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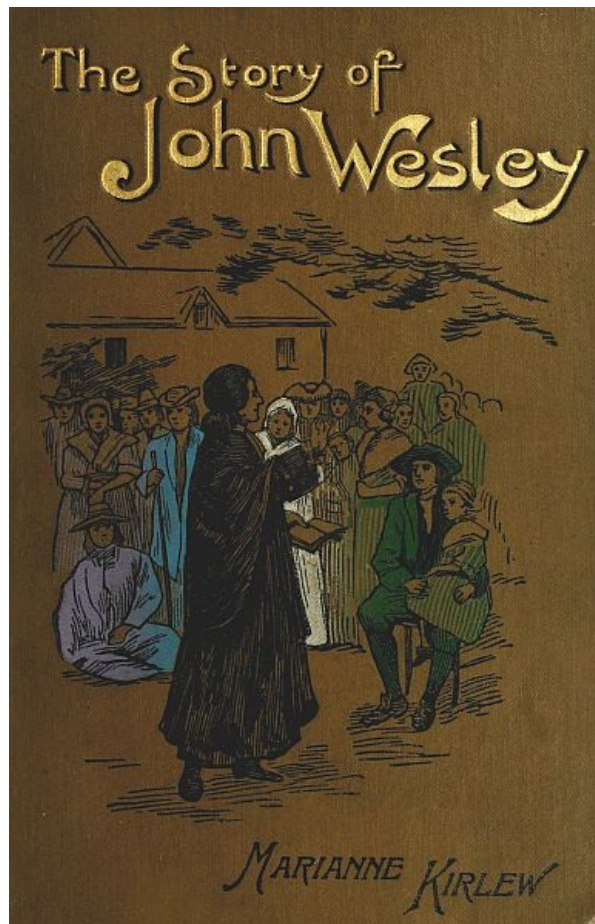
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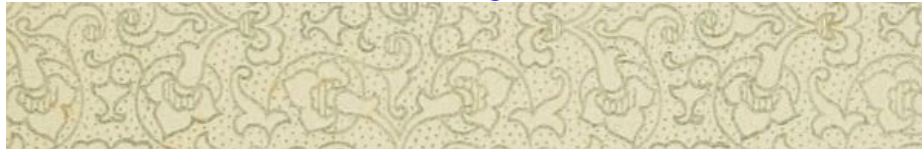
*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE STORY OF JOHN WESLEY, TOLD TO BOYS AND GIRLS ***





Frontispiece.

"'You seem half starved, dear,' he said."—[Page 33.](#)



**THE STORY OF
JOHN WESLEY.**

Told to Boys and Girls.

BY

MARIANNE KIRLEW,

Author of "The Red Thread of Honour," etc., etc.

WITH PREFACE BY REV. DINSDALE T. YOUNG.



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Presented to
 Calvert Haigh,
 for regular attendance
 during the year 1905.
 John P. Brown,
 Superintendent

TO THE SACRED MEMORY

[iv]

OF THE

Dear Mother,

WHO BY PRECEPT AND EXAMPLE

SOUGHT TO BRING UP HER CHILDREN

IN "THE NURTURE AND ADMONITION OF THE LORD";

THIS BOOK IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED

BY HER DAUGHTER.

— — —
"That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace."—PSALM CXLIV. 12.

PREFACE.

[v]

THE Story of John Wesley is one of which the world does not easily weary. There is perennial freshness in it. "Age cannot wither it." We may indeed almost affirm that it has an "infinite variety."

It is specially important that this remarkable history should be re-told for young people. The youth of England ought to be fully conversant with John Wesley's unique personality and immortal work.

John Wesley's name is far above mere denominationalism. He belongs to all the churches, for he belongs to the "Holy Catholic Church." He is a great national and historic figure. It has ever been claimed by some, whose authority is high, that John Wesley was the saviour of modern England. Surely there is large truth in this. The great religious leader was indeed one of the most potent political forces England has known. If there be even an approximation towards fact in such a claim, then how important for young England to know the record of a man so supremely distinguished.

Certainly, on any ground, these pages meet a distinct want; and I think it will be the judgment of readers, that they meet it admirably well. Here John Wesley's life is traced clearly, even to the point of vividness. The style in which the story is told, will be found to add to the intrinsic interest of the recital.

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The author of this life of Wesley is thoroughly imbued with the spirit of her subject, nor does she forget to apply the lessons, with which this wonderful life-story is crowded.

If the *children* of our land could be fired with enthusiasm for the truths John Wesley taught and lived, what a blessed outlook would there be for England!

We earnestly pray, that many a young reader may be stirred to the very depths of his being, by the narration here so attractively given. "'Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished."

DINSDALE T. YOUNG.

*Manchester,
June, 1895.*

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[1]



THE STORY OF JOHN WESLEY.

CHAPTER I.

Jacky.—His brothers and sisters.—His cottage home.—What happened to the little pet-dog.—How Jacky's father forgave the wicked men of Epworth.—"Fire! Fire!"

LONG, long ago, more than one hundred and fifty years, lived the hero of this book. Because his name was John, everybody called him Jack or Jacky; and by everybody I mean his dear, good father and mother, and his eighteen brothers and sisters. Eighteen, did I say? Yes, indeed, they counted eighteen; and seeing there were so many, I will not trouble you with all their names. I will just tell you three. Samuel was the eldest, he was the "big brother"; Jacky was number fifteen, and Kitty and Charlie came after him.

But Jacky did not mind all this houseful, I think he rather liked it, for you see he always had plenty of playmates. His home was in a country village called Epworth, in Lincolnshire. If you look on your map I think you will find it. The house was like a big cottage; the roof had no slates on like ours, but was thatched with straw, the same as some of the cottages you have seen in the country; and the windows had tiny panes of glass, diamond-shaped, and they opened like little doors. The walls of the cottage were covered with pretty climbing plants, and what was best of all, there was a beautiful big garden where apple and pear trees grew, and where there was lots of room for Jacky and Charlie and the others to run about and play "hide and seek."

[2]

But I must tell you that a great many wicked people lived at Epworth, and Jack's father, who was a minister, tried to teach them how wrong it was to steal and fight, and do so many cruel things. But his preaching only made them very angry with good Mr. Wesley, and one of the men, out of spite, cut off the legs of his little pet-dog. Was not that a dreadfully cruel thing to do?

But Jack's father, because he loved Jesus so much, loved these wicked men, and always forgave them. He knew if he could get *them* to love Jesus, they would soon stop being cruel and unkind.

One night in winter, when everybody was fast asleep, Kitty woke up feeling something very hot on her feet. Opening her eyes she was dreadfully frightened to see the bedroom ceiling all on fire. She was only a very little girl, but she jumped out of bed, and ran to the room where her mother and two of her sisters were sleeping. Her father, who was in another room, hearing a great noise outside, and people calling "Fire! Fire!" jumped up and found it was his own house that was in flames. Telling the elder girls to be quick and get dressed and to help their mother, who was very ill, he ran to the nursery, and burst open the door. "Nurse, nurse!" he shouted, "be quick and get the children up, the house is on fire."

[3]

Snatching up baby Charles in her arms, and calling to the other children to follow her, the nurse hurried down-stairs. But there they found the hall full of flames and smoke, and to get out of the front-door was impossible. So some of the children got through the windows and some through the back-door into the garden.

Just as the minister thought he had all his family safe, he heard a cry coming from the nursery, and on looking round, he found Jacky was missing. He rushed into the burning house, and tried to get up the stairs, but they were all on fire. What should he do? He didn't know. So he just knelt down in the hall surrounded by the dreadful flames, and asked God to take care of little Jack, and if he couldn't be saved to take him to heaven.

Now I must tell you how it was Jack was still in the burning house. He had been fast asleep when the nurse called, and did not hear her and the other children go out of the room. All at once he woke up, and seeing a bright light in the room, thought it was morning. "Nursie, nursie!" he called, "take me up; I want to get up." Of course there was no answer. Then he put his head out of the curtains which surrounded his little bed, and saw streaks of fire on the top of the room. Oh, how frightened he was!

[4]

Jacky was only five years old, but he was a brave boy, and instead of lying still and screaming and crying, he jumped up and ran to the door in his night-gown. But the floor and the stairs were

all on fire. What should he do? He ran back again into the room, and climbed on a big box that stood near the window. Then some one in the yard saw him and shouted: "Fetch a ladder, quick! I see him."

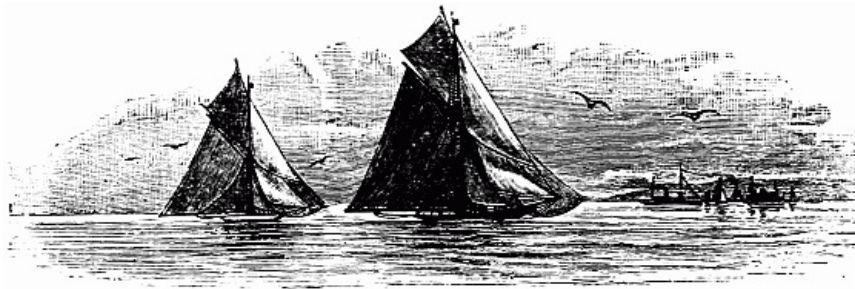
"There's no time," called out somebody else; "the roof is falling in. Look here!" said the same man, "I'll stand against this wall, and let a man that's not very heavy stand on my shoulders, and then we can reach the child."

So the strong man fixed himself against the wall, and another man climbed on his shoulders, and Jacky put out his arms as far as he could, and the man lifted him out of the burning room, and he was safe. Two minutes afterwards the roof fell in with a big crash.

Jack was carried into a neighbour's house, and they all knelt down while the minister thanked God for taking care of them, and so wonderfully preserving all their lives. [5]

Jack never forgot that terrible night, and all his life afterwards he felt that God had saved him from being burnt to death, in order that he might do a great deal of work for Him.

You will not be surprised to hear, that it was the wicked people in Epworth who had set the minister's house on fire. But as Jesus forgave His enemies, so Mr. Wesley forgave these men, and tried more than ever to show them how much Christ loved them.



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CHAPTER II.

Jacky learns his A B C.—A wise mother.—Christ's little soldier.—A chatterbox.—The big brother and the little one.—Jacky poorly.—The bravest of the brave.—A proud father.



ACK'S father and mother were not rich people, and they could not afford to send all their children to school, so Mrs. Wesley taught them at home, and as there were so many of them it was almost like a proper school. When Jacky was five years old, he became a little scholar. The first day he learnt his alphabet, and in three months could read quite nicely.

Mrs. Wesley was a dear, kind mother, and took a great deal of trouble, and often put herself to much pain to train her little boys to be Christian gentlemen, and her little girls to be Christian ladies. As soon as they could speak, they were taught to say their prayers every night and morning, and to keep the Sabbath day holy. They were never allowed to have anything they cried for, and they were always taught to speak kindly and politely to the servants. Bad words were never heard among them, and no loud talking or rough play was allowed. This wise mother also knew that little people are sometimes tempted to tell untruths to hide a fault for fear of punishment, so she made it a rule that if any of the children did what was naughty, and at once confessed and promised not to do it again, they should not be whipped. [7]

One of the little boys—I'm afraid it was Jacky—did not always follow this rule, and so he sometimes got what he did not like. But Mrs. Wesley never allowed her children to taunt one another with a fault, especially when they were trying to do better.

Another thing the children were taught, was to respect the rights of property; that is, if Jacky wanted Charlie's top, he was not to take it without Charlie's leave; and if Emily wanted Sukey's brooch, she must ask her sister's permission before taking it.

"Oh, how dreadfully strict!" I fancy I hear some of my readers say. Not at all, dears, it was a

mother's kindness to her children; for it took far more time, and a great deal more trouble to teach them all these things than it would have done to let them do as they liked. And when Emily and Mollie and Jack and Charlie and all the others grew up to be men and women, they thanked God for giving them such a wise mother.

[8]

Once a week Mrs. Wesley used to take each of the children into her room, separately, for a quiet little talk. They each had their own day for having mother *all to themselves*. Jack had every Thursday, and Saturday was Charlie's day. So helpful were these little talks with mother, that years afterwards when Jack had left home, he wrote and asked his mother if she would spare the same time every Thursday to pray for him.

Before Jacky was eight years old he loved Jesus so much that he wanted every one to know he meant to be one of His faithful soldiers. So he asked his father if he might go to the communion, which, you know, is doing what Christ asked all His followers to do, taking bread and drinking wine "*in remembrance of Him*." Though Jack was such a little boy, his father knew, by his conduct, that he meant what he said, and so he admitted him to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. I wish all my young readers could say, as Jacky could:—

"I am a little soldier,
I'm only eight years old,
I mean to fight for Jesus
And wear a crown of gold.
I know He'll make me happy,
And help me every day,
I'll be His little soldier,
The Bible says I may."

Mrs. Wesley used to have services in her big kitchen on a Sunday night, for the servants, and the poor people who could not walk all the long way to church; and little Jack used to sit and listen so attentively, while his mother told the people how God's Son was put to death on the cruel cross, to save them from sin, and to gain for them a place in heaven.

[9]

Jack, like many another little boy, had rather a long tongue, indeed, he was a regular chatterbox. His big brother Sam did not always like Jack putting his word in, and giving his opinion; he would put him down and say: "Child, don't talk so much, when you're older you'll find that nothing much is done in the world by arguing." His father used to stand up for Jack, and would say: "There's one thing, our Jack will never do anything without giving a good reason for doing it, I know."

You will be sorry to hear that Jacky had a dreadful illness when he was nine years old. It was a disease that causes a great deal of pain and suffering. But Jack remembered that a soldier must be brave, and, as Christ's little soldier, he must be the bravest of the brave. So Jacky was very patient, and gave his nurse as little trouble as he could. His mother wrote to Mr. Wesley, who was in London at the time, and said, "Jack has borne his illness bravely, like a man, and like a little Christian, he has never uttered a word of complaint;" and the father, as he folded the letter and put it into his pocket, felt proud of his little son.



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CHAPTER III.

Jacky at boarding school.—Bullying.—Hard lines.—A morning run.—A Christ-like schoolboy.—Charlie at Westminster.—Scotch Jamie.—"Bravo, Captain Charlie!"



BY and by Jack grew to be a big boy of eleven, and all this time he had only been at the home-school. His parents thought he was now quite old enough to go to a proper boys' school, and through the kindness of a friend, he was sent to a big school in London called the Charterhouse.

Here poor Jacky had a very unhappy time for two or three years. The big boys took a delight in bullying the little ones, especially the new-comers; and as Jack had never been from home before, their unkindness was hard to bear. Every meal-time each boy had to go to the cook's house for his allowance of food, and the big boys used to lay wait for the little ones as they came out, and snatch away their meat; so for a long time Jack had nothing but bread to eat at every meal.

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Those of my readers who know what boarding-school life is to-day, will think this a very funny

way of getting your food; and so it was, but, you must remember, this was in 1714, one hundred and eighty years ago, and every thing then was very different to what it is now.

Before Jack went to the Charterhouse, his father had said to him: "Jack, I should like you to run round the school garden every morning before breakfast, it will give you an appetite and help to make you grow up a strong man." And all the long years Jack was at school he never failed to obey his father's wish; and, when he grew up, he said this morning run had helped to make him the healthy, strong man he had always been. But, poor little fellow, it was very hard for him, when, feeling dreadfully hungry with the fresh air and exercise, the big boys ran off with his meat, and left him with only some bread for his breakfast.

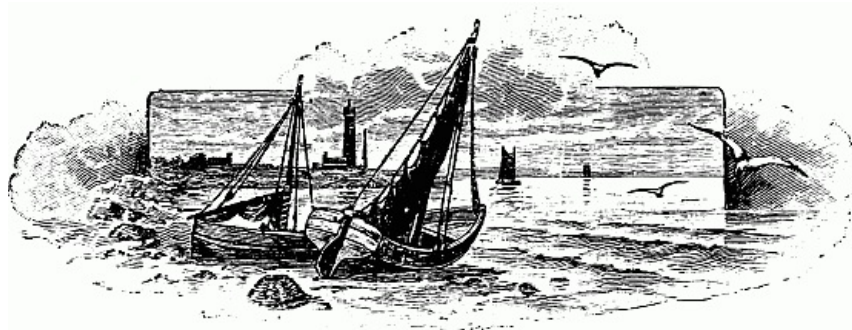
However, by and by, Jack grew old enough to fight for his meat. And when this time came, do you think he took his turn at stealing from the little boys, and bullying them? Of course you will all say: "No, indeed, Jack would never be so mean." You are right; instead of treating others as others had treated him, he just did what he thought Jesus would have done when he was a boy at school. He stood up for the little fellows, and fought the big boys who tried to steal their meat. [12]

Jack was so quiet and diligent at school, and so careful to obey rules, that he soon became a favourite with the head-master, Dr. Walker; and when he grew to be a man, he forgot all about the hard times he had had, and never failed to visit the Charterhouse once a year.

When Jack had been two years at this school, his brother Charlie was sent to a school at Westminster, where his elder brother Samuel was a teacher. Charlie was then a bright little boy of nine; he was strong, full of spirit and fun, and afraid of nothing. He became a great favourite, and was soon looked upon as the "captain" of the school. Charlie was as generous as he was brave; his great dream was to be a good man, and to help others to be good too.

There was a little Scotch laddie at the school whom all the other boys used to tease and mock. The captain wouldn't stand this; he took Jamie under his special protection, shielded him, fought for him, and saved him from what would otherwise have been a life of misery.

I fancy I hear you all say: "Bravo, Captain Charlie!"



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CHAPTER IV.

Jack at Westminster.—At Oxford.—Life at College.—Jack a deserter.—His good angel.—"He that goes a borrowing, goes a sorrowing."—A bitter disappointment.—A letter from "Mother."—Jack's decision.—Father's advice.

WHEN Jack was sixteen he left the Charterhouse School, and joined Charlie at Westminster. Here too he was so diligent and persevering, that when his brother Samuel wrote home to his father, he said: "Jack is a brave boy, and learning Hebrew as fast as he can." The next year he went to Oxford, where he got on splendidly. He was very witty and lively, and still *very fond of talking*; but his was not foolish talk, and he always took care to stand up for the right.

At first he was much shocked at the drinking and gambling, and wickedness of all sorts that went on among the students at the university. But when day after day we witness wrong-doing, gradually we get less and less shocked, and after a time think little about it. This only happens though when we get down from our watch-tower, and the enemy has a chance to get near to us. Jack's temptations to join his fellow students were very great, and I am sorry to say, he got "off his guard," and yielded. For a time he quite disgraced the colours of his regiment, and became a deserter from Christ's army. But it was not for long, he remembered what he had learnt at home, and how his dear mother had prayed for him. He remembered how he had been saved from the [14]

burning house, and he felt sure that God had not spared his life for him to grow up a wicked or a worldly man.

He had found it hard work to be a Christian at the Charterhouse School, now he found it harder still at Christ Church College. He loved fun and merry company, and this sometimes led him to seek the society of young men who loved their own pleasure better than any thing else; and many times Jack, following their bad example, did things for which he was afterwards very sorry and very much ashamed.

I have somewhere read this line of poetry:

"The boy that loves his mother
Is every inch a man,"

and if ever boy loved his mother, Jack did. The memory of her loving, holy life was Jack's good angel; and when temptations proved almost too strong for him at Oxford, he wrote and asked her to pray for him, and to pray on every Thursday. For Thursday had been Jacky's day with mother, ever since a little boy he knelt at her knee; and he felt that his mother's prayers on *that* day could not fail to bring down God's blessing upon him, and give him strength to resist the many evil influences that surrounded his college life—and they did. [15]

I told you before, I think, that Jack's parents were not rich; they had never been able to allow him much pocket-money, and now at Oxford, when his expenses were greater, he somehow could never manage to make his money last out. I am afraid he was not always as careful as he might have been, and I am sorry to say when he was spent up—which was very often—he did what so many boys and young fellows do, borrowed money. This is always foolish, for, of course, it cannot make things any better, and indeed only makes them worse; because when the allowance comes, the debts have to be paid, and there is little or no money left. However, neither debt nor being short of money troubled Jack at this time; indeed he said it was just as well to be poor, for there were so many rogues at Oxford, that if you carried anything worth stealing, it was not safe to be out at night.

One of his friends was once standing at the door of a coffee-house about seven o'clock in the evening, and happening to look round, in an instant his hat and his wig—they wore wigs in those days—were snatched off his head by a thief, who managed to get clear off with his booty. Jack writing home about this said: "I am safe from these rogues, for all my belongings would not be worth their stealing." [16]

When Jack had been four years at Oxford, and was about twenty-one, his brother Samuel wrote to tell him he had had the misfortune to break his leg. He also told him his mother was coming to London, and if he liked he might go and meet her there.

It was a long, long time since Jack had seen his mother, and you may imagine his delight when he got this letter. He wrote back:

"DEAR BROTHER SAMUEL,

"I am sorry for your misfortune, though glad to hear you are getting better. Have you heard of the Dutch sailor who having broken one of his legs by a fall from the mast, thanked God that he had not broken his neck? I expect you are feeling thankful that you did not break both legs.

"I cried for joy at the last part of your letter. The two things I most wished for of almost anything in the world were to see my mother and Westminster again. But I have been so often disappointed when I have set my heart on some great pleasure, that I will never again be sure of anything before it comes.

"Your affectionate brother,
"JACK."

Poor Jack! it was well he did not anticipate this treat too much, for when the time came he hadn't enough money to take him to London, and as he was already in debt he could not borrow any more. It was a bitter disappointment; but when his mother got back home again after her visit to London, she wrote one of her bright, loving, encouraging letters, which did something towards comforting the heart of this "mother's boy." This was the letter: [17]

"DEAR JACK,

"I am uneasy because I have not heard from you. Don't just write letter for letter, but let me hear from you often, and tell me if you are well, and how much you are still in debt.

"Dear Jack, don't be discouraged; do your duty; keep close to your studies, and hope for better days. Perhaps we may be able to send you a few pounds before the end of the year.

"Dear Jacky, I pray Almighty God to bless thee!

"Your mother,
"SUSANNA WESLEY."

When boys get to be fourteen or sixteen, they begin to think and wonder what they will be when they are men. Very little boys generally mean to be either cab-drivers or engine-drivers; and I did hear of one who meant to have a wild beast show when he grew up. Jack reached the age of twenty-one, and had not decided what he would be.

At last the time came when he must make up his mind. After thinking about it very seriously, he thought he would like to be a minister like his father. So he wrote home and told them his decision.

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His father who had been ill and was unable to use his right hand properly, wrote to him that he must be quite sure that God had called him to this work before he undertook it. "At present," he said, "I think you are too young." Then, referring to his illness, he said: "You see that time has shaken me by the hand; and death is but a little behind him. My eyes and heart are almost all I have left, and I bless God for them."

Mrs. Wesley was very glad when she heard that her boy wished to be a minister. "God Almighty direct and bless you," she wrote to him.

A few months afterwards, Jack's father wrote, and told him that he had changed his mind about his being too young, and that he would like him to "take Orders," that is, to become a minister, the following summer. "But in the first place," he said, "if you love yourself or me, pray very earnestly about it."

To choose to be Christ's minister, a preacher of the gospel, Mr. Wesley knew was a very solemn and responsible choice, and he wished Jack to think very seriously, and to pray very earnestly before he took the important step.



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CHAPTER V.

Books.—Two books that left impressions on Jack.—Must a Christian boy be miserable?—Jack says "No."—So says Jack's mother.—Father gives his opinion.—"The Enchanted Rocks;" a fairy story.



WONDER if any of my readers ever think what the books they read are doing for them, especially the books they are most fond of? Do you know every book you read makes *you* a little bit different? By *you*, I mean the unseen part of you, your mind and character.

I remember, when I was somewhere about the mischievous age of eight or nine, how fond I used to be of getting to the putty round a newly-put-in window pane. It was lovely to press my thimble on it, and see all the pretty little holes it left; or to push a naughty finger deep down into the nice soft stuff. Then, when the putty had dried hard, I used to look with great interest on my work, for every impression was there, and could not now be removed.

[20]

So it is with books, they make an *impression* on you; and you are either a little bit better or a little bit worse for every book you read. *Take care only to read those books that will make you better.*

The summer after Jack decided to be a minister, he read two books which made some big impressions on his mind, and left him *better* than he was before reading them. One was called "The Imitation of Christ," and the other "Holy Living and Dying." They taught him that true religion must be in the heart, and that it is not enough for our words and actions, as seen and heard by men, to be right, but our very thoughts must be pure and good, such as would be approved of God. He did not at all agree with Thomas à Kempis, the writer of the first book I mentioned, in everything, though, for he made out, according to Jack's idea, that we should always be miserable.

I think Jack would never have persevered in his determination to follow Christ, if he had been

convinced that "to be good you must be miserable," for he loved fun, and could not help being happy. He felt sure Thomas à Kempis was mistaken, especially when he remembered that verse in the Bible which says religion's ways "are ways of *pleasantness*" (Prov. iii. 17). When he wrote home, he asked his mother what she thought, for although he was now a young man of twenty-two, he was still the old Jack that thought father and mother knew better than anybody else.

[21]

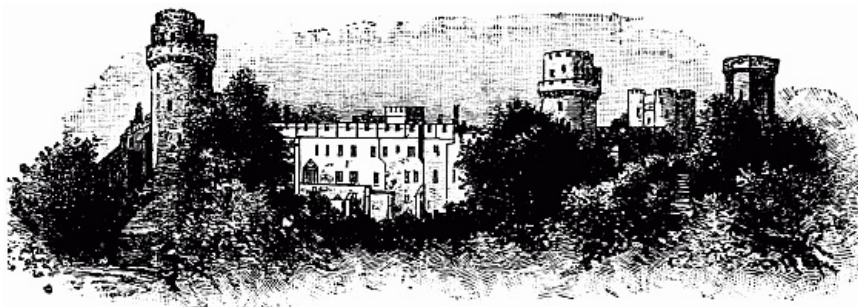
His mother wrote back that she thought Thomas à Kempis *was* mistaken, for so many texts in the Bible show us that God intends us to be happy and full of joy. "And," she said, "if you want to know what pleasures are right and wrong, ask yourself: 'Will it make me love God more, and will it help me to be more like my great example, Jesus Christ?'"

Jack's father wrote: "I don't altogether agree with Thomas à Kempis; but the world is like a siren, and we must beware of her. If the young man would rejoice in his youth, let him take care that his pleasures are innocent; and in order to do this, remember, my son, that for all these things God will bring us into judgment."

Some of my readers will hardly understand what Mr. Wesley meant when he said the world is "like a siren." Most of you have read fairy tales; well, a kind of Greek fairy story tells of some beautiful maidens, called sirens, who used to sit on some dangerous rocks, and play sweetest music. When sailors saw them and heard their singing, they were drawn by magic nearer and nearer to where they were, until at last their boats struck on the rocks, and the poor deluded sailors were dragged by the sirens to the bottom of the sea and were drowned.

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Now, do you see why the world is like a siren? Its pleasures all look so beautiful that we are tempted to draw nearer and nearer, until at last we are lost to all that is holy and good.



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CHAPTER VI.

Jack a minister.—A letter from father.—Jack's first sermon.—"Mr. John."—Back at college.—Temptations and persecutions.—"For Jesus' sake."—Mr. John's long hair.—Clever, but not proud.—Young soldiers for Christ.



WE all love to get letters, do we not? though some of us are not so fond of writing them. It was in the year 1725, when Jack was twenty-two years old, that he became a minister; and just about this time he had a beautiful letter from his father. In it Mr. Wesley said:—

"God fit you for your great work. Watch and pray; believe, love, endure, and be happy, towards which you shall never want the most ardent prayers of

"Your affectionate father,
"SAMUEL WESLEY."

Jack's first sermon was preached at a small town near Oxford, and his second at his dear home-village, Epworth. Mr. Wesley was getting old, and as he had now two churches to look after, the one at Epworth and another at a place called Wroote, where he and Mrs. Wesley had gone to live, he was very glad when his son offered to go and help him. And now that Jack has grown up and got to be a proper minister, I think we must begin to call him Mr. John. Well, Mr. John stayed some time helping his father at Wroote and Epworth, and then went back again to Oxford, to study for a place in a college there—Lincoln College.

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There were several others trying to get this same place, and they didn't like Mr. John because he would not do the wicked things they did, so they made great fun of him, and laughed at him for being good. Nobody likes being laughed at; and Mr. John didn't, but he bore it bravely; and his father comforted him when he wrote: "Never mind them, Jack; he is a coward that cannot

bear being laughed at. Jesus endured a great deal more for us, before He entered glory; and unless we follow His steps we can never hope to share that glory with Him. Bear it patiently, my boy, and be sure you never return evil for evil." His mother, too, sent loving letters to cheer and comfort him.

So Mr. John worked hard, and bore his persecutions patiently—for *Jesus' sake*; and in spite of all his enemies he won the coveted place, and became Fellow of Lincoln College. Oh, how glad and thankful he was! And his father and mother were so proud and happy.

[25]

It was just about this time that Mr. Wesley was afraid he would have to leave Wroote, and it was a great trouble to him. "But," he said, proudly, "wherever I am, my Jacky is Fellow of Lincoln." As for Jack, he felt it was worth everything to give his father and mother such pleasure.

Though he was properly grown up, twenty-three years old, Mr. and Mrs. Wesley always thought of him as their "boy." Fathers and mothers always do this. It doesn't matter how old their children grow to be, they love to think of them, and speak of them as their "boys" and "girls." Dear readers, remember there is no one on earth that loves you, or ever will love you with such a big love as father and mother. No matter how tall, or how strong, or how clever you may grow, they will always love you with the same big love they did when you were little boys and girls. And, oh! whatever you do, never, never grieve these dearest of all dear friends.

Mrs. Wesley had been longing to see her "boy" again, especially now that he had become Fellow of Lincoln College. At last her wish was granted. There were a great many things that puzzled Jack which he wanted to ask his father and mother about. So he went and spent a long summer at home, getting his hard questions answered, and helping his father with the work that was now almost too much for him. He had such a happy time that he was almost sorry when the autumn came and he had to return to Oxford.

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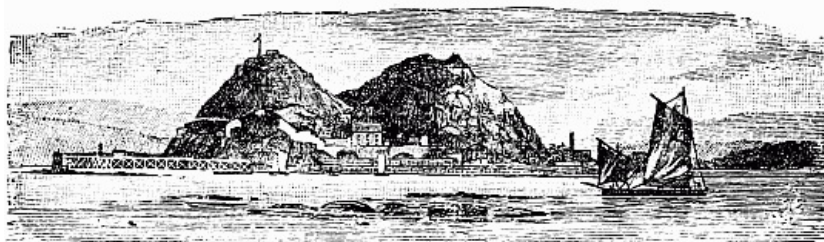
Being at school and college costs a great deal of money, and Jack knew that his father was not a rich man, and that he had hard work often to pay his college expenses. Jack had been very sorry to be such a burden to his parents, and tried to be as careful as he could. Have you ever seen a picture of Mr. John Wesley? If you have, you will have noticed his long hair. Every one at Oxford wore their hair short; but having it cut cost money, and John used to say: "I've no money to spend on hair-dressers." So, though his fellow-students made great fun of him, he saved his money and wore his hair long, and in time got so accustomed to it, that he wore it long all his life. Now that he was Fellow of Lincoln College he received enough money to pay his own expenses, and it made him very happy to think he need no longer be an expense to his dear father. But he resolved still to be as careful as he could, and never again to go into debt.

When he went back to his new College, after spending the summer at home, he said to himself: "I will give up all the old friends who have so often tempted me to do things that a Christian ought not to do, and I will make new friends of those who will help me on my way to heaven." So, though he was always polite to the many worldly young men who wanted to make his acquaintance, he would not have them for his friends. This made some of them say very unkind things about him; but Mr. John bore it all quietly, and never said unkind things back again. He felt he was only treading the path Jesus had trod before him, the path which all His disciples must follow.

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Mr. John got to be so clever that soon he was made professor, or teacher of Greek. Some boys and girls—yes, and grown-up people, too—become proud when they get to be clever, but Mr. John did not. He determined, more than ever, to be a faithful and humble follower of the Lord Jesus. He was very patient with his scholars, and tried not only to make them learned, but to make them Christians. "I want these young soldiers of Christ to be burning and shining lights wherever they may go," he said. "If they are not all intended to be clergymen, they are all intended to be Christians."

In the beginning of the next year (1727), Mr. John went home again to help his father, who was getting very old, and was often ill. He stayed at Wroote about two years, and then went back again to Oxford.



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CHAPTER VII.

Charlie goes to Oxford.—Won't have his brother interfere with him.—A change in Charlie.—Somebody's prayers.—Charlie's chums, and how he treated them.—Dividing time.—Nickname.—A nickname honoured.

BEFORE I tell you any more about Mr. John, I am sure you would like to know how Charlie has been getting on all this long time. We left him, you remember, captain of the school at Westminster, where his eldest brother Samuel was a teacher. He was so clever and brave, and such a generous, loving-hearted boy, that he was a favourite with everybody. He stayed nine years at Westminster, and then, when he was eighteen, went to one of the colleges at Oxford. It was not the one Mr. John was at, but, being in the same town, the two brothers often saw each other.

Charlie was not a Christian, and made companions of the worldly young students who spent their time in all sorts of wrong-doings. John was very sorry for this, and spoke to him about it; but Charlie became very angry at what he called his brother's interference, and said: "Do you want me to become a saint all at once?" [29]

However, while Mr. John was away at home those two years helping his father, Charlie changed very much. He became steadier and more thoughtful, and even wrote to his brother, and asked for the advice he would not have before. "I don't exactly know how or when I changed," he said in his letter; "but it was soon after you went away. It is owing, I believe, to somebody's prayers (my mother's most likely) that I am come to think as I do."

When boys and girls or grown-up people become Christians, those around them soon find it out. Charlie's giddy companions soon saw something was wrong with him. He used to be lazy and shirk his studies, spending his time with them in pleasure and amusement, now he was diligent and worked hard.

The next thing they noticed was that he went to church regularly and took the Sacrament. And here I must tell you how he behaved towards these friends, and I know it will make you like Charlie more than ever.

I told you before how loving and genial he was, and now he did not at all like to give up his old chums, and yet he knew that if he meant to travel heavenwards he must have companions that were going the same way. He longed for his friends to become Christians, and talked to them so lovingly and so wisely that before very long he got two or three of them to join him in fighting against the evils of their nature, and encouraging and seeking after everything that was good. [30]

You have all read in your English history how good King Alfred the Great divided his time; well, Charles and his companions divided theirs in a similar way. So many hours were spent in study, so many in prayer, and so many in sleeping and eating. They made other strict rules for themselves, and lived so much by what we call "method," that at last they got to be called "Methodists."

Boys and girls are very fond of giving nicknames to their companions; sometimes it is done in fun, and then there is no harm in it,—but often spite and ill-nature suggest the nickname, then it is very wrong and very unkind.

Most of the young men at Oxford thought religion and goodness were only things to make fun of, so Charles and his friends were a butt for their ridicule. Because they read their Bibles a great deal they called them "Bible Bigots," and "Bible Moths," and their meetings they called the "Holy Club."

But "Methodists" was the name that fastened most firmly to them, and, as you know, after all these years, this is the name we call ourselves by to-day. Just think; a nickname given to a few young men at Oxford, more than one hundred and fifty years ago, is now held in honour by hundreds of thousands of people all over the world. [31]





CHAPTER VIII.

The Christian band at Oxford.—How they spent their time.—Mr. John and the little ragged girl.—A very early bird.—Methodist rules, and the Methodist guide-book.

WHEN Mr. John came back to Oxford, of course he joined the Christian band, and very soon they made him their leader. He was cleverer and had more experience than the others, and they all looked up to him for help and advice. Others joined the club, and soon there were twenty-five members.

Do you remember a verse in the Bible that, speaking of Jesus, says: "He went about doing good"? Well, these young men who were taking Jesus for their copy, just did the same; all their spare time was spent in "doing good." Some of them tried to rescue their fellow-students from bad companions and get them to become Christians; others visited and helped the poor. Some taught the children in the workhouse, and some got leave to go into the prison and read to the prisoners. Very few of them were rich, but they denied themselves things they really wanted in order to buy books, and medicine for the poor. Every night they used to have a meeting to talk over what they had done, and settle their work for the next day.

[33]

Mr. John started a school for poor little children; he paid a teacher to teach them, and bought clothes for the boys and girls whose parents could not afford to buy them. Once a little girl from the school called to see Mr. John. It was a cold winter's day, and she was very poorly clad.

"You seem half starved, dear," he said; "have you nothing to wear but that cotton frock?"

"No, sir," she answered; "this is the only frock I have."

Mr. John put his hand into his pocket, but, alas! he found no money there, it had all gone. Just then he caught sight of the pictures on the walls of his room, and he thought: "How can I allow these beautiful pictures to hang here while Christ's poor are starving?"

We are not told, but I think we can be quite sure that the pictures were sold, and that the little girl got a warm winter's frock.

Mr. John was just as careful of his time as his money, he never wasted a moment. He believed in the proverb you have often heard: "Early to bed and early to rise." Some people say: "Get up with the lark," but I think Mr. John was always up before that little bird even awoke. Every morning when the clock struck four he jumped out of bed, and began his work. Wasn't that early? I wonder which of us would like to get up at that time? And he did not do this only when he was young, he did it all his life, even when he was an old, old man.

[34]

I told you these "Methodists" made rules for themselves. One of them was to set apart special days for special prayer for their friends and pupils. And another one which we all should copy was: NEVER TO SPEAK UNKINDLY OF ANY ONE. The Bible was their Guide Book, and it told them, as it will tell us, all they ought to do, and all they ought not to do.



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CHAPTER IX.

A long walk.—More persecutions.—Mr. John's illness.—Not afraid to die.—Mrs. Wesley scolds.—Home again.—A proud father.—Mr. Wesley's opinion about fasting.—At Wroote once more.—Mr. Wesley's "Good-bye."



WILL you look on your map of England and find London? Now find Oxford. The two places are a long way apart, are they not?

Well, do you know Mr. John and Mr. Charles Wesley used often to walk all that long way to see a friend. You know there were no railways in those days, and to go by coach cost a great deal of money. This friend's name was Mr. Law; he was a very good man, and encouraged and helped the two brothers very much. He taught them that "religion is the simplest thing in the world." He said: "It is just this, 'We love Jesus, because Jesus first loved us.'"

At Oxford, the Methodists were still called all sorts of names and made great fun of, not only by the idle, wicked students, but even by clever and learned men who ought to have known better. Some of their enemies said: "They only make friends with those who are as queer as themselves." But Mr. John showed them this was not true, for in every way he could he helped and showed kindness to those who said the most unkind things.

[36]

Hard work, close study, and fasting, at last made Mr. John very ill; one night he thought he was going to die. He was not at all afraid, he just prayed, "O God, prepare me for Thy coming." But God had a great deal of work for His servant to do, and did not let him die. With care and a doctor's skill he got quite better.

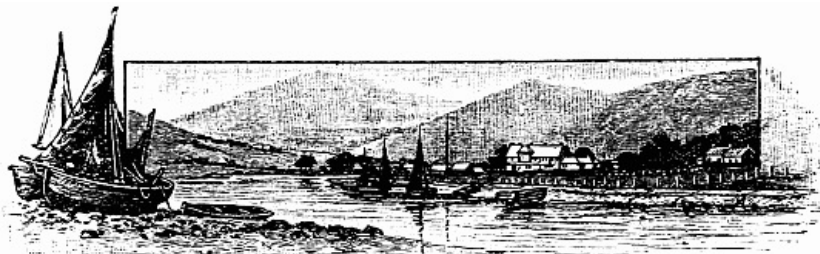
Poor Mrs. Wesley was often anxious about her two Oxford sons, and once wrote them quite a scolding letter. "Unless you take more care of yourselves," she said, "you will both be ill. You ought to know better than to do as you are doing." Mrs. Wesley did not agree with them fasting so much; she believed God meant us to take all the food necessary to support our bodies.

Just about this time, Mr. Samuel—the big brother—got an appointment as master of a boys' school somewhere in the West of England; but before he went to his new place he thought he would like to go home, and see his dear father and mother.

When his brothers at Oxford heard this, they thought they would go too, so that they might all be together in the old home once more. And, oh, what a happy time they had! Mr. Wesley was getting very old, and he was so proud to have his "boys" with him again. He talked very seriously to John and Charles, and told them he did not at all approve of their way of living. He said he was sure God never meant us to fast so much as to injure our health, or to shut ourselves up and be so much alone. Jesus said: "Let your light shine *before men*;" our light should be where *everybody* can see it. I am sure old Mr. Wesley was right.

[37]

A few months later, and the brothers were again at Wroote, standing by the bedside of their dying father. "I am very near heaven," he said, as they gathered round him, "Good-bye!" And "father" went Home.



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CHAPTER X.

A corner in America.—Wanted a missionary.—Mrs. Wesley gives up her sons to God's work.—At the dock-side.—The good ship "Simmonds."—Life on board.—A terrible storm.—The German Christians who were not afraid.



F you look on your map of the United States, you will see in the south-east, a little corner called Georgia. It was to this place that a number of poor people from England had emigrated; people who had been cruelly treated in prison, and on being released had no work to do and nowhere to go. Some kind Christian gentlemen collected money to help them to get to Georgia, where they could have plenty of

work and plenty of food. A number of poor Germans, too, who had been persecuted in their own country because of their religion, also went out to this place where they could worship God as they chose, without fear of cruel treatment.

When people are driven out of their own country like this, they are called "exiles," and though this little band of exiles found work and food, and freedom to worship God in the new land, they had no minister. So the gentlemen who had raised the money, and who knew what brave, good men Mr. John and Mr. Charles Wesley were, asked them if they would go out and minister to these poor people in Georgia. "You are just the men to comfort and teach them," they said. [39]

Then, too, a number of Indians lived in Georgia, and they wanted to be friends with the white strangers, and General Oglethorpe and Dr. Burton, the gentlemen I mentioned, thought it would be a good opportunity to preach the gospel to them.

When Mr. John Wesley was first asked, he said: "No, I cannot go, I cannot leave my mother." Then they said: "Will you go if your mother gives her consent?"

"Yes," said John, feeling quite sure she would never give it.

So he went to Epworth and told his mother all about the matter. Then he waited for her reply. Mrs. Wesley loved her "boy" John very, very dearly, and if he went to America she might never see him again, and yet her answer came: "If I had twenty sons, I would give them all up for such a work."

Even after obtaining this unexpected consent, John did not decide to go until he had asked the advice of his brother Samuel and his friend Mr. Law, both of whom advised him to undertake the work. Then both he and his brother sent in their decision to General Oglethorpe, and began making preparations for their long journey across the Atlantic Ocean. [40]

Now I want us to imagine ourselves at Gravesend, a place on the river Thames near London. Look at all those ships in the docks! See, there is one that looks just ready to sail! Can you read the name of it? "S i m o n d s"—"Simmonds." Yes, that is its name. Let us button up our coats, as it is a sharp October day, and watch the passengers go on board.

Look at that little man with the nice face, and a lot of colour in his cheeks! What long hair he has! and how smooth it is! It looks as if he brushed it a great deal. See, he is looking this way, and we can notice his beautiful forehead and his bright eyes. Why that must be Mr. John Wesley! And, of course, that is his brother Charles talking to some gentlemen on the deck. See, he is holding a book close to his eyes—he must be short-sighted. Listen, how the others are laughing! I expect he is making a joke. Now he is walking off arm in arm with one of his companions. He seems to be still loving-hearted and full of fun, the same Charlie he was at Westminster School only grown big.

A number of Germans were also on board the "Simmonds," all bound for Georgia. Before they had been many days at sea, John Wesley found out that they were earnest Christians, and he began at once to learn German in order that he might talk to them. [41]

The brothers had not taken their father's advice about fasting; they and some other Methodists who were their fellow-passengers still thought they ought to do with as little food as possible, and with as few comforts. They ate nothing but rice, biscuits, and bread, and John Wesley slept on the floor. He was obliged to do it one night, because the waves got into the ship and wet his bed, and because he slept so well that night, he thought the floor was good enough for him, and continued to sleep on it.

I expect you wonder how they spent their time during the long, long voyage to Georgia. I will tell you. They made the same strict rules for themselves that they did at Oxford. They got up every morning at four o'clock, and spent the time in private prayer until five o'clock. Then they all read the Bible together until seven. After that they had breakfast, and then public prayers for everybody on the ship who would come. Then from nine to twelve—just your school-time, little readers, is it not?—Mr. John studied his German; somebody else studied Greek, another taught the children on board, and Mr. Charles wrote sermons. Then at twelve o'clock they all met and told each other how they had been getting along, and what they had been doing. At one o'clock they had dinner, and after that they read or preached to those on board until four o'clock. Then they studied and preached and prayed again until nine, when they went to bed. Were not these strict rules? I wonder if they ever had the headache? I am afraid we should, if we studied so hard and so long. [42]

Have you ever been to Liverpool, and seen one of those beautiful vessels that go to America? They are as nice and as comfortable as the best of your own homes, and you can get to the other side of the Atlantic in about ten days. But at the time of which I write, more than one hundred and fifty years ago, travelling was very different. The ships were much smaller, and tossed about a great deal more, and the passengers had to put up with a great many discomforts. Then again, it took weeks, instead of days, to get across to America.

The passengers on board the "Simmonds" met with some terrible storms; often the great waves would dash over their little ship, until it seemed as if it must sink and never rise again.

One of these storms began on a Sunday, about twelve o'clock in the middle of the day. The wind roared round them, and the waves, rising like mountains, kept washing over and over the decks. Every ten minutes came a shock against the side of the boat, that seemed as if it would

During this storm as Mr. Wesley was coming out of the cabin-door, a big wave knocked him down. There he lay stunned and bruised, until some one came to his help. When he felt better, he went and comforted the poor English passengers, who were dreadfully afraid, and were screaming and crying in their fear. Then he went among the Germans, but they needed no comfort from him. He heard them singing as he got near, and found them calm and quiet, not the least bit frightened.

"Were you not afraid?" Mr. Wesley asked them when the storm was over.

"No," they answered, "we are not afraid to die."

"But were not the children frightened?" he said.

"No," they said again, "our children are not afraid to die either."

During that terrible storm they had remembered how Jesus stilled the tempest on the Lake of Galilee, and His voice seemed to say to them now: "Peace, be still."

This reminds me of a piece of poetry, which I dare say some of you have read. It is about a little girl whose father was a captain, and once when there was an awful storm, and even the captain himself was frightened:

"—his little daughter
Took her father by the hand,
And said: 'Is not God upon the water
Just the same as on the land?'"

"The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea:" Psa. xciii. 4.

[44]

"He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still:" Psa. cvii. 29.



[45]

CHAPTER XI.

In the Savannah river.—Landed.—A prayer meeting on the top of a hill.—German Christians.—The Indians.—Tomo Chachi and his squaw.—Their welcome to Mr. Wesley.—A jar of milk and a jar of honey.



AT last storms and dangers were over, and the good ship "Simmonds" floated safely in the smooth waters of the Savannah river. You can find this on your map. They cast anchor near a little island called Tybee Island, where beautiful pine trees grew all along the shore.

The first thing they did on landing was to go to the top of a hill, kneel down together, and thank God for bringing them safely across the ocean. You remember Noah's first act after leaving the ship that God put him into when the world was drowned, was to offer a sacrifice of thankfulness for God's care over him. And when Abraham got safely into the strange land to which God sent him, the first thing he did was to offer sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. In the same way the little missionary band from England showed their reverence and gratitude to the God who rules earth, sky, and sea.

[46]

When they got to the town of Savannah they found it a very small place. There were only about forty houses, besides a church, a prison built of logs of wood, and a mill where everybody took their corn to be ground.

I told you, if you remember, that besides the poor English exiles there were a number of

German Christians. These were called Moravians, and they were so glad to have a minister that they came to meet Mr. Wesley, and told him how pleased they were to see him. Mr. Wesley and one of his friends lived with them in Savannah for a long time, and they soon found what earnest real Christians they were, true followers of the Lord Jesus. You know it is the people you live with that know you the best, and this is what Mr. Wesley wrote about these Moravians. "We were in the same room with them from morning till night, except when we went out for a walk. They were never idle, were always happy, and always kind to one another. They were true copies in all things of their Saviour Jesus Christ." Was not that a splendid character to have, and would it not be nice if those whom we live with could say the same of us?

There was something near Savannah that you would have liked to see, especially the boys, and that was an Indian town. If there was one thing more than another that drew Mr. Wesley to Georgia it was the Indians. I expect, like you, he had loved to read and hear about them; now he had a chance to see them. But what he longed for most of all was to tell them about Jesus, and to get them to become Christians. The Indians lived in tents or tepees as they are called, and a number of these tepees all put up close together was called a town; one of these towns was only about twenty minutes' walk from Savannah.

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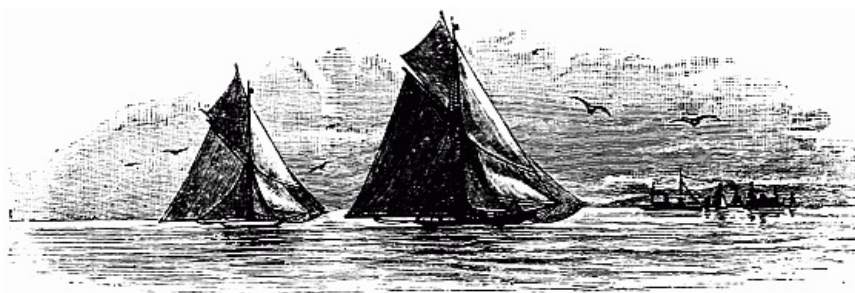
After Mr. Wesley had been a week or two in America, who should come to see him but the Indian chief. Think how excited Mr. Wesley would be! The chief's name was Tomo Chachi, and he came looking so grand in all his war paint, with his great feather head-dress, and moccasins made of buffalo skin, ornamented with pretty coloured beads, just as you have seen them in pictures.

Mr. Wesley thought he must dress up too, to receive his distinguished visitor, so he put on his gown and cassock, and down he went to see Tomo Chachi. Of course Mr. Wesley did not understand the Indian language, but there was a woman who did, and she acted as interpreter. "I am glad you are come," said Tomo Chachi. "I will go up and speak to the wise men of our nation, and I hope they will come and hear you preach."

Then Tomo Chachi's wife, or squaw as she is called, who had come with her husband, presented the missionaries with a jar of milk. She meant by this that she wanted them to make the story of Jesus Christ very plain and simple so that they could understand it, for she said "we are only like children." Then she gave them a jar of honey, and by this she meant that she hoped the missionaries would be very sweet and nice to them. Then Tomo Chachi and his squaw went back to their tepee.

[48]

A few months after, Mr. Wesley had a long talk with another tribe of Indians, a very wicked tribe called the Chicasaws; but they would not allow him to preach to them. They said: "We don't want to be Christians, and we won't hear about Christ." So Mr. Wesley had to leave them and go back disappointed to Savannah.



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CHAPTER XII.

Proud children.—Eddie.—Boys in Georgia.—John and Charles Wesley in the wrong.—Signal failure.—Disappointment.—Return to England.—Mr. Wesley finds out something on the voyage home.—An acrostic.



WONDER if my readers know any boys or girls who sneer and look down upon their school companions because they are not so well dressed as themselves? It is a cruel, unkind, un-Christ-like thing to do.

I remember seeing a little girl, and it was in a Sunday School too, who had on a new summer frock and a new summer hat; and oh! Eddie did think she looked nice. She kept smoothing her frock down and looking at it, and then tossing her head. By her side sat a sweet-

faced little girl about a year younger than Edie. Annie's dress was of print and quite plainly made, but very clean and tidy. After admiring herself a little while, Edie turned to Annie and thinking, I suppose, that she might be wearing a pinafore, and have a frock underneath, she rudely lifted it up, and finding it really was her dress, she turned away with a very ugly, disgusted look on her face, and said, scornfully "What a frock!" Proud, thoughtless boys and girls never know the hurts they give, and the harm they do.

[50]

The boys in Georgia were no better than some boys in England. At a school where one of the Methodists taught there were some poor boys who wore neither shoes nor stockings, and their companions who were better off taunted them and made their lives miserable. Their teacher did not know what to do, and asked Mr. Wesley for advice. "I'll tell you what we'll do," he said; "we'll change schools"—Mr. Wesley taught a school too—"and I'll see if I can cure them."

So the two gentlemen changed schools, and when the boys came the next morning they found they had a new teacher, and this new teacher, to their astonishment, wore neither shoes nor stockings. You can imagine how the boys stared; but Mr. Wesley said nothing, just kept them to their lessons. This went on for a week, and at the end of that time the boys were cured of their pride and vanity.

Though Mr. John and Mr. Charles Wesley were so good, they were not perfect. They said and did many unwise things, and only saw their mistake when it was too late. One thing was they expected the people to lead the same strict lives they did, and to believe everything they believed. This, of course, the people of Georgia would not do, they thought their ways were just as good as Mr. Wesley's, and I dare say in some things they were. Instead of trying to persuade them and explaining why one way was better than another, Mr. Wesley told them they *must* do this, and they *mustn't* do that, until at last they got to dislike him very much. One woman got so angry that she knocked him down.

[51]

I am sure you will all feel very sorry when you read this, for Mr. Wesley was working very hard amongst them, and thought he was doing what was right. Mr. Charles did not get on any better at Frederica, where he had gone to work and preach. Like his brother, he was very strict and expected too much from the people. He tried and tried, not seeing where he was to blame, and at last wearied and disappointed he returned to England.

After he had gone, Mr. John took his place at Frederica, hoping to get on better than he had done at Savannah. It was of no use; he stayed for twelve weeks, but things only seemed to get worse and worse. At last he had to give up and go back to Savannah. Things, however, were no better there, and before long he too began to see that his mission had been a failure, and he returned to England a sadder and a wiser man.

In spite of all their mistakes Mr. John and his brother must have done some good in Georgia, for the missionary who went after them wrote and said: "Mr. Wesley has done much good here, his name is very dear to many of the people." It must have made the brothers glad to read this, for it is hard when you have been doing what you thought was right, and then find it was all wrong.

[52]

On his return voyage to England Mr. Wesley had time to think about all the things that happened in Georgia. He was feeling dreadfully disappointed and discouraged; he had given up everything at home on purpose to do good to the people out there. He had meant to convert the Indians and comfort and help the Christian exiles, and he was coming back not having done either. Poor Mr. Wesley! And the worst of it was, the more he thought about it all, the more he began to see that the fault was his own.

There was another thing he discovered about himself on that voyage home. They encountered a fearful storm, when every one expected to be drowned. During those awful hours Mr. Wesley found out, almost to his own surprise, that the very thought of death was a terror to him. He knew then that there was something wrong, for no Christian ought to fear to die. So Mr. Wesley went down on his knees and told God how wrong he had been, that he had thought too much of his own opinions and trusted too much in himself. He asked God to give him more faith, more peace, more love.

[53]

He was always glad afterwards that he had gone to Georgia, and thanked God for taking him into that strange land, for his failure there had humbled him and shown him his weakness and his failings.

It is a grand thing when we get to know ourselves. Let us be always on the look-out for our own faults, and when we see them, fight them.

I would like to close this chapter with an acrostic I once heard on the word "Faith." It is a thing little folks, yes, and big folks often find hard to understand, perhaps this may help you.

What is Faith?

F ull
A ssurance (confidence, having no doubt)
I n
T rusting
H im (Jesus).



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CHAPTER XIII.

George Whitefield, the "boy parson."—The Wesleys back in England.—Long walks.—Preaching by the way-side.—A talk in a stable.—Sermon in Manchester.—Mr. Charles in London.—Wants something he has not got.—Gets it.—Mr. John wants it too.—A top place in the class.

YOU remember the Holy Club which the Methodists started at Oxford? Well, one of the youngest members was named George Whitefield; he was a pupil of Mr. John Wesley's, and when he left Oxford he became a preacher. While the two Wesleys were in Georgia, he carried on their work in England. He had learnt to love Jesus very dearly, had felt how wicked and sinful he was, and had gone to the Saviour and told Him all, asking Him to "Create in him a clean heart, and to renew within him a right spirit." Then he was so happy in knowing he was forgiven, that he wanted every one else to be happy and forgiven too. He was so young when he commenced to preach that every one called him the "boy parson;" but he talked so earnestly and kindly to the people that crowds everywhere flocked to hear him.

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When he heard that the two Wesleys were leaving Georgia he determined to go and take their place, and see what he could do for the poor exiles. Before he left England he preached a good-bye sermon, and told the people that he was going this long and dangerous voyage, and perhaps they might never see his face again. When they heard this, the children and the grown-up people, rich and poor, burst into tears, they loved him so much. But as this book is to be about Mr. John Wesley, we must not follow Mr. Whitefield across the Atlantic. Try to remember his name though, for he and the Wesleys were life-long friends, and you will hear about him again further on.

When Mr. John and Mr. Charles got back to England they took up George Whitefield's work, going from town to town telling the people about Jesus Christ. As there were no railways they had to walk a great deal, and they used to speak to the people they met on the roads and in the villages through which they passed. Once, when Mr. Wesley and a friend were on their way to Manchester, they stayed one night in an inn at Stafford. Before they went to bed, Mr. Wesley asked the mistress of the house if they might have family prayer. She was quite willing, and so all the servants were called in. Next morning, after breakfast, Mr. Wesley had a talk with them all again, and even went into the stables and spoke to the men there about their sins and about the love of Jesus Christ.

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He preached in Manchester the next Sunday, and this was his text: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Cor. v. 17). He explained to them that when any one begins to love Jesus, and tries to copy His life, they grow more and more like what He was. Then everything becomes different; the things they loved to do before cease to be a pleasure to them, and the places they liked to go to they no longer care to visit; they are "*new creatures* in Christ Jesus."

The next morning (Monday) Mr. Wesley, and the friend who was with him, left Manchester and went on to Knutsford. Here, too, the people listened attentively, while they preached the gospel of Jesus Christ. They visited other towns, and then Mr. Wesley returned to Oxford.

He had not been long there when he heard that his brother Charles was very ill in London, and went at once to see him. Charles Wesley had been living and working there with some German Christians, or Moravians, as they were called, and before long he found that these people had something in their lives that he did not possess. Like the Germans he met in Georgia, their religion gave them peace and joy on week-days as well as on Sundays.

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When he was ill, one of these Moravians, named Peter Böhler, came to see him. During the little talk they had, the visitor said:

"What makes you hope you are saved?"

"Because I have done my best to serve God," answered Mr. Charles.

You see, he was trusting in all the good deeds he had done, and not on Jesus Christ's suffering and death for him.

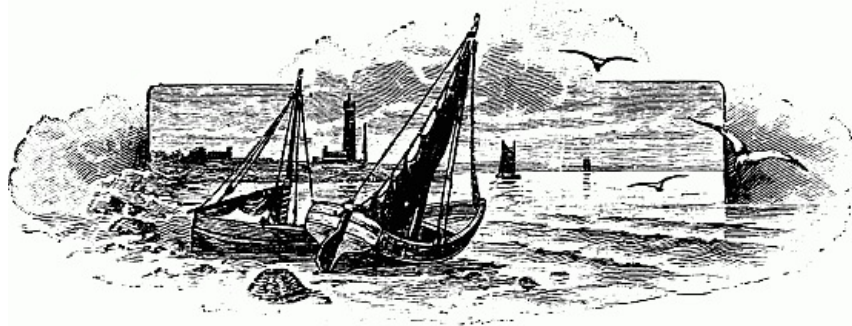
Mr. Böhler shook his head, and did not say any more then. But he left Charles Wesley longing for the something he had not got.

When he was a little better, he was carried to the house of a poor working-man named Bray. He was not clever, indeed, he hardly knew how to read, but he was a happy believer in Jesus; and he explained to Mr. Charles that *doing* was not enough, that we must believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for us, and that it is only through Him that we can pray to God, and only by His death that we can hope to go to heaven.

Then a poor woman came in, and she made him understand better than any one; and at last Mr. Charles saw where he had been in the wrong, and instead of trusting in his own goodness and in all the kind things he had done, he just gave up his faith in these, and trusted alone in the dying love of his Saviour, and ours.

I expect all my readers have classes in the schools they go to. Some of you are at the top of your class, some of you are in the middle, and some of you are—well—near the bottom. I think this is very much the way in Christ's school, the only difference is that in your class at school there can only be *one* at the top. In Christ's school there can be any number at the top. There are a great number of Christians who are only half-way up in the class, and I am afraid there are a still greater number at the bottom. That is a place none of us like to be in at school; then don't let us be content to keep that place in Christ's school; let us all seek and obtain top places. [58]

When Mr. John Wesley visited his brother, he found he had got above him in Christ's school; he had taken a top place in the class, and John could not rest until he had got a top place too. So he prayed very earnestly, and got the people that had helped his brother to talk to him, but still he did not seem to understand. Four days after he went to a little service, and while the preacher was explaining the change that comes in us, when we trust in Jesus alone, John Wesley saw it all, took a top place in Christ's school, and joyfully went and told his brother.



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CHAPTER XIV.

Methodist rules.—Pulpits closed against Mr. Wesley.—A visit to Germany.—A walk in Holland.—Christian David, the German carpenter.—The Fellow of Lincoln College takes lessons in a cottage.



DARE say many of my readers go to Wesleyan Chapels, and understand some of the Methodist rules. Most of these rules were made by the two Mr. Wesleys and their friends more than one hundred and fifty years ago, and they have been kept by their followers ever since. I want to tell you about a few of them.

The people who attended the Methodist meetings were divided into little bands or companies, no band to have fewer than five persons in it, and none more than ten. They were to meet every week, and each one in turn was to tell the rest what troubles and temptations they had had, and how God, through Jesus Christ, had helped them since the last meeting.

Every Wednesday evening, at eight o'clock, all the bands joined together in one large meeting, which began and ended with hymns and prayer. There were many other rules, some of which I will tell you later on, others you can read about when you are older. [60]

All this time you must remember that Mr. Wesley was a church clergyman. He loved the Church of England very dearly, though there were a great many things in it with which he did not agree.

Wherever he preached he told the people just what he believed, and as very few clergymen thought as he did, they did not like him speaking his opinions so freely. At last, first one and then another said he should never preach in their churches again. Yet the message Mr. Wesley gave to the people, was the very same message that Christ spoke long before on the shores of Galilee.

Mr. Wesley still longed to understand his Bible better, and to learn more of Jesus Christ, so he

determined to go and visit the Moravians at a place called Herrnhuth in Germany, and see if he could get some help from them. So one June day, he said good-bye to his mother, and with eight of his friends set off. One of these friends was an old member of the Holy Club at Oxford. On their way to Herrnhuth, they had to pass through Holland. This is what Mr. Wesley says about a walk they had in that country:

I never saw such a beautiful road. Walnut trees grow in rows on each side, so that it is like walking in a gentleman's garden. We were surprised to find that in this country the people at the inns will not always take in travellers who ask for food and bed. They refused to receive us at several inns. At one of the towns we were asked to go and see their church, and when we went in we took off our hats in reverence, as we do in England, but the people were not pleased, they said: "You must not do so, it is not the custom in this country."

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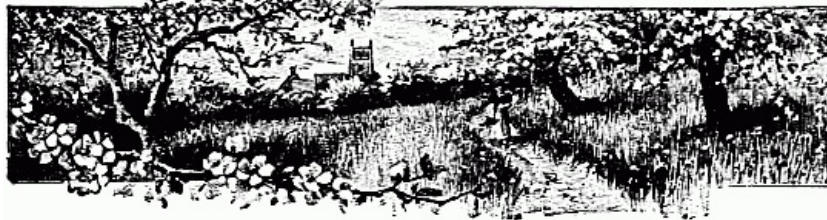
After a long, long journey through Germany, the little party at last reached Herrnhuth.

Mr. Wesley had only been a few days there, when he wrote to his brother Samuel: "God has given me my wish, I am with those who follow Christ in all things, and who walk as He walked."

I must just tell you about one of these Moravians, because he helped Mr. Wesley more than any of the others. His name was Christian David. He was only an ignorant working-man, and when not preaching was always to be found working at his carpenter's bench. But David was Christian in life as well as in name; he "walked with God," and whether he preached and prayed, or worked with chisel and plane, he did all "in the name of the Lord Jesus." He was never tired of telling people about the Saviour he loved, and trying to get them to love Him too. He was a man who often made mistakes, but as some one has said, "the man who never makes mistakes never makes anything;" and Christian David was always ready to own his faults when they were pointed out to him.

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You remember to what a high position Mr. Wesley had risen at Oxford, and how clever he was? Yet Christian David knew more than he did about Jesus Christ and His love; and the Fellow of Lincoln College was not too proud to go and sit in a cottage and be taught by this humble carpenter, who so closely followed the Holy Carpenter of Nazareth.



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CHAPTER XV.

Fetter Lane.—Popular preachers.—Old friends meet again.—Love-feasts.—1739—Small beginning of a great gathering.—A crowded church.—A lightning thought.—But a shocking thing.—George Whitefield's welcome at Bristol.—"You shall not preach in my pulpit."—"Nor mine."—"Nor mine."—Poor Mr. Whitefield.



WHILE Mr. Wesley was in Germany, his brother Charles had been preaching and working in London, and when Mr. John returned he found about thirty-two people had joined the society there. They had hired a room in Fetter Lane, and here they held their meetings. Mr. Wesley had come back so full of love to Jesus Christ, and therefore so full of love to everybody, and so eager for all to be as happy as he was, that he soon got many others to join them. When he wrote to his German friends, he said: "We are trying here, by God's help, to copy you as you copy Christ."

He and his brother still preached in any church where they were allowed, and wherever they went crowds of poor people followed to hear them. They used to go, too, to the prisons, and the hospitals, and preach to the sinful and the suffering. They told them how Jesus forgave sins, and how He used to heal the sick; and the sinful were made sorry, and the suffering ones were comforted, and many believed in Jesus and prayed for forgiveness.

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Mr. Wesley had returned from Germany in September; a few months later Mr. George Whitefield came back from Georgia. He had got on very well with the people there, because he

did not try to alter the ways they had been accustomed to, unless it was really necessary.

Mr. Wesley went to meet his old friend, and, oh! how pleased they were to see each other again. Mr. Whitefield joined the little society in Fetter Lane, and they all worked together most happily.

I dare say most of my Methodist readers will have been to a love-feast; those of you who have not, will at any rate have heard of them. Well, it was just about this time that love-feasts were first started. The little bands or companies that I told you about used to join together, and have a special prayer meeting once a month on a Saturday; and the following day, which, of course, was Sunday, they all used to meet again between seven o'clock and ten in the evening for a love-feast—a meal of bread and water eaten altogether and with prayer. It was a custom of the Moravians, and it was from them Mr. Wesley copied it. [65]

I have also heard that the love-feast was provided for the people, who had walked a great many miles to hear Mr. Wesley preach, and were tired and hungry. If this was the idea of the love-feast, they would have to give the people a great deal more bread than they do now, or they would still be hungry when they had done.

The year after Mr. Whitefield returned from Georgia, 1739, was a wonderful year for the Methodists. It started with a love-feast and prayer meeting, which lasted half through the night. Then a few days later, on January 5th, the two Mr. Wesleys and Mr. Whitefield, with four other ministers, met together to talk about all they hoped to do during the year, and make rules and plans for their helpers and members.

I told you, if you remember, that first one pulpit and then another was closed against these clergymen. At last there were only two or three churches where they were allowed to preach. One day when Mr. Whitefield was preaching in one of these, the people came in such crowds to hear him, that hundreds could not get into the church. Some of them went away, but a great number stood outside.

All at once there flashed across Mr. Whitefield's mind this thought: "Jesus preached in the open air to the people, why can't I?" Numbers had often before been turned away when he preached, but he had never thought of having a service outside a church, it seemed a most shocking thing. However, the message seemed to come straight from God. He dared not act on it at once, for you see he was a clergyman, and had always been brought up to believe that inside the church was the only place where people can properly worship God. [66]

When he mentioned the matter to his friends, some of them were very much shocked, and thought to preach in the open air would be a very wrong thing. But some said: "We will pray about it, and ask God to show us what we ought to do." So they knelt down and prayed to be guided to do the right thing.

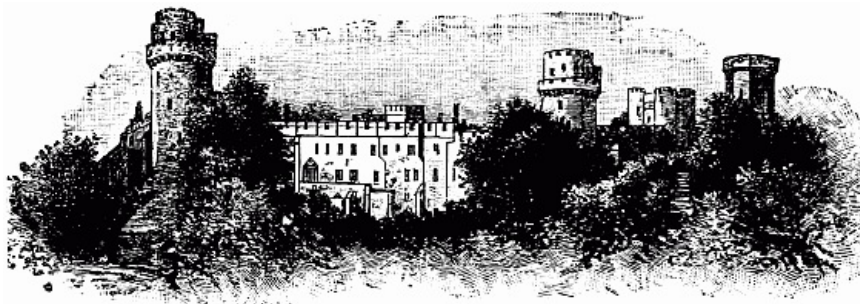
Soon after this Mr. Whitefield went to Bristol, where he had been liked so much before he went to America. When he got there he was invited to preach first in one church and then in another, all were open to him. But before very long the clergymen in the place showed that they disapproved of the plain way in which he spoke to the people, and they told him they would not allow him to preach in their pulpits again.

By and by all the churches were closed against him, and there was nowhere but the prison where he was allowed to preach. Soon the mayor of Bristol closed that door also.

Poor Mr. Whitefield! what could he do now? I think I know one thing he would do. He would turn to his Bible, and there he would read: "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." [67]

In the next chapter you shall hear how God fulfilled His promise to George Whitefield.





CHAPTER XVI.

Kingswood.—Grimy colliers.—The shocking thing is done.—A beautiful church.—From 200 to 20,000.—John Wesley shocked.—Drawing lots.—To be or not to be.—To be.—Mr. Wesley gets over the shock.—George Whitefield's "good-bye" to the colliers.



LONG, long ago, before all this happened that I have been telling you, there was a forest near Bristol where the kings of England used to hunt, Kingswood it was called. But at the time of which I write, most of the trees had been cut down; a great many coal mines had been dug, and the people who lived round about and worked in the mines were a wild and wicked lot. They had no churches, and those in Bristol were three or four miles away.

Surely, Mr. Whitefield thought, these people ought to have the gospel of Jesus Christ preached to them; they have no church, it cannot be wrong to preach to them in the open air. So, one Saturday in this year, 1739, Mr. Whitefield set off to Kingswood. It was a cold winter's day, but his heart was warm inside with love for these poor neglected colliers, and he soon got warm outside with his long walk. [69]

When he reached Kingswood he found an open space called Rose Green, which he thought was just the place for a service. Standing on a little mound which did for a pulpit, he commenced to preach; and surely that was the grandest church in which a Methodist minister ever held a service. The blue sky of heaven was his roof, the green grass beneath him the floor; and as Mr. Whitefield stood in his FIRST FIELD PULPIT, his thoughts went back, down the ages, to the dear Master whose steps he was seeking to follow—the Preacher of Nazareth, whose pulpit was the mountain-side, and whose hearers were the publicans and sinners. Two hundred grimy colliers stood and listened to that earnest young preacher.

Mr. Whitefield continued his visits to Kingswood; the second time, instead of two hundred there were 2,000 eager listeners. The next time over 4,000 came to hear; and so the numbers went on increasing until he had a congregation of 20,000.

Once, after he had been preaching, he wrote this: "The trees and the hedges were all in full leaf, and the sun was shining brightly. All the people were silent and still, and God helped me to speak in such a loud voice that everybody could hear me. All in the surrounding fields were thousands and thousands of people, some in coaches and some on horseback, while many had climbed up into the trees to see and hear." [70]

As Mr. Whitefield preached, nearly all were in tears. Many of the men had come straight from the coal-pits, and the tears that trickled down their cheeks made little white gutters on their grimy faces. Then, in the gathering twilight, they sang the closing hymn, and when the last echoes died away in the deepening shadows, Mr. Whitefield felt how solemn it all was, and he, too, could hardly keep back the tears.

Mr. Whitefield soon found there was more work at Kingswood than he could do alone, so he wrote and asked Mr. John Wesley to come and help him. Being very *proper* sort of clergymen, John and Charles Wesley could not help thinking it a dreadful, and almost a wrong thing to preach anywhere but in a church, or, at any rate, in a room; and for some time they could not decide what to do.

They asked the other members at Fetter Lane what they thought about it; some said Mr. John ought to go, and some said he ought not. So at last they decided to draw lots. You know what that is, don't you? If you look in your Bible, in Acts i. 26, you will see that the disciples drew lots when they wanted to make up their number to twelve, after wicked Judas had killed himself. And in John xix. 24, you can read how the soldiers cast lots for the coat that had belonged to Jesus, which they took away after they had crucified Him. And in many other places in the Bible we read about people casting lots. [71]

So the society at Fetter Lane cast lots, and it came out that Mr. John Wesley should go. Everybody was satisfied after this, and even Mr. Charles, who more than any of the others had objected, now felt that it was right. So Mr. John set off for Bristol and joined his friend.

The first Sunday he was there he heard Mr. Whitefield preach in the open air, and this is what he wrote about it: "It seemed such a strange thing to preach in the fields, when all my life I had

believed in everything being done properly and according to the rules of the Church. Indeed, I should have thought it almost a sin to preach anywhere else."

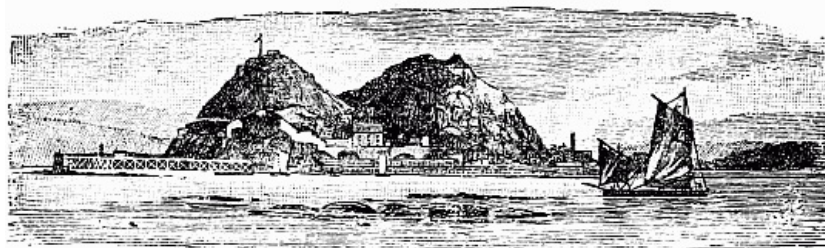
However, because of the lots, he felt it was all right; and he was still more sure of this when he saw the crowds, who would never have gone into a church, listening so intently to God's Word. He very soon got used to open-air preaching, and by and by Mr. Whitefield left the work at Kingswood to him.

When the people heard that Mr. Whitefield was going to leave them, they were very, very sorry; and the day he rode out of Bristol, a number of them, about twenty, rode on horseback with him, they could not bear to say "good-bye."

As he passed through Kingswood, the poor colliers, who were so grateful for all he had done for them, came out to meet him, and told him they had a great surprise for him. They had been very busy collecting money for a school for poor children, and now they wanted their dear friend, Mr. Whitefield, to lay the corner-stone of their new building. [72]

He was surprised and delighted; and when the ceremony was over, he knelt down and prayed that the school might soon be completed, and that God's blessing might ever rest upon it; and all those rough colliers bowed their heads, and uttered a fervent "Amen."

At last "good-bye" was said to the dear minister who had brought them the glad tidings of salvation, and leaving them in charge of Mr. Wesley, George Whitefield rode away.



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CHAPTER XVII.

John Wesley's moral courage.—What some carriage people thought of him.—And why.—The fashionable Beau in the big, white hat.—Interrupts Mr. Wesley.—Gets as good as he gives.—And better.—The King of Bath slinks away.

DO you know what "moral courage" is, young readers? How shall I explain it? I think you will understand it best if I say it is "courage to do what is right." A boy may have courage to fight a bigger boy than himself, but he may not have the moral courage to own to a fault before his school-fellows, or to side with the right when that side is unpopular.

Now, I think John Wesley showed a great deal of moral courage when he started to preach in the open air. Remember, he was born a gentleman, he was educated as a gentleman, and as Fellow of an Oxford College had always mixed with distinguished gentlemen. Then he was brought up a strict Churchman, and had always believed that the ways and rules of the Church were the only right and proper ways. [74]

Fancy this most particular Church clergyman, wearing his gown and bands, just as you have seen him in the pictures, and getting upon a table in the open air, or on the stump of a tree, or climbing into a cart and preaching to a lot of dirty, ignorant men and women. This was, indeed, moral courage; he did it because he felt it was the right thing to do, and that God wanted him to do it.

Mr. Wesley was quite as much liked by the people as Mr. Whitefield had been, and the sight of him preaching was such a wonderful one, that ladies and gentlemen came in their carriages to see and to hear.

In his sermons, Mr. Wesley spoke as plainly to the rich as he did to the poor. He told them how God hated sin, and that it was impossible for a sinner to get to heaven. Some of the ladies and gentlemen did not like this at all, and called Mr. Wesley "rude and ill-mannered," but it made them feel uncomfortable all the same.

You have heard of a place called Bath, and that it is noted for its mineral waters. It is a fashionable place now, but it was a great deal more fashionable in Mr. Wesley's time. Not being far from Bristol, Mr. Wesley used sometimes to go and preach there. Once when he went, some of his friends said: "Don't preach to-day, for Beau Nash means to come and oppose you."

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Beau Nash was a gambler, and in other ways, too, a very bad man. But, somehow, he always managed to get enough money to make a great show, and many of the people looked up to him as a leader of fashion. Indeed, he was quite popular among most of the visitors to Bath.

Of course when Mr. Wesley heard that this man was coming to oppose him, instead of being frightened, he was all the more determined to preach.

A great number of people had assembled, many of them Nash's friends, who had come to see "the fun." By and by Beau Nash himself came, looking very grand in a big white hat, and riding in a coach drawn by six grey horses, with footmen and coachmen all complete.

Soon after Mr. Wesley had commenced his sermon, Beau Nash interrupted him by asking: "Who gave you leave to do what you are doing?"

"Jesus Christ," said Mr. Wesley, "through the Archbishop of Canterbury, when he laid his hands upon my head, and said: 'Take thou authority to preach the gospel.'"

This answer rather settled Beau Nash. Then he accused Mr. Wesley of frightening the people out of their wits.

"Did you ever hear me preach?" said Mr. Wesley.

"No," was the reply.

"Then how do you know I frighten people?"

"By what I have heard."

"Oh!" said Mr. Wesley. "Then is not your name Nash?"

"It is," said the Beau.

"Well, sir, I suppose, then, I must judge you by what I have heard of you."

This reply so confounded the young man that he could not say a word, and when an old woman in the congregation stood up and told the Beau what she thought about him, the "King of Bath," as he was called, slunk away, and took himself off.

This affair made a great stir in Bath, and when Mr. Wesley went through the town the streets were full of people, hurrying up and down, wanting to see him.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

Good out of evil.—What Mr. Wesley preached.—"Hurrah!"—In the prison.—How the wicked Methodists spoiled the woollen trade.—Emilia Wesley says strong things.—In the sunlight.



KNOW you will have thought it very unkind of the clergymen not allowing such a good man as Mr. Wesley to preach in their churches; and so it was, very unkind, and very wrong. These clergymen thought so themselves after a time; but God often uses the wrong doings of people to bring about a great good, and He did so in this case.

Perhaps if the churches had not been closed against Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitefield they would never have preached in the open air, and thousands of people, who would not go to a church, might never have heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

You boys and girls love father and mother and home, do you not? And when you have been

away at day-school or boarding-school, oh! how glad you always are to get to them again. Well, in the same way we all come from God; He is our Father, and heaven is our home, and all of us, deep down inside of us, have a longing to go home again some day. But Adam and Eve had to be punished for their disobedience; and the punishment was that they and all that were born after them should die, and never go back to home and to God. This was a terrible punishment, was it not? But you know how Jesus Christ, God's Son, in His great love and pity for us said He would come down from heaven, and be a man on earth; that He would go through life just as we have to do, and at last die. Then God said if His dear Son did this, and lived on earth a life that should be a beautiful copy for men and women and boys and girls to follow; and if the people would believe on Him and follow His example, God would forgive them, and they should go back to Him, their Father, and to heaven their home.

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All this Mr. Wesley explained to the people, and told them if they believed this and loved and followed the Saviour that died for them, they would always be happy, and God would give them His own peace, the peace He has promised to those that love Him.

One wonders how the clergymen could disapprove of such preaching, and why they should shut Mr. Wesley out of their pulpit, for if they did not preach this same Gospel they certainly ought to have done.

However, Mr. Wesley got much larger congregations outside the churches than they ever got inside, and wherever he went hundreds of people believed the wonderful story he told them, and became true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Strange things happened at his services; some of the people were so overjoyed at what they heard they could not help shouting "Hurrah!" and "Hallelujah!" and they poked each other in the ribs, as much as to say: "Isn't that good?"

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Then, when Mr. Wesley told them how Jesus Christ suffered, and how cruelly Judas betrayed Him, and that He allowed all this in order that we might be saved, the people would burst into tears, and you could hear their sobs all over the great congregation. All sorts of people came to the services, thieves and gamblers, poor people and rich people, and all heard the same glad tidings of salvation.

Mr. Wesley did not remain at Bristol; several times he went up to London, and wherever he went crowds came to hear him. One day when he was preaching at Newgate, a prison in London, and was telling the people what would become of them if they did not give up their wicked ways, a woman whom he had known for many years as a very bad character, burst into tears and begged Mr. Wesley to pray for her. Many of the other prisoners did the same, and numbers believed in Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and became Christian men and women.

It was just wonderful; but it is sad to think that if these people had only heard the Gospel before, they might never have been the wicked men and women they were. As soon as ever they heard, they believed.

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All the magazines and newspapers that were published were full of the doings of the Methodists. They were still called all sorts of names and abused dreadfully. But the good people had got so used to this that they did not mind, indeed, they hardly expected any other treatment. In those days very few of the poor people could read, and one newspaper complained that nearly every one who went to hear the Methodists wanted to learn to read the Bible, and as soon as ever he could spell out a chapter he would go and read it to some one who could not read, and then they would talk about it together. This, the paper said, wasted a great deal of time, for the men were so busy talking and reading their Bibles that they could not get on with their work, and the woollen trade in Yorkshire would soon be ruined. Of course this last was not true, and was only said to stop the Methodists from preaching. It showed, however, how sincere and how much in earnest the people were.

But amidst all the persecutions of mobs of ignorant and brutal men and women who knew no better, and of abuse and slander by the rich and the educated, who ought to have known better, nothing pained Mr. Wesley so much as the unkind words of his sister Emilia. She was his favourite sister, and he thought a great deal about her opinion. In an angry letter she wrote him, she said the Methodists were "a lot of bad people."

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However, John Wesley and his friends calmly went on doing the work they felt God had called them to do. The peace of God was in their hearts, and the sunlight of His love brightened their faces, and made them tender and forgiving to all their enemies. As Jesus Christ prayed for the cruel men who crucified Him, so they prayed: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."



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CHAPTER XIX.

Don't believe all you hear.—Mrs. Wesley finds her "dear Jack" true to his colours.—She joins the Methodists.—And thus dreadfully shocks her eldest son.—Death of Mr. Samuel Wesley.—A loving mother's letter to "her boy."



THINK Mr. Wesley's greatest trouble at this time was, that even his dear mother, whom he had not seen for a long, long time, believed many of the things that people were saying about him, and felt sure he had wandered away from the true religion of Jesus Christ.

It does not do for us to believe all we hear, and when at last Mrs. Wesley went to London, and saw and talked with her sons, she found all the tales had been untrue, and that her "dear Jack" was the same loyal soldier and servant of Jesus Christ that he had ever been. [83]

Instead of going back to where she had been living, Mrs. Wesley, freed from her fears, remained in London with her "boys," a proud and happy mother. She joined the Society in Fetter Lane, went every Sunday to hear her sons preach, and helped them in every way she could. Once she stood by Mr. Wesley's side when he preached on Kennington Common to a congregation of about 20,000 people, and I don't know which was the prouder, mother or son.

You remember Mr. Samuel Wesley, the eldest brother? He was one who strongly disapproved of open-air preaching, and thought John and Charles were very much in the wrong for not behaving like other clergymen. When he heard that even his mother had joined the Methodists he was more indignant than ever, and wrote her what I think was a very rude letter.

"I was very much surprised and grieved," he said, "when I heard that you had joined the Methodists, and, indeed, become one of Jack's congregation. My brothers are brothers to me no longer, and now, must my mother follow too?"

It is sad to think that two weeks after Mr. Samuel wrote this he was taken ill and died in a few hours. He was a clever and a sensible man, but he did not understand, or even try to understand, the work his brothers were doing, and, therefore, disapproved of it.

When Mr. Wesley heard the news of his brother's death he set off at once to Bristol to Mr. Charles, and together they went to Tiverton to comfort and help their sister-in-law. They forgot all the unkind things their brother had said against them, and only thought how they could best show their love and sympathy to those that were left. [84]

Poor Mrs. Wesley was very ill when she heard the sad news. She had always dearly-loved her eldest child, and his death was a great sorrow. But she said: "It is God's will, therefore it is all right."

You can tell what a real comfort Mr. John was to her at this time, by the letter she wrote to Charles at Bristol about a month after Mr. Samuel's death. This is what she said:

"DEAR CHARLES,

"You cannot want to see me more than I want to see you. Your brother Jack, whom I shall call son Wesley, now that my dear Sam is gone home, has just been in to see me, and has cheered me up ever so much. Indeed, he never comes but he does me good; his visits are all too seldom and too short. For this I cannot blame him, for I know he is about his Heavenly Father's business.

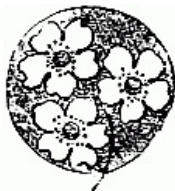
"But, dear Charles, I do so want one of you, for I feel weak as a little child. I do pray that God will bless you both in your work, and keep you from harm; and that He will give you strength and courage to preach the true Gospel of Jesus Christ.

"This is the hearty prayer of, dear Charles,

"Your loving mother,
"SUSANNA WESLEY."

Is not that a loving letter? No wonder Mr. Charles prized it very much. Little folks generally take care of all the letters they get. I know I did when I was a little girl, indeed I have some of them now. Grown-up people usually tear theirs up, they get so many. But this letter that Mr. [85]

Charles had from his dear old mother was too precious to be so treated; he took great care of it, and after his death it was found among his papers.



[86]

CHAPTER XX.

A very old school.—The first Methodist Chapel.—Well done, Bristol!—Empty purses.—How they were filled.—The penny-a-week rule.



YOU remember the school at Kingswood, that the colliers collected the money for and started? Although it is one hundred and fifty years ago since it was opened, there has been a school at Kingswood ever since, and it is the very oldest thing we have in connection with Methodism.

If you will listen at chapel some time—in October I think it generally is—you will hear the minister say: "Collections will be taken to-day, morning and evening, on behalf of the Kingswood Schools." When you hear this will you just think, that the money you give is for the same school that was started by those good-hearted colliers near Bristol, more than one hundred and fifty years ago.

Now I must tell you of the very first Methodist Chapel that was ever built; for this, too, we have to thank the Bristol people. Having heard about Jesus Christ themselves, they were eager for their friends and neighbours to hear about Him too. They worked very hard, and were so much in earnest inviting people to come to the services, that at last the room where they held their meeting got far too small for all the people who wanted to come. It was only a tumble-down sort of place, and they were afraid the floor might give way or the roof fall in, and somebody be hurt.

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At last they secured a piece of ground in what was called the Horse Fair in Bristol, and one bright May morning, in 1739, the first stone of the

FIRST METHODIST CHAPEL

was laid, amidst great shouting of praise and thanksgiving. I have called it a Chapel, but the Methodists called it a "Preaching House."

You may think what a great deal of money it took to carry on all the work that the Methodists were doing; sometimes their purses were very empty, and they wondered however they should get them filled again. But it was God's work they were doing, and of course the money always came.

Like most Methodist Chapels nowadays, the money to pay for the Bristol Preaching House was not got all at once; but a plan was adopted which, I think, was a very good one. Every Methodist in Bristol promised to pay a penny a week until all the money was raised; and as there were some hundreds of Methodists, the debt was soon paid off. Some of the people, however, were too poor to pay even this small amount, so it was arranged that the richer men should each call upon eleven poorer ones every week, and collect their pennies, and when they could not give them, the rich man was to make it up. This was the beginning of the weekly class money which your fathers and mothers, if they are Methodists, pay in their class-meetings to-day.

[88]

When Mr. Wesley told the society in Fetter Lane, London, of the good plan the Bristol people had made, they adopted it too, and always after that wherever the Methodists commenced a society, the penny-a-week rule was followed.





CHAPTER XXI.

An explosion.—A new business at the old Foundry.—Mr. Wesley and his mother at home.—Grand helpers.—Poor little Tom.—The worst man in Bristol.—And one of the best.

HOW old would John Wesley be in 1716, if he was born in 1703? Thirteen, would he not? a school-boy at the Charterhouse School. In that year there was a terrible explosion at a cannon foundry, where the guns were made for war. The roof of the building was blown off, and a great many workmen were injured and killed.

After this explosion, the machinery and iron were removed to Woolwich, which, as you will learn in your geography is still the great place for making cannon and other weapons of war. All the years from 1716 to 1739 the old foundry had never been touched, there it was, still in ruins.

One day in this year, 1739, while Mr. Wesley was in London, two gentlemen came and asked him if he would preach in this old tumble-down place. He consented, and one dreary November morning at eight o'clock, before the grey clouds of night had fled, he preached to about six thousand people in the old King's Foundry. [90]

The following week many of those who had listened to him, came and begged him to buy the old place for a meeting-house. After thinking and praying about the matter he consented, and before very long the roof was mended, galleries were made, and the first Methodist preaching-place in London was ready for use.

Class-rooms and a school-room were afterwards built, and a house fitted up where Mr. Wesley and his mother could live. At the end of the chapel was another house for his servants and some of his helpers. There was also a coach-house and stable where the travelling preachers could "put up."

Though Mr. John and Mr. Charles Wesley were so clever and worked so hard, they could never have got on without their earnest, loving helpers. There was Thomas Maxfield, one of those devoted, go-a-head men of Bristol; then there was John Nelson, a stone-mason, in Yorkshire, who, when his master wanted him to work on Sunday, refused; and, like other Methodists, having become a Christian himself he sought to win others for Christ.

Thomas Olivers was another. Poor Thomas, when he was a wee boy, only four years old, both his father and his mother died, and little Tom was left to grow up a wicked boy. He used to swear and gamble and drink, and when he became a man was one of the worst characters in Bristol. But he heard Mr. Whitefield preach, and from that time a change came over him. He felt he was too great a sinner ever to be forgiven, and would kneel down and pray for hours and hours. God saw how sorry he was for all his wickedness, and how much he longed to be different, so He just whispered His forgiveness, bidding him, "Go and sin no more," and Thomas Olivers rose up a converted man, and became as brave a Christian as he had been bold a sinner. [91]



CHAPTER XXII.

Billy and Polly.—A little sunbeam visits Sandgate.—What happened at seven o'clock in the morning.—And at five o'clock in the evening.—"The Old, Old Story."—Newcastle wants to know more.—But Newcastle has to wait.—John Wesley goes back to Bristol.—The Kingswood of the North.



"HO'S yon man?"

"Which man?"

"Yon. Him with the long hair, and dressed like a parson."

"I dunno. Why there's two on 'em."

"I say, Polly, let's go and hear 'em, they're singing. Come on, Bob."

Bob and Billy and Polly were very ragged and very dirty children, and they lived in Newcastle.

The boys were almost naked, and Polly, though nearly fifteen had no clothes on at all, only a dirty bit of blanket wrapped round her. Their fathers and mothers worked in the coal mines, and because they had never been taught different, they were drunken, swearing, wicked people; even the children cursed and swore. [93]

But Bob and Billy and Polly have got to the top of Sandgate, the street where their miserable home is; let us follow. Some of their companions are with them, children as ragged and dirty as themselves. The women, too, have come to their doors to listen. What is it these men are singing? Hark!

All peo - ple that on earth do dwell
Sing to the Lord with cheer - ful voice;
Him serve with fear, His praiso forth tell;
Come ye be - fore Him and ro - jice.

[Transcriber's Note: You can play this music (MIDI file) by clicking [here](#).]

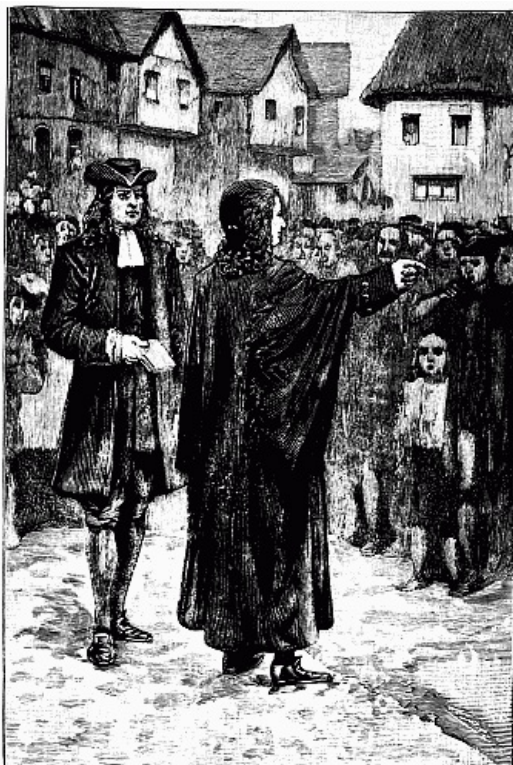
All people that on earth do dwell
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;
Him serve with fear, His praise forth tell:
Come ye before Him and rejoice.

[94]

It was a lovely May morning, and a kind little sunbeam had left the green fields and the

chirping birdlets to peep into Sandgate. I think it must have heard the singing, and wanted to shine its gladness, that God's praises were at last being sung to those poor people.

It was quite early, about seven o'clock in the morning, and some of the men and women were still in bed; but little sunbeam went first to one and then to another and kissed them awake, and when they had rubbed their eyes and opened their ears, they heard a strange sound. What could it be? They had never heard anything like it before.



They sat up in bed and listened, then they got dressed, and then they went out. The music acted like a magic spell, and drew them to it. One man, two men, three men, four men, five men; oh, dear! there are too many to count. Such a number of women too, why, there must be five hundred people all together, and still they keep coming. One of the gentlemen is now talking. Listen what he is saying! He is preaching a sermon, and this is his text: "*He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.*" He is telling those poor men and women that it was Jesus, the Son of God, who suffered this for them, *because He loved them.*

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The people, who numbered about twelve hundred, stood gaping and staring, they had never heard anything like this before.

"Who are you?" shouted one man.

"What do you mean?" called out another.

The gentleman with the long hair and beautiful face answered them: "If you want to know who I am, my name is John Wesley, and if you come to yon hill at five o'clock to-night, I'll tell you what I mean."

"If you come to yon hill at five o'clock to-night, I'll tell you what I mean."—Page 95.

At five o'clock the hill was covered with people from the top to the bottom, and as Mr. Wesley stood with that great crowd round him, all eager to learn about the wonderful Saviour who had died for them, and of whom they had never heard, tears of pity filled his eyes, and a big love for them filled his heart.

Oh, so sweetly and tenderly did he read to them God's own words: "*I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely;*" and then he told them the "Old, Old Story."

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He told it very slowly:

"That they might take it in,
That wonderful redemption,
God's remedy for sin.'

He told them the story simply:

'As to a little child,
For they were weak and weary,
And helpless and defied.'

He told them the story softly:

'With earnest tones and grave,
For were they not the sinners
Whom Jesus came to save?'"

When the preacher finished, the people stood as if spell-bound, then they all crowded and pressed round him, full of love and kindness towards the man who had brought them such good news. They nearly trampled him down in their eagerness to speak to him, and he had to slip round a back way in order to escape. When he got to the inn where he was staying, he found some of the people had got there before him; they had come to beg and pray him to stay among them. No, he could not.

"Stay a few days," said one. No, he could not do that.

"Just one day more," they begged.

Poor Mr. Wesley was very loth to leave these eager hearers, but he had promised to be in Bristol on the Tuesday, and this was Sunday night, and it would take him all the time to get to his appointment, and he was a man that could not break his word. So he was sadly obliged to refuse.

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Before very long, however, Mr. Charles Wesley went to Newcastle, and after a time, Mr. Wesley himself paid a second visit.

It was a plan of the Methodists always to go to the poorest and most uncared-for people. These they generally found among the colliers. Wherever there were coal mines, the district round them was sure to be the abode of dirt, ignorance, and sin. You remember what a dreadful place Kingswood was when the Methodists first went? Because they found Newcastle just as bad, they called it "The Kingswood of the North."



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CHAPTER XXIII.

A magic mirror.—And the picture it shows us.—Billy and Polly again.—Hurrah for Newcastle!—John and Charles Wesley put their heads together.—The result.—Strict Rules.—Circuits in Methodism.



HAVE you ever heard of the Magic Mirror? It is a mirror I would like to have. You just think of something you would very much like to see; something either in the past, the present, or the future, peep into the mirror and there it is.

Let us imagine that we have this mirror, and that we want to look at a particular part of Newcastle in the year 1742.

What do we see?

A big unfinished building with all the walls standing, but no roof, no doors, and no windows. It is a cold winter's day; but in spite of the biting wind and the frosty air there are hundreds of people crowding inside and outside the walls. Right in the middle stands the gentleman with the long hair and the beautiful face.

[99]

It is Mr. Wesley opening the first meeting-house in Newcastle. Oh, how hard those poor colliers and their wives, yes, and the children too, worked to get money to build their chapel. On this opening day they were so proud and happy they could not keep still. They kept shouting "Hallelujah!" all the time Mr. Wesley was preaching. Three or four times he had to stop in the middle of his sermon on purpose to let them praise God.

Bob, and Billy, and Polly were at that opening; they loved Mr. Wesley, and always tried to get as near to him as they could. They were not ragged now, for their fathers and mothers were converted, and their money was no longer spent in drink. The children, too, had learnt to love Jesus, and were trying to be like Him, and no cursing or swearing was ever heard.

Scores of men and women in Newcastle that day, thanked God they had got out of bed that Sunday morning in May, and heard Mr. Wesley sing at the top of Sandgate.

The Methodists had now chapels or meeting-houses in Bristol, London, Kingswood, and Newcastle, and societies were being formed in a great many other places. When Mr. Wesley found the work was spreading so fast, he saw it was necessary to draw up some general rules for all the members to follow.

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His brother Charles helped him in this difficult task. These are some of the rules which together they drew up, and which all who joined the Methodists had to promise to obey.

Members of society must not swear.

Must keep the Sabbath Day holy.

Must not buy or sell intoxicating liquor.

Must not drink intoxicating liquor, except as medicine.

Must not fight.

Must not quarrel.

Must return good for evil.

Must not speak evil of any one.

Must do to others as we would have them do to us.

Must not wear a great deal of jewellery or expensive clothes.

Must not go to any place of amusement where they would not like to meet Jesus.

Must not sing songs or read books that will not help them to love God more.

Must not buy anything unless they are quite sure they will be able to pay for it.

Must be kind to everybody, and give help to all, as far as they are able;

By feeding the hungry;

Clothing the naked;

Visiting the sick and those in prison;

By "running with patience the race that is set before them;"

By denying themselves and taking up their cross daily.

[101]

They must go to chapel regularly.

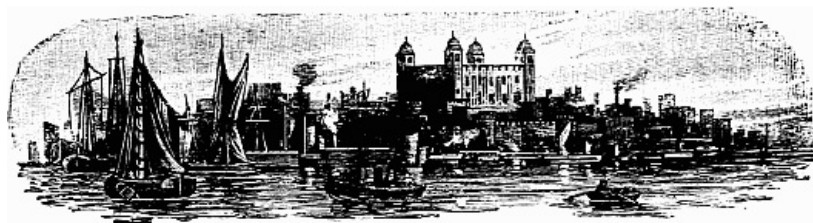
Must take the Sacrament.

And, lastly, have family and private prayer every day.

Were not these strict rules? But the people were so much in earnest, and had such trust in their leader, Mr. Wesley, that they were quite willing to agree to them.

The next thing Mr. Wesley did was to send out his helpers, generally two together, to certain districts where they usually remained for a year. They had to preach in all the places round about, and each particular district or tract of country was called a "circuit." This was the beginning of the "circuits" which we have in Methodism to-day. I dare say you have often heard father or mother say, "Oh, Mr. So and So has gone to another circuit;" or, "Mr. So and So is in our circuit now."

London and Bristol always remained the chief circuits; but before very long Newcastle became the next in importance.



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CHAPTER XXIV.

Another peep into the Magic Mirror.—A pretty picture.—At Epworth.—Mr. Wesley is very unkindly treated.—All for the best.—The curate is "done."—A happy ending to a bad beginning.—"Good-bye, Epworth."



HALL we have another peep into the Magic Mirror? See that pretty country church, with the square tower. There are some big trees near, looking as if they were tall giants keeping guard; they have no leaves on them yet, and their bare arms stretch out a long way as if they were trying to reach the church.

If you look carefully you will see buds coming out on the trees, baby buds they are, waiting for the sun's kisses. Then they will burst out and grow into great leaves that will cover up the naked old trees. Ivy climbs up the church wall. I see its dark glossy leaves, for the ivy is evergreen.

There are many graves in the churchyard, but you can hardly see them because people are sitting on them; such a number of people, hundreds more than could ever have got into the church. They are all looking one way, and seem to be listening very attentively. What are they looking at? They are looking at a gentleman who is standing all alone on a big flat tombstone near the church wall. He wears a gown and white bands like a clergyman, and he has long hair brushed very smoothly, and a beautiful, happy face.

[103]

Dear me! did I hear a crash then? And did I hear a hundred young voices shouting: "I know who it is, it's Mr. John Wesley"? Why, you must have broken the mirror with your shouts. You are right, dears, but you shouted rather too soon. I wanted to read what it said on the tombstone on which Mr. Wesley was standing. But, never mind, I think I saw some of the words:

"SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF
SAMUEL WESLEY,
FOR THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS RECTOR OF EPWORTH."

Yes, it was his father's grave on which John Wesley was standing.

On his way back from one of his visits to Newcastle he thought he would like to see his dear old home once more. It was a long, long time since he had been there, and he was not quite sure whether the people would have anything to do with him now, for, as leader of the Methodists, he had many enemies.

It was Saturday evening in early spring, when he got to the little inn, in the long straggling street that was called Epworth village. He had not been there very long before three or four poor women found him out, one of them an old servant of his mother's. [104]

Next morning, which was Sunday, he went to the curate of the church and politely offered to help him with the service. The curate, I am sorry to say, was very rude, and refused to let Mr. Wesley take any part in the service or to preach in the church at all.

This was a great disappointment, for Mr. Wesley loved the people of Epworth, and every stone in the old church was dear to him. His father had preached from that pulpit for nearly forty years, and he himself had stood there more times than he could count, and it was very hard that he was forbidden to take his place there now.

The people were longing to hear him, and when the afternoon service was over, and all the folks were leaving the church, one of his friends stood in the churchyard and gave out this notice:

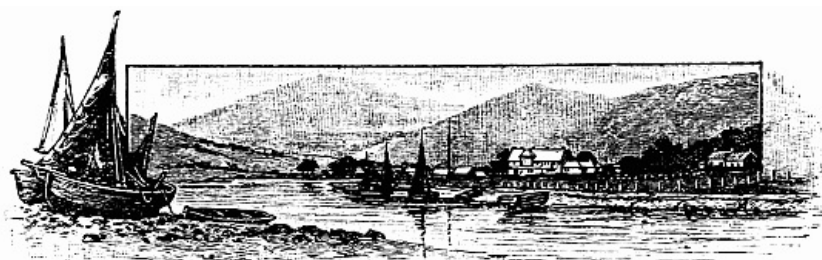
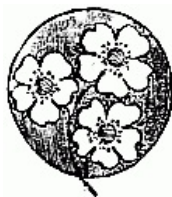
"MR. WESLEY, NOT BEING ALLOWED TO PREACH
IN THE CHURCH, INTENDS TO PREACH HERE AT
SIX O'CLOCK THIS EVENING."

It was this picture of Mr. Wesley preaching that the Magic Mirror showed us. I expect the curate was very angry at being so "done;" but he could not stop Mr. Wesley preaching *outside* the church.

For a whole week John Wesley preached every evening from his father's tombstone. Crowds came to hear him, and hundreds were converted and turned from their evil ways. They saw how sinful they had been and prayed aloud for forgiveness. Drunkards became sober men, and those who cursed and swore were turned into peace-makers. [105]

So dear old Mr. Wesley's prayers were answered, and the people who had treated him so unkindly, and whom he had forgiven and loved, now took his Saviour to be their Saviour, and his God to be their God.

Indeed Mr. Wesley's visit to his old home, that began so unpleasantly, ended very happily, and when his last evening came, both he and his dear people found it hard to say "Good-bye."



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CHAPTER XXV.

No one like mother.—Sad days at the Foundry.—Mrs. Wesley goes Home through the Beautiful Gate.—A sorrowing son.—Preaching at the open grave.—At work again.—Satan in opposition.—Fireworks, cows, stones, blood, and broken windows.



GOOD mother is a boy's or a girl's best earthly friend. John Wesley knew this, and thought there was no mother like *his* mother. You remember how, as a little boy, he always went to her for advice; and when he was quite a young man he used to hope that he would die before her, for he felt he could not live without his mother. You may think, then, how sad he was when, at last, the message came to him that she was dying.

He was at Bristol when he received the news, and at once set off for London. Arrived at his home at the Foundry, he found his five sisters watching round the bed of the dear old mother.

Though she was too ill to speak to them, they could see she was quite happy and peaceful, just waiting to be taken Home. Before long the call came: "Come up higher." [107]

A great number of people came to the funeral; and as Mr. Wesley stood at the graveside, he preached one of his most wonderful sermons. His heart was full; he had lost the friend of his life. But he knew it was not for ever, one day he would meet her again; and as he looked on those hundreds of people gathered there by the open grave, he longed that they should, as surely, some day pass Home through the Beautiful Gate.

Work is the best cure for sorrow; and after his dear mother's death, Mr. Wesley began his preaching again. Wherever he went people were converted, and became followers of Jesus Christ; and also wherever he went wicked men and women tried to stop him preaching, and sometimes even wanted to kill him. But he was doing God's work, and God took care of him.

Once he was preaching to hundreds of people in an open space somewhere in London. In the middle of his sermon, several men tried to drive a herd of cows among the listeners. They wanted to frighten them, and force them to go away. But the cows were wiser than their masters, and would not go among the people. Then these bad men started throwing stones, and one of them hit Mr. Wesley just between his eyes. What do you think he did? Give up preaching and go home? Indeed he did not; he just wiped the blood off his face, and went on telling the people to repent of their sins and believe on the Son of God. Brave John Wesley! [108]

Bristol, you remember, was the first place where Mr. Wesley preached out of doors, and it was at Bristol where there was the first great disturbance.

I don't quite know how it was, but just about this time, wherever the Methodists went, they were abused and ill-treated. I think Satan was beginning to find out how much good the Methodists were doing, and thought it was about time he did something to stop it. So, in all the towns where the preachers went, he stirred up the worst men and women to make rows and disturb the services.

At Chelsea, the rioters threw fireworks into the room; at another place they broke in the roof, and some of the people were nearly killed. At Bristol, the mob filled the streets, shouting, and cursing, and swearing. When the constables caught the ring-leaders and took them before the mayor, they began to speak against Mr. Wesley, but the mayor stopped them. "Whatever Mr. Wesley is, is nothing to you," he said. "I won't allow any rioting in this city, and you must go to prison." This was the first and last disturbance at Bristol. But the worst of it was, at most of the places, neither the constables nor the mayor would interfere, and so the people did just as they liked.

At Wednesbury, in Staffordshire, the Methodists were most cruelly treated. One of the rioters used to blow a horn, and then all the mob gathered together. They went to every house where there was a Methodist, smashed the windows, dragged the furniture out and broke it up, and burnt the beds. If the men or women interfered, they just knocked them down; even the little children they used to beat. But I think I will leave the exciting scenes at Wednesbury for another chapter. [109]



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CHAPTER XXVI.

Brave as a lion.—A protecting angel.—God's magic.—Foes become friends.—An unpleasant walk in rain and darkness.—What the mayor said.—A free fight.—"Knock the parson down! Kill him at once!"—Magic again.—A butcher to the rescue.—Safe back in Wednesbury.



WHEN Mr. Wesley heard how his followers were being treated in Wednesbury, he went off at once to their help. Though he was only a little man, he was as brave as a lion; he knew he had God at his back, and like David before Goliath, like Daniel before Darius, and like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego before Nebuchadnezzar, he did not fear what man could do unto him.

God sent His angel to close the lions' mouths so they would not harm Daniel; and the same messenger walked in the fiery furnace with the three Hebrew youths. So, when Mr. Wesley went straight into the market-place in Wednesbury, and fearlessly preached to the hundreds assembled there, God's protecting angel breathed silence and calm; not a sound of disturbance was heard. In the evening the mob surrounded the house where Mr. Wesley was staying, shouting out fiercely:

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"Bring out the minister! We will have the minister!"

Mr. Wesley, neither frightened nor excited, quietly asked one of his friends to bring in the ringleader of the mob. The man came in, anger and fierceness in his eyes. But, somehow, as soon as he stood in the presence of that calm, Christ-like man, all his passion went out of him. Mr. Wesley then asked him to bring in two or three of his roughest companions. The angry men came in. They had wanted to get at the minister, now they had the chance. But once inside that room, they found they could not touch him. They felt the presence of God's protecting angel, and peace took the place of passion, and friendliness the place of hatred. Getting Mr. Wesley between them, these strange, new friends made a way for him through the mob outside the house.

Then, standing on a chair, Mr. Wesley spoke to the crowd.

"You wanted me," he said. "Here I am. Now what do you want me for?"

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"We want you to go with us to the magistrate," they cried.

"I will go with you with all my heart," he replied.

So away went the brave ambassador for Christ, accompanied by hundreds of the roughest men and women in Wednesbury.

It was two miles to the magistrate's house, and before they had got half-way the night came on, and it began to rain very heavily. This made most of the people turn back and hurry home, but two hundred or more kept together round Mr. Wesley.

Some of the men ran on first to tell the magistrate they'd got the Methodist preacher. Instead of seeming pleased, the magistrate said:

"What have I to do with Mr. Wesley? Take him back again." So he sent them off, and went to bed.

By and by the crowd came up to the house, and knocked at the door. When the magistrate's son went to them and asked what was the matter, they said:

"Why, please, sir, these Methodists sing psalms all day, and make folks get up at five o'clock in the morning, and what would your worship advise us to do?"

"To go home and be quiet," replied the gentleman.

[113]

Finding they could get no help from this magistrate, they hurried poor Mr. Wesley off to another. This gentleman, too, had gone to bed, and so the mob could do nothing else but go home.

However, before they had got very far they were joined by another rough mob from a neighbouring town; and then, in the rain and the darkness, the two mobs started fighting and knocking each other down. It was no use Mr. Wesley trying to speak, for the shouting and noise was like the roaring of the sea. They dragged him along with them until they reached the town, and then, seeing the door of a large house open, Mr. Wesley tried to get in. But one of the cruel men got him by the hair and pulled him back into the middle of the mob; and then they dragged him from one end of the town to the other.

"I talked all the time to those that were within hearing," said Mr. Wesley, afterwards, "and I never felt the least pain or weariness."

At last he saw a shop door half open, and tried to get in, but the gentleman to whom the shop belonged would not let him.

"Why, the people would pull my house down," he said, "if I let you in."

However, Mr. Wesley stood at the door and shouted to the people: "Are you willing to hear me

speak?"

"No, no; knock him down! Kill him at once!" cried hundreds of voices.

"Nay, let's hear him first," shouted others.

"What harm have I done any of you?" exclaimed the fearless preacher. "Which of you have I wronged in word or deed?"

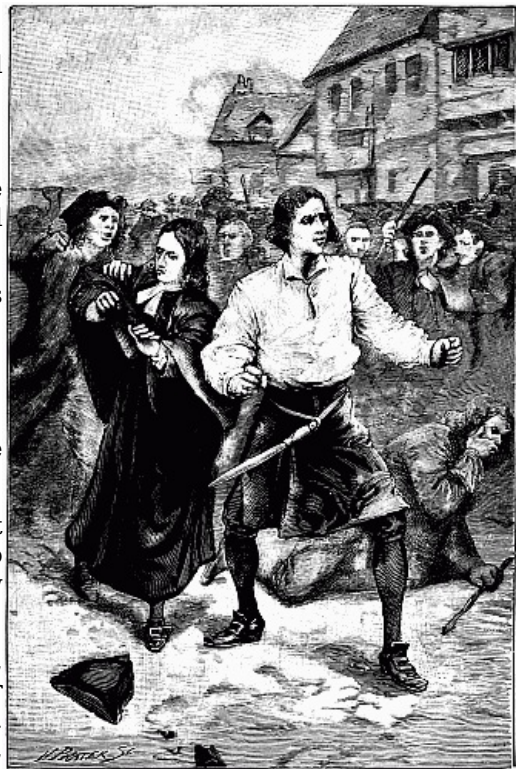
For a quarter of an hour he talked to them, then his voice suddenly gave way, the strain had been too great.

Then the cruel mob cried out again: "Bring him away! Bring him away!"

But Mr. Wesley's strength had come back, and he began to pray aloud.

That prayer acted like magic; the man who had just before been the leader of that brutal crowd, turning to Mr. Wesley, said: "Sir, I will spend my life for you; follow me, and no one here shall touch a hair of your head."

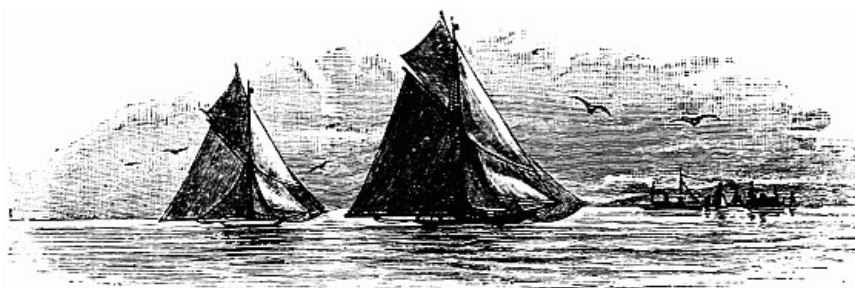
Two or three of his companions said almost the same, and surrounded Mr. Wesley to protect him. Then four or five rough men set upon them, and tried to drag Mr. Wesley away; but a butcher, who was a little further off, shouted, "Shame! shame!" and pulled them back one after another. Some one else shouted, "For shame! For shame! let the good man go!"



"Knock him down! Kill him at once!" cried hundreds of voices.—Page 114.

Then, just as if they had been struck by magic, all the people drew back right and left, and Mr. Wesley was carried safely through.

But the danger was not quite over even yet. On the bridge which they had to cross, the mob assembled again; but Mr. Wesley's protectors took him across a mill-dam and then through some fields, and at last brought him safe into Wednesbury, with no other damage than a torn coat and a little skin scraped off one of his hands.



CHAPTER XXVII.

Mr. Wesley's story of the Wednesbury riot.—How he felt.—The right pocket.—Beautiful hair.—The prize-fighter a good protector.—A brick, a stone, and two hard blows.—Daniel vi. 22.



AFTER reading the last exciting chapter, you will all exclaim, "Well, Mr. Wesley was a brave man!" and I am sure you will like to hear what he himself said about his adventures. These are the very words he wrote after the Wednesbury riots:

"From the beginning to the end, I felt as calm as if I had been sitting in my study at home. Once it did come into my mind, that if they threw me into the river, it would spoil the papers I had in my pocket. I was not afraid for myself, for I did not doubt but I could swim across to the opposite bank.

"Thinking about it all now, I notice some remarkable circumstances. One was, that though

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several tried to get hold of me, it seemed as if they could not, and when at last one did get hold of my coat and tore the pocket off, it was the right pocket for him to get, for it contained nothing of importance; whereas if he had torn off the other he would have got a bank-note with it.

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"Another was, a big strong fellow just behind struck at me several times with a large oak stick. One blow had it hit me would have killed me, but somehow every time he struck, the blow was turned aside. I don't know how, for I could not move either to the right hand or to the left.

"Another man came rushing through the crowd and raised his arm to strike me. Suddenly he let his arm drop, and only stroked my hair, saying: 'What beautiful hair he has!'

"It was strange too, that the very first men whose hearts were softened were always the leaders of the mob—one of them had been a prize-fighter. So that when they took my part I was well protected.

"Again, from first to last I heard no one give me a reviling word, or call me by any insolent or disgraceful name whatever. The cry of one and all was: 'The Preacher! The Preacher! The Parson! The Minister!'"

Again Mr. Wesley wrote:

"By what gentle and gradual steps does God prepare us for His will! Two years ago a brick that was thrown at me grazed my shoulders. Then a year after that, the stone struck me between the eyes when I was preaching in London. This evening I have received two blows; one man struck me on the chest with all his might, and another on the mouth with such force that the blood gushed out immediately. But both were as nothing, I felt no more pain from either of the blows, than if the men had touched me with a straw."

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Boys and girls, is not this a wonderful story? Get your Bibles, and look in the sixth chapter of the book of Daniel and the twenty-second verse.

Wicked men had laid a trap for King Darius, and because they were envious of Daniel, they caused the king to order Daniel to be thrown into the lions' den. This made King Darius very unhappy, for he loved Daniel. But though he was a heathen king, he had such faith in Daniel's God, that he felt sure the lions would not be allowed to hurt him.

King Darius could not sleep all night, for thinking of Daniel all alone in the den of those wild beasts; so he got up very early in the morning, and went to the den and called to Daniel to know if he were alive. And from inside that dismal den with hungry beasts prowling round and round, came the bright, cheering voice of the God-protected man: "My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me."

John Wesley was as much among wild beasts at Wednesbury, as ever Daniel was in the den of lions, for when men's passions are roused they are no better than the beasts. But the arm that was raised to strike, gently stroked his hair; the blow that was meant to kill, fell upon an invisible head; the leaders of all that was cruel and wicked, were struck tender and quiet, and became personal protectors.

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Truly Mr. Wesley could have said with Daniel: "My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me."



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CHAPTER XXVIII.

The lion-hearted Wesleys.—And their brave, long-suffering followers.—What Munchin thought of John Wesley.—Hymn 276 and how it came to be written.—The mischievous schoolboy becomes the sweet singer of Methodism.—The wall that sat down.—And the people who sat down with it.

HE troubles in Wednesbury were not yet ended. The very magistrates who had refused to see Mr.



Wesley that night when the mob dragged him to the door, a few days later gave orders for the police to search everywhere for "those Methodist preachers who go about raising riots."

Even this failed to frighten the brave-hearted Wesleys, for when John left Wednesbury his brother Charles took his place. He found the poor Methodists still suffering terrible persecutions, but patient and forgiving to their enemies. Christ's own words were their help and comfort: "*Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*" (Matt. v. 10).

Munchin, the man who had been one of the leaders of the mob and afterwards protected Mr. Wesley, had joined the Methodists and become a member of society. One day Mr. Charles said to him: "What did you think of my brother?"

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"Think of him?" said Munchin; "I think he is a man of God; and God was surely by his side when so many of us could not kill one man."

The persecutions of the Methodists in Wednesbury continued for a long time. The windows of their houses were broken, their tables, chairs, and other furniture were smashed to pieces, and their feather-beds were torn into shreds. No craven-hearted man would have dared to go into such a place of danger, and preach to such fiends in human form; but the Wesleys knew no fear when duty called, and again and again they visited their poor, persecuted followers. Christ-like men, indeed, they were, for, like their Holy Leader, "when they were reviled they reviled not again; when they suffered they threatened not."

Mr. Charles composed a hymn after one of the dreadful rows, which shows how entirely they trusted in Jesus, and how sure they were that no harm could come to them except what He allowed.

Look at number 276 in your Wesley's Hymn-Book, and you will find this very hymn. This is the first verse:—

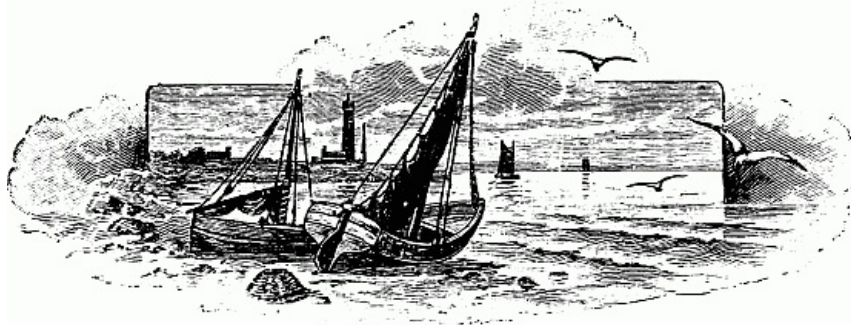
"Worship and thanks and blessing,
And strength ascribe to Jesus!
Jesus alone defends His own,
When earth and hell oppress us.

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"Jesus with joy we witness
Almighty to deliver,
Our seals set to, that God is true,
And reigns a King for ever."

That reminds me that I must not forget to tell you, by far the greater number of the hymns we sing every Sunday in chapel were written by Mr. Charles Wesley. Yes, the little mischievous Westminster schoolboy became the sweet singer of Methodism. Not only among Methodists are his beautiful hymns sung to-day, but in almost every Christian hymn-book in the world some of his verses will be found.

You must not think all places were like Wednesbury. Mr. Wesley had often very attentive congregations, and the people listened to him gladly. Indeed, at an open-air service he once held, the people behaved better than I fear we should have done. Part of the congregation sat on a low wall built of loose stones; all at once, in the middle of the sermon, down came the wall and all the people with it. I think we should have burst out laughing, it must have looked so funny. Instead of which, there was no laughing and no screaming; the people just kept their places, only instead of sitting on the top of the wall they sat at the bottom. There was no interruption of the service at all; Mr. Wesley went on with his sermon, and the people continued reverent and attentive.



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CHAPTER XXIX.

The Magic Mirror again.—Sycamore Farm.—Annie's good news.—A chorister up in a tree.—A long, long journey.—Sixty miles a day on horseback.—A Chapel out of doors.—A hard bed and a funny pillow.—Thanksgiving



WHY, I do believe that Magic Mirror has mended itself, for here it is, showing us such a lovely picture—nay, two, I declare. Look at that dear old farmhouse; it must surely be called Sycamore Farm, for there are great sycamore trees all round the front and the side. At the back, and only one field away from the house, are the green slopes of the mountain, with a little waterfall tumbling merrily down a crack in its side. In front of the farm, shimmering through the leaves of the trees, you can see the sunlit waters of a calm lake. The farm is a low whitewashed building, and we can see the cows in the distant meadows coming home to be milked. No one is with them; but there is a little group of people standing at the farmyard gate. The farmer and his wife and all the family and servants seem to be there.

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Whatever is the matter?

Oh, see! there is a little girl in the middle of the group, and they are all listening to what she is saying. Let us listen too.

"Yes, it is quite true; Mr. Wesley *is* coming. I went to the village for mother, and old Downs the cobbler told me, and so did Mrs. Wilson at the shop. Everybody is talking about it."

"Ay, but that's good news, lassie!" the old farmer says. "I wonder now if he'd come and preach at Sycamore Farm."

The picture has gone.

Oh, but here's the other one. Why, it is the same old farmhouse, and the sun is shining on the whitewashed walls and funny little windows. There is a great crowd gathered under the shade of the leafy sycamores. See, there is the kind-looking farmer, with his sunburnt face, and sitting on his knee is Annie, the little girl that brought the good news from the village. Right in the midst of the crowd is Mr. Wesley, telling these country-people the story of the Cross.

Now that picture has gone too.

Should we not have liked to have been at that service?

I will tell you what Mr. Wesley said about it.



"It was a hot summer day, and we could see the blue, blue sky through the leaves of the old sycamores, which shaded us from the heat. Just as I began to preach, a little bird perched on a branch close by and began to sing. I went on preaching, but its song did not end, it sang on and on, and not until the service was quite over did it cease. It was the best music for such a church and such a congregation, no harp or organ ever sounded half so sweet."

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From Westmoreland, where this happened, to Cornwall is a long way, but not too far for Mr. Wesley and his horse. He used often to ride sixty miles a day; and most of his reading, and the composing of his sermons was done while he was on horseback. He travelled in this way for more than forty years, and must have gone over 100,000 miles.

In Gwennap, a place in Cornwall, Mr. Wesley found a lovely out-of-doors sort of chapel. Some of my readers will have seen the Happy Valley at Llandudno; I think the Gwennap chapel must have been something like that, only a great deal bigger. This is what Mr. Wesley wrote about his first service there:

"I stood on a wall, in the calm, still evening, with the setting sun behind, and a great, great multitude before, behind, and on either hand, sitting on the hills all round. All could hear quite distinctly, when I read to them Christ's own words: 'The disciple is not above his Master,' and 'He that taketh not his cross and followeth after Me is not worthy of Me.'"

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"In the midst of the crowd is Mr. Wesley, telling these country-people the story of the Cross."—Page 124.

after Me is not worthy of Me."

Must it not have been a wonderful sight?

Like other places, Cornwall did not always give a kind welcome to the Methodists; indeed, they had sometimes to put up with very rough treatment. Often they had to go without food, and the hard floor was their only bed.

Once, at a place called St. Ives, Mr. Wesley and his helper, Mr. Nelson, slept on the floor for a whole fortnight. One of them had an overcoat rolled up for a pillow, and the other a big book. They used to get very sore, and sometimes could not sleep for the pain in their poor aching bones. But these Methodists had never heard of Grumble Corner,—they only knew Thanksgiving

Street; and so, instead of murmuring and complaining, one night, when the floor seemed harder than ever, Mr. Wesley called out: "Let us cheer up, Brother Nelson, for the skin is only off one side yet."

Another time, when no one had asked them to dinner or tea, and they were riding through a country lane, feeling very hungry, Mr. Wesley stopped his horse to gather some blackberries, saying to his friend: "Brother Nelson, we ought to be thankful that there are plenty of blackberries, for this is the best country I ever saw for getting an appetite, but the worst for getting food."

On the whole, however, the Cornish people were not unkind to Mr. Wesley. At St. Ives they once gave him a very noisy welcome, shouting, "Hurrah! hurrah!" and then going under his bedroom window and singing:

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"John Wesley is come to town,
To try if he can pull the churches down."

All this happened during his first visit to Cornwall; and only once during the three weeks he was there did he get really abused, and that was at St. Ives, when the mob burst into his room, and a rough, cruel man struck him on the head.



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CHAPTER XXX.

A fight with the sea.—Poor Peter!—A sail in a fisherman's boat.—The song that the waves accompanied.—A climb on Land's End.—Manchester disgraces itself.—Hull still worse.—Matt. v. 39.—A brave servant girl.—John Wesley declines to hide.



TOLD you in the last chapter what a wonderful traveller Mr. Wesley was; he could walk twenty-four miles a day easily, in either hot or cold weather, and his adventures on the roads would almost fill a book.

On one of his later visits to Cornwall, he had a terrible fight with the sea; this time he was riding in a coach. He had promised to preach in St. Ives at a certain time, and the only way to get there was by crossing the sands when the tide was out. His own driver being a stranger in the country, he engaged a man named Peter Martin to drive him. When they reached the sea-shore they found, to their dismay, that the tide was coming in, and the sands they had to cross were already partly covered with water. Peter, the old coachman, stopped the horses, and told Mr. Wesley that it was not safe to go. Then an old sea-captain tried to prevent them, begging them to go back, or they would surely be drowned.

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"No," said Mr. Wesley, "I've promised to preach at St. Ives, and I must keep my promise. Take the sea! Take the sea!" he shouted, putting his head out of the carriage window.

In a moment, Peter whipped the horses, and dashed into the waves. The wheels of the carriage kept sinking in the deep pits and hollows in the sand, while the horses, swimming in the water, snorted and reared with fright, and every moment poor Peter expected to be drowned.

Just at this terrible moment, Mr. Wesley put his head out of the carriage window; his long white hair—for he was an old man when this happened—was dripping with the salt water, which ran down his venerable face. He was calm and fearless, unmoved by the roaring of the waves or the danger of the situation.

"What is your name, driver?" he shouted.

"Peter, sir," shouted back the man.

"Peter," Mr. Wesley called out again, "fear not; thou shalt not sink."

With spurring and whipping, the poor frightened, tired horses at last brought them safely over.

When they reached St. Ives, Mr. Wesley's first care was to see to the comfort of his horses and driver. He got warm clothing, and refreshments at the inn for Peter, and comfortable stabling for his weary horses; then, quite forgetting himself, wet through with the dashing waves, he went off to the chapel to preach. [130]

While Mr. Wesley was in Cornwall he paid a flying visit to the Scilly Isles. He went over in a fisherman's boat, and sang to the rising and falling of the waves:

"When passing through the watery deep,
I ask in faith His promised aid;
The waves an awful distance keep,
And shrink from my devoted head.
Fearless, their violence I dare;
They cannot harm,—for God is there."

If you look in your Wesley's Hymn-Book, at hymn 272, you will find this verse.

You have all learnt, in your geographies, that Land's End is the most southern point in England; look at the very south of Cornwall, and you will find it. Mr. Wesley was very fond of this wild, rocky point, with oceans rolling on either side,—the English Channel on the one, the mighty Atlantic on the other. He paid a last visit to it when he was an old, old man, eighty years or more. With furrowed cheeks, white hair streaming in the wind, and infirm limbs, he climbed over the steep rocks to get a long, last look at his favourite spot, the meeting of the waters. I believe hymn 59 was composed by Mr. Wesley as he stood on Land's End; this is one of the verses: [131]

"Lo! on a narrow neck of land,
'Twixt two unbounded seas I stand,
Secure, insensible;
A point of time, a moment's space,
Removes me to that heavenly place,
Or shuts me up in hell."

But we are getting on too fast, and must go back to the days when Mr. Wesley was *not* an old man. All his time was spent in preaching up and down the country, starting fresh societies, and encouraging old ones; and almost everywhere he and his helpers met with abuse and rough treatment.

In Manchester, which was even then a large and important town, Mr. Wesley preached to several thousands of people in the open air. At this meeting, his hearers either got tired of listening or they took offence at what he said, for, before he had finished, they threatened to bring out the fire-engine and squirt water upon him if he did not stop.

At Hull, on his first visit in 1752, lumps of earth and stones were thrown at him while he was preaching; and when the service was over, the mob followed him, shouting, hooting, and throwing stones until he reached his lodging.

Though Mr. Wesley could be as brave as a lion when it was necessary, he could also be as gentle as a lamb. Once, when he was preaching at Dewsbury, a man rushed up to him in a terrible rage, and struck him with all his might on the side of his face. It was such a hard blow that poor Mr. Wesley could not keep the tears from coming into his eyes. Instead of striking the man back or using angry words, he just did what Christ said we should do, he turned his other cheek (Matt. v. 39). The enraged man was so surprised at such unexpected gentleness, that he turned away and hid his face with shame, and was ever after one of the Methodists' greatest friends. Once he even risked his life to save one of their chapels from being destroyed. [132]

Another time, when Mr. Wesley was at Falmouth in Cornwall, he called to see an invalid lady. The mob heard where he was, and surrounded the house, shrieking out: "Bring out the Canorum! Where is the Canorum?" This was a nickname which the Cornishmen had given the Methodists. With sticks and stones the mob tried to break open the front door of the poor sick lady's house; and while they were doing this, all the people in the house escaped by the backway, except Mr. Wesley and a servant girl. The girl did not like to leave Mr. Wesley alone in this great danger, and begged him to get away and hide himself. But John Wesley was not one of the "hiding" sort. Instead of that, as soon as they had succeeded in bursting the door open, he just walked straight among the mob, exclaiming: "Here I am! What have you got to say to me? To which of you have I done any wrong?" [133]

He made his way out into the street bare-headed, talking all the time; and before he had finished, the ringleader of the mob declared no one should touch him, he would be his protector. So he reached his lodgings in safety.





CHAPTER XXXI.

Back in London.—Mr. John and Mr. Charles go visiting.—Too much for one.—Talking matters over.—The first Methodist Conference.—No time to be in a hurry.—What early rising can do.—First tract distributors.—A big district.—Boarding schools 150 years ago.—Dreadful rules.

WE have been travelling all over England with Mr. Wesley, now I think we must go back to London with him. The society there was still the largest in the country: in the year I am writing about (1744), they had one thousand nine hundred and fifty members. Mr. Wesley very much wished to visit every one of these members, and asked his brother Charles to go with him. They started their visiting at six o'clock every morning, and did not leave off till six o'clock at night.

Six o'clock a.m. seems a funny time to call and see any one, does it not? But you see people used to get up at four or five in the morning in those days, and used to go to bed at eight, so it was not really such a funny time as it seems. [135]

Though Mr. John and Mr. Charles started so early and worked so late, it took them a long, long time to visit all those 1950 members, and when they had finished, Mr. Wesley realised for the first time how his work had grown. He saw it was impossible, even with his brother's help, to manage all the preachers and all the members scattered over the country, when even the work in London was more than he could undertake alone. He thought about this a great deal, and then he asked four clergymen and four of his helpers, or what we should call local preachers, to meet him and his brother at the Foundry, to talk things over and decide what ought to be done. These gentlemen accepted his invitation, and there, on that eventful Monday in June, 1744, the first Methodist Conference met; and from that time up to the present, no year has passed but Methodist preachers and helpers have gathered together to make plans and talk business.

I am sure you must all have heard of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, which is now held every July or August in some one or other of the large towns of England. This first conference was opened with solemn prayer and a sermon by Mr. Charles Wesley; then all the difficulties of the work were talked over, and arrangements made for the future. Mr. John Wesley presided, and for forty-six years after, at every conference, their beloved leader and head took the chair at this annual gathering. [136]

You will think that what with travelling and preaching, and looking after his helpers, and visiting the members, Mr. Wesley could not find time for much else. But it is always the busiest people who have the most time. As I told you before, Mr. Wesley began his days very early, getting up at four o'clock; and by doing this every morning for sixty years, he managed not only to preach, and read, and visit, but also to write a great many books, and thousands of tracts—one of his books was called "Lessons for Children." Many of the tracts were about swearing and Sabbath-breaking, and printed on the outside were the words, "Not to be sold, but given away"; and he and his preachers used to carry them in their pockets and give them to the people they passed on the roads.

Another reason why Mr. Wesley had more time than most people was, because he

NEVER WASTED A MINUTE,

and though he did so much work, he was *never in a hurry*. He used to say, "I have no time to be in a hurry." Hurry you know does not always mean speed; when things are done in a hurry they are often only half done, and have to be done all over again.

You remember how the miners at Kingswood collected money and built a school for their children. Well, about ten years afterwards, another school was built at Kingswood for the children of the travelling preachers. These preachers had not much time to look after their families themselves, being so much away from home, and they wanted their boys and girls to be taught to read their Bibles and to learn to love Jesus. They had some dreadfully strict rules at this boarding school, which my readers would not have liked at all, and which I am afraid the children there did not like either, for I have heard that some of the boys ran away. They had to go to bed every night at eight o'clock, and what was worse, get up every morning at four. Then every little boy and girl, unless they were poorly, had to fast every Friday, that is, they were not allowed to have anything to eat all day until three o'clock. But I had better not tell you any more of these dreadful rules, only you may be very thankful that you are living in these days, when you have much better times than the boys and girls who lived 150 years ago. [137]



CHAPTER XXXII.

A visit to Ireland.—The sack that did not contain potatoes.—The bogie man.—What the sack did contain.—The prayer-meeting in the barn.—Mr. Charles Wesley gets married.—And so does Mr. John.—Two niggers who became missionaries.



IN 1749 Mr. Wesley paid a visit to Ireland, where already he had many followers. His brother Charles had visited there two years before, and was a great favourite, for the Irish people love music, and would always go to hear his hymns.

In many places in Ireland the Methodists were treated quite as badly as they were in our own country; but the same angel of the Lord that protected them in England followed them across the Irish sea.

There is a funny story told of how they were once saved from a band of rough men. The Roman Catholics persecuted them so much at Wexford that they were obliged to hold their meeting secretly in a barn. Once, one of their persecutors got to know the night they were having a meeting, and told his companions he would hide himself in the barn before the service began, and then when it commenced he would open the door to them. They thought this was a splendid idea. So the man went to the barn, and there found an old sack or bag, big enough for him to get into. Into this he crept, and by and by the people began to come, and the service commenced. First, they sang a hymn; and somehow the man in the bag enjoyed it so much, he quite forgot what he had come into the barn for.

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He listened until the hymn was finished, and then he listened to the prayer that followed, and after that he could not listen any more. He couldn't get out of the bag, and he couldn't do anything but groan and cry. God, through the hymn and the prayer, had touched his heart, and he felt himself to be the greatest sinner in Ireland.

So he groaned and groaned, and at last some of the congregation heard him. They looked towards the place where the mysterious sound came from, but could see nothing except what looked like a sack of potatoes. Still the groaning went on, and some of the people got frightened, and were quite sure there was a bogie in the barn. At last one or two ventured to go nearer to the sack, then some one peeped in, and the poor trembling Irishman was discovered. He confessed to his purpose in hiding himself, told them God had stopped him in his evil plan, and begged them to pray for him. So the service was turned into a prayer-meeting, the man was converted, and became one of the best Methodists in Wexford.

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Some of my readers will be wondering if Mr. John or Mr. Charles Wesley were ever married, and if they had any boys and girls of their own. Just before Mr. Wesley went to Ireland in 1749, he married his brother Charles to the daughter of a Welsh gentleman, and Mr. Wesley, himself, was married two years later to a lady who was a widow. You will be sorry to hear that this lady was not at all nice; she treated her husband most unkindly, and made him very unhappy. Though Mr. Wesley was so fond of children, he never had any of his own. Mr. Charles had eight, but only three lived to grow up. His wife was a good, kind lady, and they were very happy. He did not travel about so much after he was married, but spent a great deal of his time writing his beautiful hymns.

These two brothers always remained the best of friends. In one of his letters, Charles wrote to John: "I wish we could be oftener together; it might be better for us both. Let us be useful in our lives, and at our death not divided."

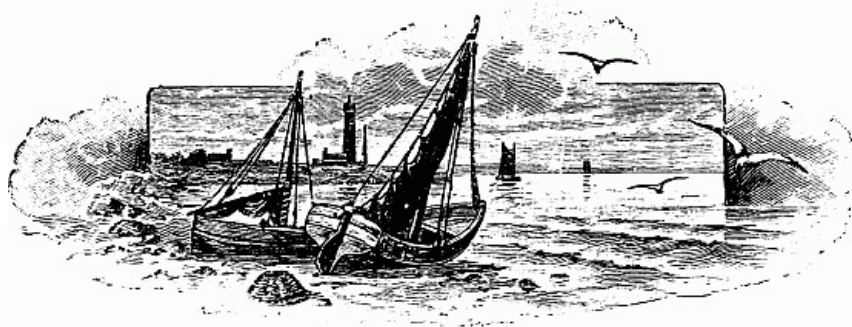
Before I close this chapter I want to tell you of the first two black men who were converted through the preaching of a Methodist.

Living at Wandsworth, a little place near London where Mr. Wesley had gone to preach, was a

gentleman named Nathaniel Gilbert. He had come from the West Indies, where he employed a great many negroes. Two of these negroes he had brought over to England with him, and when Mr. Wesley paid a visit to Mr. Gilbert, and preached in his house, these two black men were converted. When they returned to the West Indies, they, along with Mr. Gilbert, preached the gospel of Jesus Christ to the dark people in those far-away islands.

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"Shall we, whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high,
Shall we to men benighted
The lamp of life deny?
Salvation, oh, salvation,
The joyful sound proclaim,
Till earth's remotest nation
Has learnt Messiah's name."



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CHAPTER XXXIII.

Runaway horses.—Two frightened little girls.—A terrible moment.—Safe.—
Psalm xci. 11, 12.—Mr. Wesley has a birthday.—A funny receipt for keeping
young.



NE more story of how the angel that shut the lions' mouths for Daniel took care of God's dear servant, John Wesley. He was staying at Newcastle with a Methodist named Mr. Smith, who had married his step-daughter. One day a party of them drove to a village a few miles off. In the carriage there was Mr. Wesley and a friend, Mr. and Mrs. Smith and their two little girls. When they had driven about two miles and were just at the top of a hill, suddenly the horses took fright, and dashed down the steep road. The poor coachman was thrown off the box, and the horses tore away at full speed, sometimes swerving to the edge of a ditch on one side of the road, then back again to a ditch on the other, but never once going over. When a cart came along, instead of running into it, the carriage passed as if the driver had been on the box.

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At the bottom of the hill was a narrow bridge, which it seemed impossible the panting horses could cross safely. But exactly down the middle they went, swerving neither to the right or left. Then up the hill on the other side they dashed, passing many people on the road, but every one afraid to stop their mad career. Near the top of this hill was a gate, which led into a farmer's yard. The gate stood open, and turning sharp, the horses ran through without even touching gate or post. The gate on the other side of the yard was shut, and the terrified people in the carriage thought the horses would now be checked. Instead of that, they rushed through, breaking it up as if it had only been a spider's web, and galloped on through the corn-field.

The two little girls had been almost too frightened to speak, now they clung to Mr. Wesley, crying out: "Oh grandpapa, save us! save us!" Mr. Wesley, who says he felt no more afraid than if he had been sitting in his study, just calmly said to them: "Nothing will hurt you, dears; don't be afraid." The horses galloped madly on, till they came to the edge of a steep precipice. Would they go over? What would they do? Oh, what a terrible moment of suspense.

A gentleman on horseback seeing their danger, just galloped across the track of the frightened animals. This acted like magic; they stood still at once, and every one was safe. A few minutes more and they would have been dashed to pieces. When they turned back into the road they found the coachman coming to meet them, and no worse for his fall.

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Did not God keep His promise to the man who had "set his love upon Him"? "*He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways: they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest*

thou dash thy foot against a stone."—Psalm xci. 11, 12.

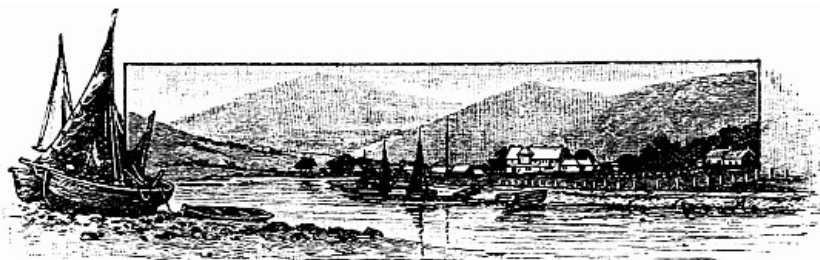
Mr. Wesley was an old man when this happened, just seventy-two; it was in June, and his birthday was on the 17th. But he was so strong and well, not at all like an old man. Listen to what he says of himself: "This is my birthday, the first day of my seventy-second year, and I am wondering how it is that I am just as strong as I was thirty years ago. Indeed, I am better than I was then; I can see better, and my nerves are firmer. The grand cause is 'the good pleasure of God.' But three special things have helped to keep me young:

First—Getting up at 4 o'clock every morning for fifty years.

Second—Preaching every morning at five o'clock.

Third—Travelling by sea or land 4,500 miles in every year."

These are funny things to keep any one young, are they not? I am afraid if to follow these rules is the only way to keep young, most of my readers will be content to grow old.



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CHAPTER XXXIV.

Little Mary and what she did with her money.—Caught on the stairs.—
Cheered by the children.—Boys and girls converted.



IN the year 1770 the Methodists had grown so numerous that they counted forty-nine different circuits or societies in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. They had one hundred and twenty-two travelling preachers, and twice as many local preachers, who did not travel, and at the covenant service which Mr. Wesley held at the beginning of this year in London, there were eighteen hundred members present.

Mr. Wesley, like our ministers nowadays, was often wanting money for different purposes, and, like our ministers too, he was always glad of the children's help. Once, when the Foundry wanted repairing, he specially asked for help at an evening service. A little girl named Mary heard him, and thought how much she would like to do something. And this is how she managed it.

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Mr. Wesley loved children, and used to keep a number of bright new coins in his pocket to give to the little folks he met at his friends' houses. Mary had always been a great favourite with Mr. Wesley, and a proud little girl she was when he took her on his knee and gave her a silver penny. He had often done this, and she had treasured up his gifts in a little box. Other friends, too, had sometimes given her money, which, instead of spending she had saved up.

Well, when she got home after that evening service, she counted up her money, and found she had £3. So she went to her mother and asked if she might give it all to Mr. Wesley. Her mother was quite willing; so the next morning little Mary carried her savings to Mr. Wesley's room. Tears came into his eyes as he thanked his little favourite. Taking her in his arms, he kissed her very tenderly, and prayed that God's blessing might always rest upon her. And it did, for Mary grew up to be an earnest, happy Christian.

Here is another story that shows how much Mr. Wesley loved the young folks. He was once staying in a house in Bristol where a little boy and girl were visiting. The little girl had long, beautiful hair hanging in curls down her back. She and her brother were running hand in hand down the stairs one day, when Mr. Wesley ran down after them and caught them on the landing. He jumped the little girl in his arms and kissed her; then putting his hand on the boy's head, he blessed him. Little Robert did not think much about this at the time, I dare say, but when he grew up, he felt all his life that the blessing of a good man rested upon him, and his eyes glistened with tears when he told the story. That little boy was the poet Southey, of whom you will read when you are older.

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When Mr. Wesley wanted recreation or a kind of holiday, he used to go off to Kingswood. A few days among the young folks there always cheered him, and did him good. He loved to hear their lessons and praise their work, and arranged easy grammars and history books for them.

A great many people used to think then, as a few do now, that children could not be converted, and that they ought not to be members of society. Mr. Wesley never thought so. At Weardale he allowed thirty children to become members. At another place quite a number of boys and girls came to him after the preaching, wanting him to show them how they could belong to Jesus. Mr. Wesley had both then and always the words of Jesus Himself, before him, "Suffer the little

children to come unto Me, and forbid them not;" and so he knelt down with those boys and girls and led them to the Good Shepherd, who had laid down His life for them.

The children of Judea loved Jesus, and were glad to be with Him; and Mr. Wesley was so like Jesus, so loving and so kind, that the children of England could not help loving him, and were glad to be with him. A whole crowd once waited in the street a long time for him, and when at last he came, they all followed him like so many little lambs after their shepherd, as many as could cling to him. They went to the meeting-house with him, and after the service was over would not leave until they had all shaken hands with him.

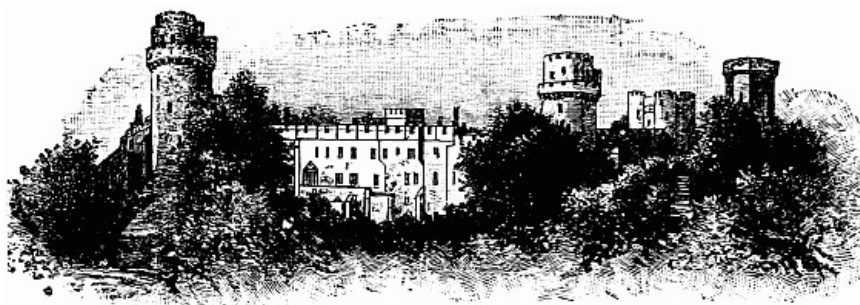
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"In Cornwall, Manchester, and Epworth," Mr. Wesley says, "numbers of children were converted."

These verses apply to all my readers:

"God wants the boys, the merry, merry boys,
The noisy boys, the funny boys,
The thoughtless boys.
God wants the boys with all their joys,
That He, as gold, may make them pure,
And teach them trials to endure;
His heroes brave He'd have them be,
Fighting for truth and purity,
God wants the boys.

"God wants the girls, the happy-hearted girls,
The loving girls, the best of girls,
The worst of girls.
God wants to make the girls His pearls,
And so reflect His holy face,
And bring to mind His wondrous grace,
That beautiful the world may be,
And filled with love and purity.
God wants the girls."



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CHAPTER XXXV.

How Mr. Wesley settled a school-boys' quarrel.—Dr. Watts and little birds.
—Mr. Wesley, loved and honoured.—A holiday for the children.

HERE is a story of how Mr. Wesley settled a dispute between two quarrelsome school-boys. When he was an old man, seventy-three, he was staying with one of his local preachers, a Mr. Bush, who had a boarding-school. One day Mrs. Bush brought to him two boys who had been fighting.

"Boys! boys!" said Mr. Wesley:

"Birds in their little nests agree,
And 'tis a shameful sight,
When children of one family
Fall out, and chide, and fight!"

You must make it up. Come now, shake hands with each other."

Mr. Wesley, with his long white hair and beautiful face, looked and spoke so lovingly, that the boys did at once what he asked them.

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"Now," he said, "put your arms round each other's necks, and kiss each other."

And the little boys did this too. He was just having his tea when Mrs. Bush brought in the culprits, and now taking two pieces of bread and butter, he folded them together and told each boy to break a piece off. Then he gave each of them a drink of tea out of his own cup.

"Now," he added, "you have broken bread together, and you have drunk out of the same cup, now you must be friends." Then he put his hands on the boys' heads and blessed them. The next morning at family prayer he sought out the boys and blessed them again.

The two lads never forgot this meeting with Mr. Wesley. One of them became a magistrate, and when he had children of his own he used to tell them this story of his school-days.

I remember that little verse of Dr. Watts' being recited to my brothers and me when we were in the nursery, and as I wrote it down I wondered if the same thoughts came into the heads of those school-boys that came into mine. My dear mother used to look very serious when she said it, and it sounded very solemn. But I had often seen little birds quarrelling, and I knew that hymn did not tell the truth, and so I felt little birds were hardly a proper example to follow. Now, though Dr. Watts was not quite correct, still little birds do agree very much better than many children; and if they sometimes quarrel, remember they are only guided by instinct, while you have sense, and know the difference between right and wrong.

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You will all be glad to know that before Mr. Wesley died, all the ill-will and hatred of the people had changed to love and reverence. The very towns where he had been treated most unkindly were now the ones to give him the heartiest welcome. Instead of mobs waiting to abuse him, crowds gathered to do him honour. In many places the children had a holiday from school, the tradespeople closed their shops, and everybody tried who could best show their love and respect for the man whom before they had treated so unkindly.



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CHAPTER XXXVI.

More peeps into the Magic Mirror.—A special picture for Sheffield readers.—Another for young folks in Oldham.—Little Daniel on the pulpit stairs.—Special for Hull.



THINK we must have some more peeps into that Magic Mirror? Will my little Sheffield readers take a good look? What do we see? A street in a big town, and oh! such crowds and crowds of people on both sides of the road. The windows of the houses, too, are all crowded with people. What can it all mean? See! there are two men coming along, everybody is turning to look at them, and we can hear more than one voice saying: "God bless him! God bless him!" Several of the women are wiping their eyes with the corner of their aprons; there are tears in many eyes. Look at the two men as they come nearer. One is a middle-aged man; the other, who is leaning on his arm, wears a black gown and white bands. He is an old man, but how beautiful he looks. He has a splendid face, a clear skin and rosy cheeks. His eyes are quick and keen, and he has long, shiny hair, white and bright like silver.

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See now how the children are crowding round him! He is smiling down upon them and putting his hands upon their heads as he passes. Now he is stretching his hands out towards heaven, and blessing all the people, many of whom are weeping aloud. He has passed down the street, and the picture has gone. Sheffield readers, that was how your town welcomed and honoured dear John Wesley a short time before his death.

Now peep again into the Magic Mirror. And this time I would like my Oldham readers to step to the front. See, there is a little boy about six years old playing at the door of a house. An old clergyman is passing, and stops to speak to the child.

"Where is your father, Daniel?" he says.

"Gone to chapel."

"And your mother?"

"She's gone too," answers Daniel.

"And you shall go too, my boy. You must not miss seeing this great man, John Wesley," says the clergyman, as he takes the child's hand and fades away from our picture.

But see, there is another coming! It is the inside of a chapel, and people are everywhere; in the galleries, in the aisles, in the communion rails, everywhere. On the pulpit-stairs some one has found room for a little child. Why, it is Daniel, and there is the kind clergyman standing near. See, the preacher has finished, and is coming down from the pulpit, he is lifting up the little child and is kissing him. Now, he has passed into the vestry, and the picture has gone. That, my young Oldham readers, was the opening of Manchester St. Chapel on Good Friday, 1790, when Mr. Wesley was nearly ninety years old.

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At Hull, Birmingham, Wednesbury, Chester, Manchester, Liverpool, all places where the Methodists had been most cruelly treated, Mr. Wesley and his followers were now most kindly welcomed. You remember how Mr. Wesley and his brother had been shut out of the churches, very few clergymen allowing them to preach in their pulpits. This, too, was all changed.

Those of you who live in Hull will like to know that John Wesley, when he was eighty-three, was invited by the vicar to preach in your beautiful High Church. If any of you have not been inside—but surely all my Hull readers have—pay it a visit, and just fancy you see that bright-eyed, silver-haired old man, with a voice that had lost little of the strength of youth, preaching to the crowds that thronged the hallowed place. If those old grey walls could speak, we might know John Wesley's very words. He preached again at night, and though so old, was unwearied with his work. He went on to Beverley that same evening, and the next day travelled seventy-six miles, preached at Malton, Pocklington, and Swinefleet, and went to bed without feeling the least bit tired. Wonderful John Wesley! God-blest John Wesley!

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CHAPTER XXXVII.

Beverley friends.—Copy of a letter John Wesley wrote to them.—Mr. Wesley's last visit to Beverley.—What took place in the red-roofed inn.—A race.—A lost ten minutes.



YOU, who live in Beverley, will be glad to hear that Mr. Wesley did not pass by your dear little town. Indeed, there is a house in Norwood where he most probably stayed, and certainly visited; the home of Mr. and Mrs. Barton. You shall see an exact copy of a letter he wrote to these friends. It has never been printed before, so you are the first of the public to see it. It is addressed thus:

"MRS. JANE BARTON,
"IN NORWOOD, BEVERLEY,
"YORKSHIRE."

And this is the letter:

London
Nov. 13. 1778

My Dear Sister

I am glad Sister Crosby has been at Beverley, & that you had an opportunity of hearing her. She is useful wherever she goes, particularly in exciting Believers to go on to perfection.

There is frequently something very mysterious in the ways of Divine Providence. A little of them we may understand; but much more, is beyond our comprehension. And we must be content to say, "What thou dost I know not now: But I shall know hereafter." At present, it is sufficient for us to know, That all his ways are mercy & truth to those that love him.

Even in these troublous times, there is a very considerable Increase of the Work of God. Cleave to Him with your whole heart, you will have more & more reason to praise him.
I am, My Dear Fanny, your affectionate Brother
J. Wesley

Transcriber's Note: Clicking on this image will show the reader a larger image.

You must not make a mistake and think that Mr. Wesley was Mrs. Jenny Barton's brother really; but it was the custom among the Methodists for the members of society to address each other as "Brother So-and-So" and "Sister So-and-So," meaning that they were brothers and sisters in having the same heavenly Father, and loving the same Saviour. [157]

John Wesley preached in a meeting-house in Wood Lane, which you can still see, though it is now turned into cottages; and we may be quite sure that the boys and girls who lived in Beverley then, heard his loving words, and received his blessing. He once spent two days of his birthday month in your quaint old town. The June sun stole through the stained windows of the beautiful Minster, and looked into the jackdaws' nests on St. Mary's Tower.

There is a funny story told of this last visit, which he paid only a few months before his death. He was going to preach in Hull again, and forty friends from that town had come over to see him. They were all to have dinner together in the red-roofed inn where he was staying, and then drive back with him to Hull. Everybody was very merry, and they laughed and talked so much that they quite forgot all about the time. Suddenly, Mr. Wesley looked at his watch, then jumped up from the dinner table, shouted good-bye to his friends, stepped into his carriage, which had been waiting some time for him at the door, and was off before his astonished friends could say a word. Their horses and carriages were got ready with all speed, but it was only by driving very fast that they managed to overtake Mr. Wesley before he rode into Hull. [158]

Punctuality was one of Mr. Wesley's strongest points. He could never bear to be a minute behind time. Once, when his carriage did not come punctually, he was heard to say: "I have lost ten minutes for ever."





CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Going to sleep.—How John Wesley missed his brother.—A good man's tears.
—Getting old.—Mr. Wesley's text for the children.—Last words in Manchester.
—In Colchester.—A dinner-hour meeting.—The old ash tree.

NOW I must come to what seems to the young a very sad time. When we are strong and healthy, and can enjoy all the things God has given us to enjoy in this beautiful world, death does seem very sad and sorrowful. But think, dear young readers, how you feel when you have been playing hard all day, or working at school, and perhaps gone to a party in the evening and have not got to bed until 10 o'clock. Is it not very nice and very comforting to lay your head on your soft pillow and go to sleep? Now this is just how God's people feel when they are tired of life's work, they just close their eyes and fall asleep, "asleep in Jesus." This is how Mr. Charles Wesley passed away when he was eighty years old. [160] Though four years younger than Mr. John, he seemed the older man, for he had been weak and infirm for a long time. The two brothers had loved each other dearly, and Mr. Wesley felt very lonely when "Charlie" died.

Three weeks afterwards, Mr. Wesley, preaching at Bolton, gave out for his second hymn No. 140, a hymn composed by Mr. Charles. He tried to read the first verse, but when he came to the words

"My company before is gone,
And I am left alone with Thee,"

he could get no further, but just burst into tears, and sat down in the pulpit, burying his face in his hands. The singing ceased, and numbers of the congregation wept in sympathy at sight of their dear leader's sorrow. At last Mr. Wesley recovered himself, and went on with the service, which was never forgotten by any of those who were present.

Very soon after this, Mr. Wesley began to feel weak and feeble. Again his birthday month came round, the sunny month of June, and on the 17th he wrote: "I am eighty-six to-day, and I find I grow old. My eyes are so dim that no spectacles will help me, and I cannot read small print except in a very strong light. My strength fails me so that I walk much slower than I used to do." He was now, for the first time for forty years, obliged to give up his five o'clock morning sermons, and was only able to preach twice a day. As the months went by, he grew weaker and more infirm. Once, as the old man tottered up the pulpit stairs, the whole congregation burst into tears. [161]

On Valentine's Day, in 1790, he preached one of his last sermons to his *little* followers. He chose for his text: "Come, ye children, hearken unto Me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord." The boys and girls flocked from everywhere to hear him, and many who had never loved Jesus before, heard Him speaking to them through His dear servant; and answering the loving call, came, and from that day became Christ's faithful little soldiers.

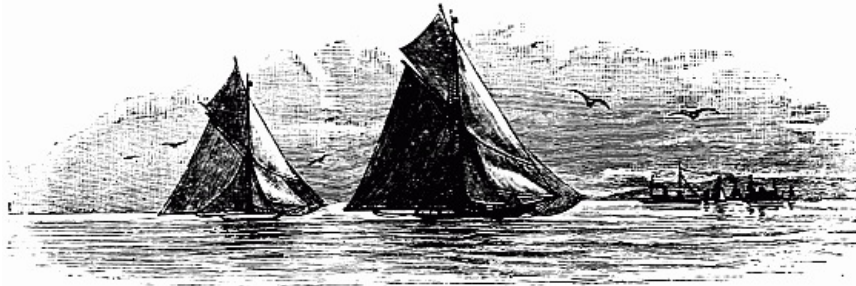
In the same year, when he was eighty-seven years old, he spent a week-end in Manchester, and spoke his last words to his followers there. He preached in the old chapel in Oldham Street on the Saturday night, and the next day, which was Easter Sunday (April 4th), he assisted in giving the Sacrament to sixteen hundred members, and preached both night and morning without feeling tired.

A few months later he preached at Colchester; but he was so infirm that a minister had to stand on each side of him, and hold him up. His voice was feeble and low, and many of the congregation could not hear him; but his calm, beautiful face, and long white hair formed a picture that the children and grown-up people in Colchester never forgot.

It was in this same year, 1790, that he preached for the last time in the open air. It was in Winchelsea, and the time was October, the month when nuts and apples are asking to be gathered, and when the leaves put on their loveliest dress. [162]

As Mr. Wesley felt his time on earth was drawing to a close, he was all the more eager to "tell to all around, what a dear Saviour he had found," and how they might find Him too. So he preached at twelve o'clock noon, the dinner hour of the workmen, in order that they too might have a chance of hearing the good news. A large oak dining-table was brought into the churchyard, and there, under the shade of an old ash tree, John Wesley gave his last message to those working men. "*The kingdom of Heaven is at hand; repent ye, and believe the Gospel,*" was his text, and as he preached, the tears of the people flowed down their cheeks.

Long, long afterwards the old ash tree was known as "Wesley's Tree," and the vicar of Winchelsea had hard work to keep it from being cut to pieces; for Methodists use to come from all parts to cut a twig in remembrance of that last scene in the life of the venerable field-preacher.



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CHAPTER XXXIX.

About his "Father's business."—Last advice.—Singing and dying.—"The best of all is, God is with us."—John Wesley passes through the Golden Gates.

MOST people think it is time to stop working long before they are eighty, but John Wesley at eighty-seven still went about his "Father's business." His constant prayer was, "Lord, let me not live to be useless." Every meeting he knew might be his last, and when he visited the different societies, he used to ask the members to take as his last advice: "To love as brothers, to fear God, and to honour the King." He closed nearly all these meetings with his brother's hymn:

"O that without a lingering groan,
I may the welcome Word receive;
My body with my charge lay down,
And cease at once to work and live."

John Wesley's last sermon was preached in a gentleman's dining-room, at Leatherhead, a small place about eighteen miles from London. It was on February 23rd, 1791, and his text was, "*Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near.*"—Isa. lv. 6. This was on a Wednesday, and the day but one after, Friday, he felt very poorly, and said he would like to lie down. At the end of half an hour, some one went to his bedroom, and found him so ill that they sent for the doctor. On Sunday he seemed better, and got up. He was so cheerful and happy; and while sitting in his chair in his bedroom, he repeated a verse from one of his brother's hymns:

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"Till glad I lay this body down,
Thy servant, Lord, attend;
And oh! my life of mercy crown
With a triumphant end!"

On Monday night he couldn't sleep, and the next day, some one asked him if he had any pain.

"No," he answered. And then he began singing:

"All glory to God in the sky,
And peace upon earth be restored;
O, Jesus exalted on high,
Appear our omnipotent Lord.
Who meanly in Bethlehem born,
Didst stoop to redeem a lost race;
Once more to Thy people return,
And reign in Thy kingdom of grace."

When he had sung two verses, he lay still. After awhile he said, "I want to write."

So they brought him ink and paper, and put the pen in his hand; but John Wesley's writing days were over.

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"I cannot," he said.

"Let me write for you," said one of his friends, "tell me what you want to say."

"Nothing," replied the dying Christian, "but that God is with us."

In the morning he wanted to get up, and while his friends were bringing him his clothes, he started to sing:

"I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,
And, when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers;
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures.

"Happy the man, whose hopes rely
On Israel's God: He made the sky,
And earth and sea, with all their train;
His truth for ever stands secure;
He saves the opprest, He feeds the poor,
And none shall find His promise vain."
Hymn 224.

When he was dressed and seated in his chair, he prayed in a very weak voice: "Lord, Thou givest strength to those who can speak, and to those who cannot; speak, Lord, to all our hearts."

Then he tried to sing again, but his voice failed him.

He was soon tired of sitting up, and went back to bed. He could not talk very much; but twice he lifted his hand in triumph, and said so gladly: "The best of all is, God is with us." [166]

A great many friends were standing round his bed; he took each one by the hand, and lovingly bade them farewell.

All through Tuesday night, he kept trying to repeat the hymn he had sung, but could only say: "I'll praise, I'll praise."

Next morning, about ten o'clock, the Rev. Joseph Bradford, who had been his faithful companion and nurse, knelt down at the bedside and prayed. Eleven of Mr. Wesley's friends were in the room; they wanted to go with their dear leader, right up to the gates that divide our life here from our life yonder.

"Farewell," said the dying patriarch. And then, as some one repeated, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and this Heir of glory shall come in," the Golden Gates opened, and the soul of John Wesley passed through.

Those who were left outside the gates, still stood round the bed and sang to the departing spirit:

"Waiting to receive thy spirit,
Lo, the Saviour stands above;
Shows the purchase of His merit,
Reaches out the crown of love."

So died happy John Wesley. Happy in life, happy in death. And the secret of his happiness was the secret he proclaimed to thousands of boys and girls, as well as men and women, all over this England of ours. [167]

"O boys, be strong in Jesus;
Let those around you see
How manly, pure, and generous,
A Christian boy can be.

"O maidens, live for Jesus,
Like Him, be kind and true;
And let the love from God above
Rule all you say and do.

"Then all the boys and maidens,
When life and work are o'er,
Will hear from One, the words 'Well done,'
And rest for evermore."

If ever you go to London, you must visit City Road Chapel, for there John Wesley was interred, on the 9th of March, 1791, aged nearly eighty-eight years.

A great deal was put on his tombstone which you could not understand, but it tells how this servant of God laboured to bring men and women to know Jesus Christ, and how the lives and hearts of many thousands were changed by his preaching.

In Westminster Abbey, too, you will see a marble tablet erected to his memory, and that of his

brother Charles. Though churches shut their doors to him in life, his memory is now so lovingly respected, that the finest Cathedral in England has sought to do him honour.

In one of the topmost rooms in the tower at Kingswood School, John Wesley's bedstead has recently been discovered. Merely a collection of poles and a piece of old sacking, it lay there many a long year, only seen by the man who went up the tower to wind the clock. Now it is put together, and set in a place of honour; and any of us may see the bed on which John Wesley slept, when he visited the boys and girls at Kingswood.

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Here, too, we may see his chairs and books, and a gown, now torn, which he used to wear. The Governor of New Kingswood still sits in the high-backed oak chair in which John Wesley sat; and grafted on several of the trees in the orchard, are shoots from the very pear tree which was planted in the garden of Old Kingswood by the Founder of Methodism.



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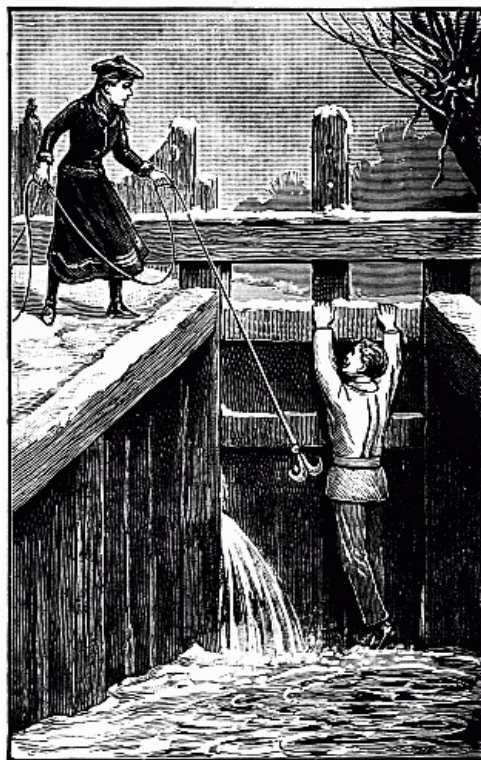
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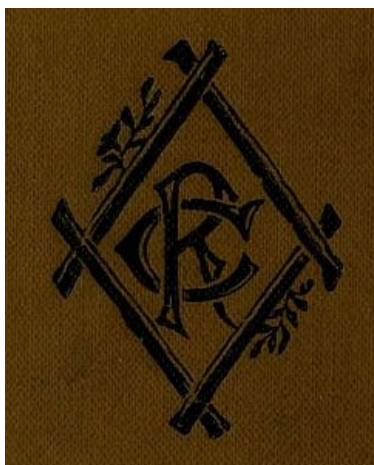
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