

life. From such a home came forth John Knox and Calvin. From such a home came George Fox, whose father was a weaver, and Luther, whose father was a miner. And in a home of poverty John Wesley was reared. But even the Lord was born in a stable, and chose poor Galilean fishermen for his apostles. It has been wisely ordered by the providence that shaped their destiny that great spiritual captains should be nursed in wintry whirlwinds, in desolate darkness, and amid hardship and difficulty, that they might at last step forth strong and true men, capable of giving battle to the forces of evil.

And if John Wesley had had the power to anticipate Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes' advice to select excellent ancestors, he could hardly have succeeded more admirably, notwithstanding the poverty that was their lot. Wesley's father, grandfather, and great-grandfather were educated at Oxford. But to his mother more especially was he indebted for the rare qualities which he possessed. It is said that men understood Goethe's greatness when they looked on the face of his mother. Most great men have had great mothers, and Wesley's was no exception to the rule. She was a lady by birth and breeding, a beautiful and accomplished woman, the daughter of a minister who had been styled "the St. Paul of the dissenters." She was a woman of rare gifts, of strong character, and of intense piety. Adam Clark has said of her: "Such a woman, take her for all in all, I have not heard of, I have not read of, nor with her equal have I been acquainted."

In personal appearance John Wesley was small of stature and slender of frame. He measured less than five feet six inches in height, and weighed not more than 125 pounds. He had an eye which is said to have been "the brightest and most piercing that can be conceived," and a countenance that was "singularly beautiful and expressive." He was always scrupulously neat in his person and habits, and his manners were those of a scholar and a gentleman. He had a quiet dignity of manner that never forsook him. In his old age his appearance has been likened to that of an apostle. He was a man of magnetic personality, and those who were brought within his influence were strangely drawn toward him. His disposition was cheerful, and in his old age he could write: "I do not remember to have felt lowness of spirits for a quarter of an hour since I was born."

Although he lived eighty-seven years, he seems to have enjoyed health and vigor to the last.

First of all, Wesley was under all circumstances a gentleman. One who knew him well has said that he never helped poor people in the street without removing his hat to them when they thanked him.

John Wesley was a scholar. He won distinction in the University of Oxford, and the room he then occupied is still known as "Wesley's room," and the creeping vine on the wall is called "Wesley's vine." It is not every one who graduates from a university that becomes a scholar. Whitefield was educated at Oxford too, but he cannot be compared with Wesley for depth or range of knowledge. Wesley seems to have had a genius for language, and early formed the practice of conversing in Latin, and continued it to the end of his life. He compiled grammars in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and French. As an author he possessed an admirable style, and it has been said that no writer, with the exception of Addison, wrote better English. He was not without merit as a poet, but in this respect he was inferior to his brother Charles. And for that matter, who was not? He certainly might have attained fame in the republic of letters had he so desired.

"This rounded scholar might have hid
apart

In sheltering cloister, from the moil
and din

Of seething life, but it o'erleaped all
bars,

Bidding him forth to deal with com-
mon sin."

Wesley had great oratorical power. He had not the eloquence of St. Chrysostom of "the golden-mouth," neither did he have Whitefield's wonderful gift of elocution, so that he could by the very tones of his voice move an audience to tears, irrespective of the thoughts which his words conveyed. But no preacher of that century produced such an effect upon the conscience as Wesley did. Whitefield was an impassioned and dramatic orator. Charles Wesley was deeply emotional. John Wesley addressed himself to the reason of his hearers, and his appeal was irresistible. Often as he preached "God bowed the heavens and came down; the rocks were broken in pieces, and the mountains flowed down at his presence." Thousands flocked to