

BISHOP WHITTINGHAM.*

THIS is a wise book on a truly great man. Bishop Whittingham was born in the suburbs of New York, December 2, 1805, and died at his country home in New Jersey about midnight, October 16, 1879. He was in the seventy-fourth year of his age. His parents were English, of good sturdy middle class stock out of Lancashire, and their two families were engaged in mechanical undertakings of the higher class; comfortable without being rich, and for those days singularly well educated. The bishop's mother would have been, in any station, a remarkable woman. Mr. Brand writes of her as

a woman of strongly marked character, with a clear and positive judgment, a strong will and great tenacity of purpose. She lived by rule, held herself to a strict account, and was not too indulgent to others weaker than herself. Her feelings were strong and easily excited. Her love was like all else that marked her. Especially towards her first-born it was intense. As she gave him her whole heart, so she claimed his whole heart in return. So long as she lived she claimed him as belonging to her *first*; husband or father he might be, but he was first her son. . . . She loved him as Seneca says the Divine Father loves his chosen ones "in verity and with severity" (*Deus amat suos vere et severe*). She was skilled in music, fond of poetry and often engaged in verse writing.

No one who ever knew Bishop Whittingham could fail to discover the mother in her son. Yet it should be said sharply in warning that her very love bitterly smote her own child in his very cradle. It left him no childhood as it urged him on through the gates of knowledge. A letter of his is extant written when he was less than three years old. When a man he could not remember the time when he could not read, or when he began to learn French, Latin, and Greek. His mother was his teacher. "The precocious child was doubtless forced, and to that extent that it is a surprise, not that he was always a nervous man fitted for suffering,

but that he lived to be a man of intellect." It is needless to say that he followed a very different course with his own children. But in this brief child-story lie the roots of many things he was and suffered in the after years of toil in his great offices. His grandfather Rollinson was an engraver, and was once set to engrave a seal for Columbia College, with a Greek motto furnished by its president. Young Whittingham pointed out that the Greek was incorrect, and his senior had such faith in the boy's scholarship that he engraved the motto according to his emendation and without consulting the president. The latter, on the seal being returned to him, was of course very angry; but soon convinced of his error, he asked with astonishment, "In what college has your grandson studied?" On being told that he had studied only with his mother, he insisted on the boy being brought to him, "a boy," as he put it, "who can correct my Greek." The boy was brought, and was invited to a seat on the platform at the next Commencement. Young Whittingham received his degree of A. M. from Columbia College in 1827, though he had never heard a college lecture, and his D. D. from the same quarter in 1835. It may be added that he had his LL. D. from St. Johns, Annapolis, and declined a D. C. L. from Oxford on the ground that he had done nothing to deserve it. He was grateful for the first of these honors, but cared nothing for the others. He studied Hebrew also with his mother when a youth, and he sped so well in this that he read it fluently all his life. He also at this period studied practically geology and natural history, and retained a keen knowledge of such lore to the last.

Probably he had grown up with the understanding that his career was to be as a minister of the Protestant Episcopal Church. November 18, 1822, he entered the General Theological Seminary in New York City, being then less than seventeen years old. His career here was a brilliant one, based on an application Spartan in its severity, so that even his classmates formally remonstrated. Indeed, his early intemperance in labor, scholastic and parochial, avenged itself in the ill health which followed him through life, though originally he must have had an iron constitution. His reputation in the seminary followed him at graduation, and he passed at once into those migratory and varied labors which usually wait upon a young man of promise and without a cure. In 1829 he settled over a small parish at Orange, N. J., but here he soon became involved in general literary work for his communion, and returned to New York City in 1830. In 1831 he was made rector of St. Luke's, and here faced the cholera of that year with great courage. Here too he became involved in editorship, and finally, as was inevitable, his health broke—as it looked, finally. Friends however sent him up the Mediterranean (1834), and he came home to be made professor of

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ecclesiastical history in the General Theological Seminary, where he remained from 1836 to 1840.

Thursday, September 17, 1840, he was consecrated Bishop of Maryland in St. Paul's Church, Baltimore, and his great life work began. It may be fairly said that henceforth his life until its close runs into all the great events in his own communion. His diocese was a peculiar one, and the usual curse of parties made his bishopric anything but quiet. Indeed Bishop Whittingham was a predestinated warrior and toiler from his birth. The details of his episcopate are chiefly of interest to his own fold, and need not be enumerated here; but the noble stand he took in behalf of the Union as the Bishop of a Border State entitles him to the reverence of every patriot, as it won the instant and thankful acknowledgment of President Lincoln and his Cabinet. That stand cost him more than life, but he neither quailed nor temporized when the storm was bitterest. As long as the love of the Union lingers in the land, loyal Maryland can never forget him.

To touch even the list of his travels and labors at home and abroad in his Master's service—in England, with the Old Catholics of Germany, and elsewhere—would be too much for these pages. To those who did not know him it may be said that he was perhaps the most remarkable scholar-bishop that his church has so far produced; and yet, apart from his editorship, there are few writings of his published. He lives in wise and far-sighted legislation which will bless his own for generations.

He was a man over six feet high, spare, strong-featured, and with the air about him of a confessor of the primitive church; full of a piety which was tinged with asceticism, honest, outspoken and firm in handling affairs, a great preacher as to his matter, if lacking form, yet sometimes breaking into passionate outbursts of pulpit oratory; a man gentle and loving towards his clergy, yet insisting upon the prerogative of his office as something he would transmit unimpaired; without a shade of mediocrity in anything he did or said; whose common words had a learning beyond libraries, and a spiritual wisdom such as few men show. He had and has left few peers, and none to challenge the reverence which with those who knew him follows him in his grave.

In short, here was certainly in strict justice, a great man and bishop. Bishop Whittingham was a man with his feet always in the path of duty and his face towards the temple of rectitude. If at any time he fell into the pitfalls and snares that lay plenty in his way, he fell both heart and head towards his one aim of serving his Lord; "and the Lord took him."