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SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

One hundred years ago last March the city of London witnessed such a funeral as had never perhaps been seen, either there or in any other part of the world. Other artists had been buried with magnificent state ceremonies, at which the people were mere spectators, but at the death of Sir Joshua Reynolds there was no class which did not feel keenly and demonstrate its sense of the nation's loss. "Never," Burke wrote to his son afterwards, "was a funeral attended with so much sincere concern by all sorts of people."

Fifty years before, Joshua Reynolds, the seventh of a family of eleven, had come to London to put himself under the instruction of Thomas Hudson, the leading portrait painter of the time. He had just escaped being apprenticed to an apothecary. His father was the Rev. Samuel Reynolds, at that time master of the grammar school of Plympton Earl, on the modest salary of £120 a year and a house. On the walls of this old school are yet to be seen the first evidences of his son's budding genius in the shape of some charcoal drawings. Of this father, who is now chiefly known through the fame of his son, a recent writer claims that he should have borne the title of "Duke of Plympton."

"The Chinese," he says, "from whom we can occasionally learn something, hold that if a man becomes great and distinguished, he ennobles his ancestors. They naturally hold that our view of a great man ennobling his descendant is altogether a mistake, for they say he may probably produce a fool—no uncommon occurrence, by the way, with a man of genius—but his ancestors should be distinguished for having produced him. There is no doubt whatever that there is a deal of sound common sense about this theory, and if such a custom could be introduced in England, the good, kind-hearted, generous country schoolmaster should be at once raised to the Peerage under the title I have suggested, not only as a reward for having produced a genius, but as a recognition of his knowing how to take care of and foster the genius with whom he had been blessed. It is just a hundred years since Sir Joshua Reynolds died, and yet he is held in as great esteem as ever, and we cannot help feeling grateful to his father for the way in which he took every pains to improve and encourage the genius of his son. Had he acted in harmony with the spirit of the time, and regarded painters as idle and dissolute people; had he said, 'No, I am a schoolmaster. It is a good, honest calling, and no matter what Joshua's inclinations or capabilities may be, he will

have to follow in my footsteps.' In short, had he adopted the attitude and assumed the principles of the pig-headed parent of the period, his son might have died an unsuccessful schoolmaster at Plympton, and the great and famous pictures with which he subsequently delighted the world would have been unpainted."

At the time young Reynolds was drawing his charcoal pictures on the school-room walls, he did not apparently give as

A few months later the arrangements were made and towards the close of 1740 the young painter took up his lodgings with Thomas Hudson in Great Queen street.

His stay there, however, was not long. Ostensibly, because of some trifling disobedience of orders, but really, as many are inclined to think, because of jealousy on the part of his master, he was discharged. He went back home to Devonshire and at once set to work to earn his livelihood by

devoting himself to landscape work, painting portraits when he could get sitters and making a home for his mother and sisters.

Later, through his friendship with Commodore Keppel, he visited Portugal, Spain and Italy, spending two years at Rome. Years before his first instructor, Jonathan Richardson, had predicted that there were qualities in Englishmen which would shed some day astonish the world, and Reynolds returned from abroad determined, as far as in him lay, to fulfil this prediction.

In 1753 Reynolds settled permanently in London. A few years later, he removed to Leicester square, then Leicester fields, the artists' centre, made famous by Hogarth, Wilson and Gainsborough. The room there in which he painted is now used as an auction room.

His industry is described as remarkable. In each year between 1755 and 1760 he is said to have painted from 120 to 150 pictures in each year, and for over twenty years afterwards there is no reason to believe that his industry was any less. "Yet scarcely a single work," says another writer, "which belongs to this period, shows the sign of slovenliness or haste. He managed to seize with unerring eye, and to transcribe with unfaltering hand, the distinctive grace of each sitter—man, woman, or child; he touched with grace each fleeting fashion, and by his art gave it permanency. The warrior, the statesman, and the scholar are depicted with that touch of genius which makes them live before our eyes, and at this distance of time enables us to understand their characteristics better than half the biographies of which they have been the subjects. His women are marked by a grace and a distinction which had been hitherto unperceived by the school of Lely and Kneller, as seen in the numerous portraits of the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire, the Ladies Waldegrave, Lady Charlotte Spencer, and the "beautiful Gunnings," to name only a few of his masterpieces. It is, however, alone in his children that Reynolds appeals most widely, and, perhaps, even most permanently, to his fellow countrymen—"Simplicity," "The Age of Innocence," "Penelope Boothby," "Lesbia," "Miss Pelham feeding Chickens," the "Strawberry Girl," are as familiar in our mouths as household words. Their simple charms never fail, their beauties are ever fresh, and we turn to them with national pride, not only as the works of our greatest artist, but as true types of English child-life. It is here that Reynolds' claim to permanent fame is to be found. Living in an age of low ideals, of half-formed tastes, and of slightly var-



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strong promise of his future genius' as others have done. His pictures were at least considered by the family as far less promising than those of his elder brothers and sisters, but that was before he was twelve years old. After that he was not long in distancing his older competitors. Whatever his execution then, the right spirit was in the lad. On being consulted by his father concerning his being apprenticed to an apothecary, he said "he would rather be an apothecary than an ordinary painter, but if he could be bound to an eminent master he would choose the latter."

painting portraits, but before long he returned to London. By 1746, he had painted a portrait of Captain Hamilton, the father of the Marquis of Abercorn, which work brought him first into notice. His next work was a portrait group of Captain Hamilton, carrying on his back one of the children of the first Lord Eliot. So striking a departure was this from the usual stiff and constrained style of Hudson that it at once brought him into public notice.

He was soon again called back to Devonshire by the death of his father and for the next few years he remained there

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