

the Committee to which the petitions against some of the Clergy were referred. Unless there is some mistake, the Wesleys are descended from both these John Whites. In the "Complete History of the most Remarkable Providences," printed by John Dunton, 1697, chap. cxlvii., p. 157, this statement may be found: "The following epitaph was written on the tomb-stone of John White, Esq., Member of the House of Commons, 1640; and father to Dr. Annesley's wife, lately deceased:—

*Here lies a John, a burning shining light,
Whose name, life, actions, all alike were WHITE.*

From these names it is not too much to infer the reputation and worth of the young Vicar of Whitechurch; but the time speedily came when they could be of no advantage to him. Some four months after Mr. Westley obtained this vicarage, Cromwell fell; and in consequence of the changes that ensued, Mr. Westley never obtained his promised augmentation, and he was obliged to set up a school for the support of his family. His friends, whatever their previous ability, were rapidly becoming powerless. Dr. Fuller might possibly have served his niece and her husband; but in 1661 death took him away. When Dr. Calamy wrote, and described Mrs. Westley as the niece of Dr. Fuller, the latter was in high repute. But the name of John White and Dr. Burgess had sunk; thick dark clouds had obscured their worth; and to have spoken of John Westley as the son of John White, and the nephew of Dr. Burgess would have been no honour. We learn, in fact, that he was among the early sufferers, and that by an order of the Privy Council, dated July 24th, 1661, he was ordered to be discharged, on taking the oath of supremacy and allegiance. Very likely his imprisonment had been for some time, as more than twelve months had elapsed since the Restoration, to the order above noticed. To this Mr. Westley no doubt refers, in his conference with the Bishop of Bristol, who told him that by the oath of these agents he had been reported as a suspicious and dangerous person. With as much conscious integrity as dignity, he replied, "If it be enough to accuse, who then shall be innocent? There were no oaths given or taken; the matters laid against me are either invented or mistaken, and gentlemen, by others misinformed, proceeded with heat against me. Whatever imprudencies I have committed in matters civil, I have suffered for them." The Bishop assured him, that he would not meddle with him, and with "Farewell, good Mr. Westley," the conference was kindly concluded. There is no evidence that this Prelate ever regarded him in any other aspect, than "good Mr. Westley." How rapid and strange are the changes and events of life! About 1661, the Vicar of Whitechurch stood before Bishop Ironside as an accused person, and was treated with Christian courtesy. The Ironsides were a Dorset family; and the writer well remembers, when first stationed in Weymouth, his having visited a collateral branch, if not a direct descendant from the Bishop of Bristol, to take to her some small means of comfort from the people raised up by the grandson of the very person who stood reproached before her dignified

relative. So strangely do the circumstances of families change in a century and a half!

But though unmolested by the Bishop, there were other persons of figure in the neighbourhood, as the Tregonnells, Freke, &c., whose residence was within some two or three miles of Whitechurch, who were too much Mr. Westley's enemies to permit him quietly to continue in his parish, till ejected by the Act of Uniformity. Reference has been already made to his first imprisonment and discharge. In the beginning of 1662 he was again seized, one Lord's day morning, as he was leaving the church, taken immediately to Blandford, and committed to prison. But after he had been some time confined Sir Gerard Napper, who, as Dr. Calamy reports, was the most furious of all his enemies, and the most forward in committing him, broke his collar-bone, and was so softened by this sad disaster, that he sent to some persons to bail Mr. Westley, and told them that if they would not, he would do it himself. Thus he was set at liberty, but bound to appear at the assizes, where he was treated much better than he expected. In his diary he has recorded the mercy of God to him in these events: in rising up several friends to *open him*, in inclining a Solicitor to undertake his cause, in restraining the wrath of man; so that even the Judge, though a very choleric man, spake not an angry word.

The time had now arrived when the tide that had so strongly set in, began to carry before it whatever bore the hateful name of Puritanism. The Act of Uniformity was framed and passed, received the royal assent, May 1662, and was to be put in execution the 24th of the following August. By this Act, those that would not submit to the re-ordination, perjure themselves by violating oaths which they had most solemnly taken, consent to political opinions which they had abjured, and swear that the Book of Common Prayer contains nothing contrary to the word of God:—all that could not conscientiously meet these demands, without any fears to fall back on, as the sequestered Clergy had, were to be cast with their families, on the mercy of divine Providence and the world. Bartholomew-day was chosen, because then the tithes of the year became due; so that not only ejection, but immediate want as well, tested the principles of many among these most excellent men.

Mr. Westley on the 17th of August, 1662, delivered his farewell sermon at Whitechurch, from Acts xx. 32, to a weeping auditory; and in the church his voice was heard no more. Oct. 26th, the place was by an apparitor declared vacant, and an order was given to sequester the profits: but his people had given him all these. On the 22d of the following February he sought an abode for himself and family at Weymouth, where he was well known, and in other days had been deservedly honoured. But the hand of oppression followed him: he was refused a place of rest; and as a person unworthy a home therein, he was driven from town, and sought shelter as it could be found at Bridgewater, Ilminster, and Taunton. His case was greatly commiserated; and the God of the