice was hushed forever. His work was done.

JUST A PICTURE.

Out from our presence within the last five minutes has gone a good friend whom we know and trust in every particular. He happened to relate this story.

He said that ten years ago he had two men in his employ, stone-cutters by trade. They were both intemperate. And one Monday as they entered the yard, he said to them, "Why do you waste yourselves so? The moment you get your Saturday wages you go and lay out everything in rum. And Sundays you lie in the gutter till the flies are so thick on your faces that no one would know you from a brute that was dead and ought to be buried out of sight!"

So ten years passed. This morning on the way to his office, he saw one of those men at a corner of Third avenue taking a bone out of a garbage-barrel and tearing it apart with his fingers that he might gnaw out the gristle in the joint; a poor, blue-eyed ruin and sot.

When he reached his desk, before he began writing, a pleasant-looking man spoke to him. "Do you remember me?" He had no difficulty in the recognition. It was the other of the two employes of years ago. He went on: "I took to heart what you said to me, and dropped liquor at once and for ever. I am now in easy circumstances, and have two thousand dollars on deposit in the Metropolitan Bank. I thank you for what you said; it was the making of me."

There within an hour of observation were the fruits of ten years' history. Will men ever learn the meaning of two such pictures as these?—*Christian Weekly*.

—The new temperance movement in New York and Brooklyn is assuming formidable proportions. The object is simply to enforce the present law against free rum, the organization embraces all law and order men, total abstinence, moderate drinkers, Christians and infidels. Its membership already approximates forty thousand, and as each member pays an annual dues of \$1 the aggregate sum promises to be adequate for a snowy campaign. The movement is extending to other cities, it ought to extend to every village and township.—*Christian Union*.

—"If I had my time to live over again," said a landlord of a public house, at the verge of death, "I would rather sweep crossings, or beg, or even starve to death, before I would again see the misery which I and my trade have produced."