



William White - His 100th Birthday Celebration

A Newton Toney Centenarian

Birthday Celebration

William White, who resides at Warren Farm, Newton Toney, celebrated his 100th birthday on Tuesday the 12th inst., and the editor of this paper gladly accepted an invitation to be present on that auspicious occasion for the purpose of having a chat with the centenarian. Warren Farm is charmingly situated in Wilbury Park on the estate of Sir Henry Malet. Arriving at the house the pressman was cordially received and he awaited with interest the arrival of the old man who was the central figure of that day's festivities. The venerable vicar of the parish was engaged in congratulating the centenarian, and the cheery voice of White as he conversed with the clergyman could clearly be heard in the adjoining room. Anxiety on the part of the editor to learn something about the family of the centenarian led him to put several questions to relatives. White was born at Pitton and was the son of a small farmer, and until 6 or 7 years ago he was a well known figure in his native village. Both his father and mother lived to a good old age, though neither enjoyed the distinction of being a centenarian – this honour was left to their son William. The centenarian's father was born on August 5th 1759, and died July 8th 1812, aged 83 years; his mother's birth took place on March 17th, 1772, and she died in 1845, aged 73 years. The centenarian is the third son of a family of five who were born on the following dates:

Thomas, born Nov 21st, 1792, and died at the age of 93 years.

John, born Feb 21st, 1795.

William, (centenarian) born July 12th, 1798.

James, born April 22nd, 1899.

Charles, born March 14th, 1805.

The centenarian was blessed with two sons and two daughters. A son and daughter are dead, and the surviving children are Mrs. Emily Parsons, Warren Farm, and the eldest son is a retired schoolmaster, aged 70, residing in Norfolk. The vicar of Newton Toney before leaving presented the centenarian with a book of the collects inscribed in the reverend gentleman's own handwriting as follows:

To WILLIAM WHITE on his 100th birthday, from the Rector of Newton Toney.

Then followed the well-known verse:

“Oh God our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be thou our guard whilst troubles last,
And our Eternal Home.”



William White in his 101st year

Photographed by Mr R. Bidwell, of the
Salisbury Times Staff.

A grand daughter, (Miss Annie Eyles) presented the centenarian with a handsome birthday cake on top of which worked in sugar were his initials and the significant “100 years.” There had assembled at Warren Farm on this occasion young and old members of the White family, and it would be difficult for anyone to witness a more interesting assembly. Four generations were represented, and the youngest member of the family was a little two year old, who please everybody with his winsome ways. Everyone offered their hearty congratulations to the hale and hearty centenarian who had anticipated the celebration of his 100th birthday with as much delight as any member of the family. The editor was introduced to the interesting old man, and was amazed at his vitality. His recollection of events which occurred in the early part of the Victorian Era was very striking. His hearing is slightly defective, but he can read without spectacles, and is able to distinguish an object at a good distance. Whilst looking backward the old man told some very interesting stories and occasionally roared with laughter. He admitted that about 2 years ago he was in the harvest field and whilst following the reaping machine actually killed a rabbit. He told the press man that he was as happy as a king on his 100th birthday, and he wished to convey his thanks to his

numerous relatives and friends for their hearty congratulations and gifts. He humorously remarked that he should require a horse and cart in which to load his presents. He remembered the battle of Trafalgar and tried to favour the company with a patriotic song in which Nelson figured prominently, but the centenarian had not gone far before he broke down, and there being no book of words at hand, he tendered his apologies. Then his relative suggested that as that was a thanks-giving day the centenarian ought to favour them with a note of praise. Pulling himself together, White started that well-known verse "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." He sang heartily, and the tone of his voice showed that in his younger days he was a fairly good songster. For some years he was a member of Pitton Church choir, and no more fitting note could be sung by centenarian than the one he had just rendered. The company had a chat over the tea cups and the old man amused his guests with some anecdotes connected with his career. The birthday cake having been cut the centenarian made a short speech expressing the joy he felt at having his relatives and friends around him and a few hours later the day's celebration was brought to a close, and the old man entered upon his 101st year.

On the following day our representative (Mr. R. Bidwell), visited Warren Farm, and put the centenarian under the camera.

Salisbury Times, 22 July 1898