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PREACHING ON HIS FATHER'S GRAVE.

One day, before the time of railroads and telegraph wires, a traveller, mounted on horseback, pulled up at the inn of an English village. A man of noble countenance, tall and slender, and wearing a long, black gown. He held the reins a moment before dismounting and looked long at the old brick church, with the ivy clinging to its windows, and and at the rectory, too. For the man was John Wesley; and the village was the village of Epworth.

He had lived in that rectory when a boy; his father's ashes were lying among the green mounds around that old church. Next day was Sunday, and John Wesley wanted to preach in that church where his father used to preach. But the curate of the church said he could not preach there. For Wesley was well known as a great preacher, who travelled up and down the country, preaching to great crowds in the streets and fields and everywhere. Wesley believed in rousing the people to give up their lives of sin, and many of the ministers at that time believed that it was enough if they just observed the forms of a religious service and went to the English Church.

But Wesley decided, if they would not let him preach inside the church, that he would preach outside. So when the service was over that morning, a friend of his stood at the church door and told the people that Wesley would preach in the grave-yard that afternoon. When he came to preach he found that nearly all the people in Epworth had come out to hear him. It was

the largest congregation ever seen there, and Wesley stood up on his father's tomb, that all the people might hear, as he talked of the salvation that Jesus had brought to men. Many of the people were so touched that they were won for Christ, and through all the next week John Wes-



JOHN WESLEY PREACHING ON HIS FATHER'S GRAVE.

ley preached every day on his father's grave. Very soon societies of Methodists were formed throughout the neighbourhood, and the people no longer had to worship according to the forms of the Anglican Church.

WESLEY'S CHILDHOOD.

John Wesley's early childhood was spent amid the atmosphere of the quiet village of Epworth. The Wesley home was one where religion reigned, where high culture shed its refining influences, where intelligent common-sense guided day after day, where mutual helpfulness was inculcated, and where mutual happiness was the constant aim.

The example of a scholarly father was ever before the children, and the influence of a cultured mother was always felt; but above all was a spirituality that never waned. Such an atmosphere was favourable to scholarship and religion, and it is not surprising that out of that home came great scholars and great Christians.

The father was a greater force than sometimes has been supposed, but it was the mother who exerted the greatest influence upon the children in early life. She was their first and best teacher. A marvellous teacher she must have been, as may be seen from the fact that in a single lesson on the fifth birthday of the child, she enabled each child, except one, to master the entire alphabet.

Children with such beginnings are likely to do well, and it was in such an atmosphere, with such examples and with such training, that John Wesley spent his first ten years and a little more.

Probably John received special attention, for two years after he had been rescued from a fiery death his mother wrote in the book in which she recorded her private meditations: "I do intend to be more particularly careful of the soul of this child, that thou hast so