

ed by influential rivals, he was returned by a large majority. When Mr. W. came to London to attend to his public duties as a member of parliament, he was immediately brought into contact with associates of a different kind from those he had met in his native town. At the clubs which he frequented, he met with persons of high standing in the senate; influenced by their example, he often joined in the pernicious practice of gaming, and his journal records more than once the loss of £100. He was led however, to forsake this dangerous path, not by these losses though they were not small, but by gaining, on one occasion from persons who were only heirs to future fortunes, the sum of £600, and who of course had a difficulty in raising it.

In May, 1784, Mr. Wilberforce was returned a member for the county of York, an honour which he continued to hold for nearly thirty years. He became the friend and associate of Mr. Pitt, and seems to have implicitly followed his political views. It was in October of the same year that he visited the continent, taking as his travelling companion Isaac Milner, brother to the historian. Mr. M. was a man of excellent principles and talents, and to him belongs the credit of having prepossessed Mr. W.'s mind in favour of the old ways of Whitfield, taught him by his aunt, and which he appears to have forsaken. He recommended Dr. Doddridge's *Rise and Progress of Religion*, and the two travellers read it together in the course of their tour.—They read also the Greek Testament, and examined carefully the doctrines which it taught. He began to keep a private journal of his spiritual frames, and in it we find such entries as the following:—"Mrs. Crew," he says, "cannot believe that I think it wrong to go to the play.—(She was) surprised at hearing that halting on the Sunday was my wish and not my mother's."—"Began three or four days ago to get up very early.—In the solitude and self-conviction of the morning, had thoughts which I trust will come to something."

In December of the following year, he wrote a letter to the well-known Mr. Newton respecting the change in his views, and soliciting an interview, which was readily granted—and on coming away, Mr. W. writes that he found his mind "more humbled and looking more devoutly up to God." After this, on his return to the House of Commons in the spring of 1786, he ceased to act as a partizan with Mr. Pitt, though he adds, that he "was surprised to find how generally we agreed." That great

measure which is associated with the name of Mr. Wilberforce, we mean the abolition of the slave trade, now began to occupy his attention. It was a shocking traffic, if indeed we may speak of it in the past tense, seeing it is still carried on to a great extent by foreign vessels; it affixed a stain on the otherwise generous character of British seamen—ships bearing British colors, and ploughing the seas under the sanction of our righteous laws, anchored along the shores of Africa, and receiving into their sub-marine dungeons hundreds and thousands of men, women and children, carried them across the atlantic, there to be used as beasts of burden in the service of West Indian planters,—very many embarked, but few landed, death closed their eyes before the Western sun shewed them their degradation—and of those who did land, it was to drag out a life of misery. It pleased the Lord in his mercy to raise up a standard in behalf of Africa, and when he works who can let it. Divers individuals have claimed the honor of originating those measures which received their consummation in the abolition of the slave trade.—Indeed, so tenacious is man of personal distinction, that even when a victory has been achieved, sufficient in its consequences to gratify the hearts of every lover of humanity, men begin to quarrel about their several shares in the honor of the measure. Accordingly we find the sons of Mr. W. claiming for their father the honor of having first cogitated the question of abolition in private, as well as introduced it to parliament. It appears, however, to say the least, equally certain that others have fully as good a title to claim the honor of priority in devising the abolition measure as Mr. Wilberforce.—Mr. Clarkson, while a boy at college, had his mind strongly turned to the wickedness of the slave trade, when writing a theme which treated of the wrongs of Africa, and that eminent man when he grew up, shewed the strength of his feelings in visiting all the ports of Britain, from whence slave ships sailed, to collect information tending to establish both its guilt and inexpediency. Lady Middleton too appears to have conceived the purpose of the entire abolition of the slave trade some considerable time before Mr. W. could have hazarded the thought of such a measure. Lady M. had received many details, while residing with her husband, Sir Charles, in Kent, of the frightful evils of slavery and the slave trade, from a gentleman, Mr. Ramsay, who had resided in the West Indies. Lady M. rightly judged that if all these