

*THE BOOTBLACK, AND WHAT HE BECAME.*

MORE than a hundred years ago there lived in the city of Oxford a boy whose name was George. He was very poor, so much so that he was compelled to clean the boots of the students at the University to obtain money with which to buy the necessaries of life. His countenance was one of no ordinary appearance. His eye was keen and piercing, his forehead noble and lofty, and every feature of his face was perfectly developed. By his easy and polite manners, his obliging disposition, and his warm and generous nature, he soon won the confidence and esteem of those upon whom he waited. The poverty of clothing served better to show the richness of the mind, which needed only cultivation to make it one of the brightest in the whole country. The students of the University seeing such noble qualities in the lowly and the humble bootblack, determined to educate him, and many of them devoted no little share of their time to that purpose. They found him ready, willing and studious. He lost not a moment of his precious time, but applied himself diligently, perseveringly, to his studies, and soon became equal, if not superior, to some of his instructors.

His advance in merit was very rapid; so great was it, that numbers were unable to recognize in the gifted and talented young man the once poor and needy bootblack. About this time there was a great change in the religion of England. There arose a sect which were strict observers of the Sabbath; faithful readers of God's Word, and who had stated engagements in prayer. With this party George immediately connected himself, and soon became one of the ablest and most consistent members. The youths who once sought his company now treated him with sneering contempt.

Those who once considered him a young man of extraordinary abilities then considered him a reckless fanatic, and avoided his society as they would have done a poor drunkard. All this did not move him. He was as firm as a rock. Nothing could change him. Like Moses, he preferred a life of Christian consistency to the enjoyment of sin for a season. His unchanging conduct won for him many warm and ardent admirers, and numbers who formerly branded him as a fanatic became his best friends. I have not the time, children, to say more concerning the character of this interesting young man. It will be sufficient to add that he soon became one of the most pious and talented preachers in England,