VARIOUS

EXCELLENT WOMEN

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Содержание

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ELIZABETH FRY

I.
BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS

Elizabeth Fry was born in Norwich, on the 21st of June, 1780. She was the third daughter of John Gurney, of Earlham, Norfolk, and Catherine Bell, daughter of Daniel Bell, merchant in London. Mrs. Bell was a descendant of the ancient family of the Barclays of Ury in Kincardineshire, and granddaughter of Robert Barclay, the well-known apologist of the Quakers.

John Gurney of Earlham, born in 1749, was educated in the principles of the Society of Friends, but as he advanced in life, and associated with persons of various Christian denominations, the strictness of his religious opinions was much relaxed, and he showed liberality of sentiment towards others, even if they were indifferent to all spiritual concerns. In fact, in those times there was throughout England, in all the churches, a decay of faith and a tendency to unbelief; against which a few men made

noble protest, till the religious Revival, led by Whitefield and Wesley, inaugurated a happier era.

We are, therefore, not surprised to read that the daughters of John Gurney, deprived in early life of their mother's care, were accustomed to mingle with people entirely devoid of religion, although some of these were accomplished and talented in their way. The father continued formally to attend the Friends' Meeting; and the eldest daughter, Catherine, being of a thoughtful mind and with desire for instruction, was of use to her sisters in somewhat checking their love of worldly pleasure and amusements. Of Elizabeth, it is said that in her young days "she was singularly attractive; her figure tall, her countenance sweet and pleasing, and her person and manners dignified and lovely. She was gentle and quiet in temper, yet evinced a strong will." The visits of different Friends, especially her uncle Joseph Gurney, who always had much influence with her, both then and during her future life, helped to confirm the good teaching of her mother in childhood.

II.
BEGINS A PRIVATE JOURNAL: WITH RECORD OF HER EXPERIENCES

In 1793, when in her seventeenth year, Elizabeth Gurney began to keep a private Journal.[1] In the early part of this record she frankly tells her proceedings day after day, and describes the long and gradual struggle that took place in her heart, which ended in her conversion by the power of the Holy Spirit, and in her thorough consecration to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a most instructive record, especially for the young.

Her father, a man popular on account of his genial ways and social disposition, making no objection, she joined, with some of her sisters, in all the gaieties of life in Norwich. Prince William Frederick, afterwards Duke of Gloucester, was then quartered with his regiment there, and there was an incessant round of pleasures—balls, concerts, and oratorios. Elizabeth Gurney entered into all the gaiety, but she was ill at ease. She

[1] This Journal was kept up by her till the close of her life, and contains not only a full account of events, but a personal record of her thoughts and experiences. It is preserved with pious care by members of the family. *A Memoir of Elizabeth Fry*, published by her daughters, in two volumes, was widely circulated after her decease. Innumerable biographies and memoirs have since appeared, the best of which, by Susanna Corder, contains selections from the private Journal.

says, "I see the folly of the world. My mind is very flat after this storm of pleasure." "I do believe if I had a little true religion, I should have a greater support than I have now."

She had also before this time given expression to the better dispositions of her natural heart, saying, "I must do what I can to alleviate the sorrows of others; exert what power I have to increase happiness; try to govern my passions by reason; and adhere strictly to what I think right."

This condition of her mind, with alternate indulgence in vanity and resolutions after better things, lasted till she was twenty-two years of age, when she came to the settled conviction that "it is almost impossible to keep strictly to principle without religion. I don't feel any real religion; I should think those feelings impossible to obtain, for even if I thought all the Bible was true, I do not think I could make myself feel it: I think I never saw any person who appeared so totally destitute of it."

It was something to arrive at the conviction that she lacked the one thing needful; and that she felt that more than natural effort, even the power of the Holy Spirit, was necessary to awaken her to new life, and to change her heart. The arrival at Norwich of an American friend, William Savery, "a man who seemed to overflow with true religion, and to be humble, and yet a man of great abilities," confirmed her in her dissatisfaction with her own state, and strengthened her desires after a new life. Of him, she says, that "having been gay and disbelieving only a few years ago, makes him better acquainted with the heart of one in the same

situation."

III.
FIRST VISIT TO LONDON

While in this unsettled and partially awakened state of mind, Elizabeth's father proposed to take her to see London, an offer which she gladly closed with, without any thought beyond the excitement of new scenes and pleasures. He took her there, and left her for several weeks, under the care of a relative. It was a perilous trial for a young girl, but the result was for her happy. The effect was to disgust her more with the world and mere worldly amusements, and to fix her heart more surely where true peace can alone be found.

In the middle of April, after having been seven weeks in London, her father came to take her home, and very thankful she was to get back to the quiet country. A few days after, a letter came from William Savery, to whom she seems to have written asking his counsel. It was a long epistle, full of wise and faithful advice, and showing most loving interest in his young friend's welfare. A few sentences will give the substance of his letter, which may be read by others with as much advantage as it was by Elizabeth Gurney. "I know, my dear, thou hast, and wilt have, many temptations to combat with: thou wilt, doubtless, be frequently importuned to continue with thy gay acquaintance, in pursuit of that false glare of happiness, which the world, in too bewitching and deceitful colours, holds out to the unwary

traveller, and which certainly ends in blinding the intellectual eye from discovering the pure source of soul-felt pleasure resulting from a humble heart, at peace with its God, its neighbour, and itself.

"Thee asks my advice, my dear friend, and without any premeditation when I sat down, I find I have been attempting to give it; but it is very evident thou art under the special care of an infinitely better Instructor, who has already uttered His soft and heavenly voice, to teach thee that the first step towards religion is true humility; because in that state only we can feel the need we have of an arm, stronger than human, to lean upon, to lead us out of and keep us from things which hinder our access to, and confidence in, that boundless source of purity, love, and mercy; who, amidst all the vicissitudes of time, is disposed to be our Shepherd, Guardian, and Friend, in whom we may trust and never be afraid; but this blessed confidence is not, cannot be enjoyed by the gay, the giddy, proud, or abandoned votaries of this world."

Up to this time she had adopted none of the distinctive peculiarities of the Society of Friends. Although from custom attending the meetings, she did not confine herself to the services there; for we read such entries as this, "I went to St. Peter's and heard a good sermon. The common people seemed very much occupied, and wrapt up in the service, which I was pleased to see; afterwards I went to the cathedral." She had already commenced efforts to be useful to others, visiting the sick, and teaching the

children of her poorer neighbours, in Norwich, or at Bramerton, then a quiet, pleasant village, where the family usually resided in summer. "I have some thoughts," she says, "of increasing by degrees my plan for Sunday evening, and of having several poor children, at least, to read in the Testament and religious books for an hour. It might increase morality among the lower classes if the Scriptures were oftener and better read to them." Sunday school work she for herself discovered to be a profitable, as she found it to be a delightful task. All this time she was diligent in study, and in the intellectual culture of her own mind, as we find from her Journal.

"I had a good lesson of French this morning, and read much in Epictetus." Later on, we find her intent on the books of Dr. Isaac Watts, his *Logic* especially, which Dr. Johnson had commended strongly to all who sought the "improvement of the mind."

IV.
AT COLEBROOK DALE, AND ON A JOURNEY TO WALES

In the summer of 1798, John Gurney took the whole of his seven daughters an excursion through parts of England and Wales. At Colebrook Dale, where they saw several relatives, members of the Society of Friends, Elizabeth Gurney received the deepest impressions. She was especially struck with the veteran philanthropist, Richard Reynolds, who having made a large fortune in his well-managed iron-works, spent his money and time in seeking the moral good of the working people. At Colebrook Dale also she spent some days with an elderly cousin, Priscilla Hannah Gurney, cousin to the Earlham Gurneys by both father and mother, her father being Joseph Gurney and her mother Christiana Barclay. Being left by her father alone for some days with this cousin, the influence of the visit was very powerful on her. "She was exactly the person to attract the young; she possessed singular beauty, and elegance of manner. She was of the old school; her costume partook of this, and her long retention of the black hood gave much character to her appearance. She had early renounced the world and its fascinations; left Bath, where her mother and sister Christiana Gurney resided; became eventually a minister among Friends;

and found a congenial retreat for many years at Colebrook Dale."

The travelling party went on to make a tour in Wales and to attend the gathering of Friends at the Welsh half-yearly meeting. Most of the Colebrook Dale Friends were present, and further converse with Priscilla Gurney induced her niece to resolve openly to conform to Quaker customs, though at what precise time she became professedly a Friend we are not told. As to the costume, she was very slow in adopting it—not till some time after returning to Norwich.

In this early Welsh journey a singular prediction was given in an address by an aged Friend, Deborah Darby, who said of her that "she would be a light to the blind, speech to the dumb, and feet to the lame." "Can it be? She seems as if she thought I was to be a minister of Christ. Can I ever be one?" asks Elizabeth Gurney in her Journal.

V.
THE LAST YEAR AT HOME

The early months of 1799 were passed in Norwich, where she engaged in works which she believed to be right and useful. She visited the poor, doing what she could to relieve distress, yet cautious lest she should appear to do too much, telling her friends that in such charity she was only agent for her father, who approved of her thus helping others. She held what are now called "mothers' meetings," reading and talking to a little group of people about fifteen in number. Her "Sunday School" had also gradually increased, till there were sometimes seventy poor children receiving instruction from her. Cutting out and preparing clothes for the poor, and occasional visits to hospitals, and once to Bedlam to see a poor woman, were among the occupations of the winter months. She had not yet, however, made any decisive change in her social habits, for she occasionally accompanied her sisters to balls and other entertainments, yet finding less and less satisfaction in what she in calmer moments disapproved.

The doubtful, wavering condition of mind led her to think more seriously of openly avowing her religious principles.

In the autumn her father travelled to the north of England, taking with him his son Samuel and his daughters Priscilla and Elizabeth. He was going to visit an estate belonging to him; also

to attend the general meeting at the Friends' School at Ackworth, after which they were going to Scotland. All this expedition Elizabeth much enjoyed. At Ackworth she took part in the examination of the scholars, and had pleasant conversation with the headmaster Doctor Binns, and with Friends assembled on the occasion. At York they saw the wonderful Minster; at Darlington, found themselves in a living colony of Friends; and Elizabeth was gratified by receiving a note and a book of grammar from the famous Lindley Murray, whom she had met and taken tea with at York. Durham, Newcastle, Alnwick Castle, and Edinburgh, were successively visited, and afforded abundant materials for entries in her Journal, and for agreeable recollections after returning home.

VI.
MARRIAGE, AND SETTLEMENT IN LONDON

On August 19, 1800, Elizabeth Gurney was married, at the Friends' Meeting House, Norwich, to Joseph Fry, youngest son of William Storrs Fry, of London. He had been to Earlham, and made an offer of marriage, during the preceding year, but nothing had then been settled, Elizabeth Gurney being afraid that any change at that time might interfere with her spiritual welfare and her newly-formed plans of active usefulness. But after some correspondence, when the proposal was renewed, she felt it right to give her consent. It was the custom more generally prevailing than now for the junior partner to reside in the house of business, and in accordance with this, Joseph and Elizabeth Fry prepared to establish themselves in Mildred's Court in the City, a large, commodious and quiet house, since pulled down in consequence of alterations in London. The parents of her husband occupied a country-house at Plashet, Essex. The Fry family, like that of the Gurneys, had long been members of the Society of Friends; but unlike her own parents, they had adhered strictly to the tenets and the habits of Quakers. She thus came to be surrounded by a large circle of new connexions, different from her own early associates at Norwich.

During the fortnight occupied by the Yearly Meeting, Mildred's Court was an open house for the entertainment of Friends from all parts of the kingdom, who would come in to midday dinner, whether formally invited or not. On one occasion, when an American Friend, George Dilwyn, was a guest, she commenced regular family worship, with the approval of her husband, this now recognised duty not having been previously the practice in the house.

Occasionally she got rest in staying at Plashet, but her life was a busy one, and hardly favourable to spiritual advancement. At Plashet, on the 9th of seventh month (July) she wrote: "We live at home in a continual bustle; engagement follows engagement so rapidly, day after day, week after week, owing principally to the number of near connexions, that we appear to live for others rather than ourselves. Our plan of sleeping out so often I by no means like, and yet it appears impossible to prevent it; to spend one's life in visiting and being visited seems sad."

It is evident that the circumstances under which she began her married life were too fatiguing for her, and to these were added the usual domestic troubles at times with servants. All this told upon her, then approaching her first confinement, depressing not merely her bodily powers and natural energy, but in some degree her spiritual liveliness. But she must attend to present duty, and when her first child, a girl, was born, she was absorbed in the anxieties, pleasures and responsibilities of a mother.

From the feeble state of her health, she was some time in

regaining strength enough to attend Meeting, or to resume her usual activity. She was confined to her room when she heard the great tumult of joy, at the thanksgiving and the illuminations, for restoration of Peace in 1801, on the 10th of October; and the noise of the mob in the streets disturbed her even in this quiet house. A fortnight later the parents went to Norfolk, taking with them their little treasure, a lovely infant, which gave great delight to the relatives there. The child was vaccinated by Dr. Simms on their return to London, and the doctor's advice was taken about the health of the mother, who then was in a state of much bodily weakness, with a troublesome cough. These trials caused interruption in the Journal for some weeks; but she and the child gradually got better; and at the Yearly Meeting of 1802, she was able to attend almost all the meetings, and to receive the customary crowd of visitors at her house; among them her much-loved uncle, Joseph Gurney, whose presence was of much service to her.

VII.
FAMILY CARES AND TRIALS

In the autumn her husband took her a journey into the north of England, going by Warwick, Stratford-upon-Avon, Chester, Liverpool, and the Lakes, some of the excursions at which she went on horseback. She was even able to climb Skiddaw, so that her health had been much restored by the expedition. They were glad to get back to their comfortable home, mother and child both better for the trip. Soon after their return, her brother Samuel came to reside at Mildred's Court, to learn details of the banking business, and it was to both a great pleasure to be near one another. A second girl was born in March, 1803; and altogether she had in future years a very large family, eleven sons and daughters; regarding which it is sufficient to say that the succession of illnesses caused so much nervousness and debility, that we can only the more marvel at the indomitable spirit with which she afterwards undertook the labours of charity and beneficence which have made her name so famous. There were also, besides her personal illnesses, many events of trial and of bereavement, as must necessarily happen where there are numerous relatives. Writing at Earlham on the 20th of August, 1808, she says, "I have been married eight years yesterday. Various trials of faith and patience have been permitted me; my course has been very different from what I expected; and instead

of being, as I had hoped, a useful instrument in the Church militant, here I am, a careworn wife and mother, outwardly nearly devoted to the things of this life. Though, at times, this difference in my destination has been trying to me, yet I believe those trials that I have had to go through have been very useful, and brought me to a feeling sense of what I am: and at the same time have taught me where power is, and in what we are to glory; not in ourselves, nor in anything we can be, or do; but we are only to desire that He may be glorified, either through us, or others, in our being something or nothing, as He may see best for us."

That same year in late autumn, her dear father-in-law Fry was at Mildred's Court, very ill; and he died there, being carefully and tenderly nursed by his daughter-in-law. She also, at risk to her own family, went to nurse her sister Hannah, in what turned out to be scarlet fever, about which she says, that "she did not know what malady it was when she went; and that she was the only sister then at liberty to wait on her." Through God's mercy, no harm came to her own family from being there, and no one else took the complaint. "This I consider," she says, "a great outward blessing. May I be enabled to give thanks, and to prove my thankfulness by more and more endeavouring to give up body, soul, and spirit, to the service of my beloved Master."

In February, 1809, she and her husband left Mildred's Court to occupy the house at Plashet; to her a pleasant change from the smoke and din of the great city. Here, her sixth child, a boy, was born in autumn of that year. Shortly afterwards she was

summoned to Earlham, where she witnessed the death of her own father. It was a heavy blow to her, but she had the satisfaction of finding that his mind was at peace when he drew near his end. "He frequently expressed that he feared no evil, but believed that, through the mercy of God in Christ, he should be received in glory; his deep humility, and the tender and loving state he was in, were most valuable to those around him. He encouraged us, his children, to hold on our way; and sweetly expressed his belief that our love of good (in the degree we had it) had been a stimulus and help to him." At the meeting before the funeral she resolved to say nothing, but her uncle Joseph spoke words of comfort and encouragement; and then she could not refrain from falling on her knees, and exclaiming, "Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are all Thy ways, Thou King of saints; be pleased to receive our thanksgiving." She could say no more, though intending to express thankfulness on her beloved father's account. The great tenderness of her uncle gratified her, "and my husband," she adds, "has been a true helpmate and sweet counsellor."

VIII.
WORK AT PLASHET

As soon as they were settled at Plashet, Elizabeth Fry formed and carried out various plans for the poor. She established a girls' school for the parish of East Ham, of which Plashet is a hamlet. The clergyman and his wife gave their help, and a school of about seventy girls was soon busily at work. The bodily wants of the poor claimed her attention. A depot of calico and flannel was always ready, besides outer garments. There was a cupboard well stocked with medicines. In the winter, hundreds of the destitute poor had the benefit of a soup kitchen, the boiler of an outhouse being applied to this use. About half a mile off, on the high road between Stratford and Ilford, there was a colony of Irish, dirty and miserable, as such settlements in England usually are. Some she induced to send their children to school, and, with the consent of the priest, circulated the Bible among them. Once when the weather was extremely cold, and great distress prevailed, being at the time too delicate to walk, she went alone to Irish Row, in the carriage literally piled with flannel petticoats for the poor women, others of the party at Plashet walking to meet her and help in the distribution. Her children were trained as almoners very young, and she expected them to give an exact account of what they gave, and their reasons for giving. She was a very zealous and practical advocate for vaccination, having been

taught by the celebrated Dr. Willan, one of the earliest and most successful followers of Dr. Jenner.

It was an annual custom for numbers of gipsies to pitch their tents in a green lane near Plashet, for a few days, on their way to Fairlop Fair. The sickness of a child causing the mother to apply for relief, led Elizabeth Fry to visit the camp; and ever after she was gladly welcomed by the poor wanderers, to whom she gave clothing and medicines, and friendly faithful counsel. To those who could read she gave Bibles or Testaments, and little books or pictures to the children. Thus she ever abounded in good works for the benefit of others. All this she did in intervals snatched from home duties, there being in the house a constant succession of company and employments to occupy her. For her children she prayed that they might grow in favour with their Heavenly Father, by walking in humility and in the fear of God.

Such was the routine of work and duty at Plashet for several years after she went to live there. She had interruption from various illnesses in her family, five of her children being ill at one time; at other times overbusied with domestic duties, as many as eighteen, in addition to the family, once sleeping at the house. At the time of the Yearly Meeting she had to entertain many visitors in London at Mildred's Court. There were also occasional visits to Norfolk, during one of which she took active part in founding the Norfolk and Norwich Bible Society. The meeting at which this was inaugurated in 1811 was a most successful one. Old Bishop Bathurst spoke with much decision and liberality,

and he was supported by many of the clergy, and ministers of all denominations, the Mayor of Norwich presiding. About £700 was subscribed at the meeting. Mr. Joseph Hughes, one of the secretaries, who, with his venerable colleague Dr. Steinkopff, arranged the meeting, in an account written of it, speaks of "a devout address by a female minister, Elizabeth Fry, whose manner was impressive, and whose words were so appropriate, that none present can ever forget the incident, or even advert to it without emotions alike powerful and pleasing. The first emotion was surprise; the second, awe; the third, pious fervour." Such was the impression made by the hearty words spoken by Elizabeth Fry.

IX.
FIRST SIGHT OF NEWGATE PRISON

It was in 1813 that the attention of Elizabeth Fry was first directed to the condition of female prisoners in Newgate. At the beginning of that year four members of the Society of Friends had visited some persons about to be executed. One of the visitors, William Forster, asked Mrs. Fry if nothing could be done to alleviate the sufferings of the women, then living in the most miserable condition. The state of the prison was at that time disgraceful to a civilised country, even after all John Howard's labours. There were about three hundred women, with many children, crowded in four small rooms, badly lighted, badly ventilated, and with no bedding or furniture. They slept on the floor, some of the boards of which were partially raised, to supply a sort of pillow for rest; and here, in rags and dirt, the poor creatures cooked, washed, and lived. Prisoners, tried and untried, misdemeanants and felons, young and old, were huddled together, without any attempt at classification, and without any employment, and with no other superintendence than was given by one man and his son, who had charge of them by night and by day. When strangers appeared amongst them, there was an outburst of clamorous begging, and any money given went at once to purchase drink from a regular tap in the prison. There was no discipline of any sort, and very little restraint over

their communication with the outside world, beyond what was necessary for safe custody. Oaths and bad language assailed the ear, and every imaginable horror distressed the eye of a stranger admitted to this pandemonium. Although military sentinels were posted on the roof of the prison, such was the lawlessness prevailing, that even the governor dreaded having to go to the female prisoners' quarters.

Into this scene, accompanied only by Anna Buxton, did Elizabeth Fry enter. Nothing was at the first visit done but giving warm clothing to the most destitute; William Forster having told of the wretchedness caused by the severity of the cold that January of 1813. What was then witnessed of the sad and neglected condition of these women and children sank deeply into the heart of the visitors, and Mrs. Fry formed the resolution to devote herself, as soon as circumstances permitted, to the work of prison reform, and improvement of the condition of female prisoners.

The work was not wholly new to her. When not sixteen years of age, she was deeply interested in the House of Correction in Norwich, and by her repeated and earnest persuasion she induced her father to allow her to visit it. She never forgot her experience there, and she afterwards said that it laid the foundation of her future greater work.

Several years were yet to elapse before the time came for taking up seriously the cause of prisons. These years were crowded with events of various kinds, both in the great world

and in the little world of her own family circle. These events caused delays which we must suppose were needed for preparing more perfectly the instrument to be used in the great work. Every interval of time, amidst these years of busy and disturbed life, was occupied in some active and necessary work. There were meetings at various places, Westminster, Norwich, and also at Plaistow, after the removal to Plashet brought the family within its sphere. At most of the meetings she took part, both in the worship and in visiting the poor or the sick. Then there were family cares, troubles, and bereavements. The loss of little Elizabeth, the seventh child, was a sore trial, a child of much promise, and with wisdom and goodness beyond her years, early called to a heavenly home.

Her tenth child was born on the 18th of April, 1816, for whom she thus prayed with thanksgiving—"Be Thou pleased, O Lord God Almighty, yet to look down upon us, and bless us; and if Thou seest meet, to bless our loved infant, to visit it by Thy grace and Thy love; that it may be Thine in time, and Thine to all eternity. We desire to thank Thee for the precious gift."

After a visit to Norfolk, in consequence of the death of the only surviving son of her uncle Joseph Gurney; and to North Runcton, where her elder daughters were residing; and having placed her sons at school, she came to London, to commence the great work to which she now felt she must devote her life.

X.
PRISON WORK

Three years had passed since the first visit to Newgate in 1813. The determination then formed to devote her life to prison-work had been cherished ever since, though hindrances delayed the carrying out of her purpose. Nothing but the constraining love of Christ could have thus induced a woman of Elizabeth Fry's position and character, a woman delicate and in feeble health, to devote herself to labours so arduous and painful, sacrificing personal ease and domestic comfort, for the sake of rescuing from destruction those who were sunk in vice and in wretchedness. But she was following the example of Him who came to seek and to save the lost. Her labour was not in vain in the Lord, for she succeeded not only in greatly lessening the sum of human misery, but was enabled to bring many to the knowledge and the love of the Saviour.

In the years of preparation for her work, she made herself acquainted with what had been done by others. At the suggestion of her brother-in-law, the late Samuel Hoare, she accompanied him to Coldbath Fields House of Correction, the neglected state of which much shocked him. She had also visited different prisons with another brother-in-law, the late Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, at that time occupied, with other philanthropists, in forming a Society for reformation of juvenile criminals. The

interest was thus kept alive in her mind about the women in Newgate, whom she again went to see about the end of 1816. On this her second visit she asked permission to be left alone among the women for some hours. As they flocked round her, she spoke to those who were mothers, of the miserable state of their children, dirty and almost naked, pining for want of proper food, air, and exercise. She said she would like to get a school for the children, to which they gladly assented. Then, after talking kindly to many of the women, she read to them aloud the parable of the Lord of the vineyard, in the 20th chapter of Matthew, making a few simple comments about Christ coming, and being ready to save sinners even at the eleventh hour, so wonderful was His pity and mercy. A few of the listeners asked who Jesus Christ was, so ignorant they were; others feared that their time of salvation was passed.

About the school, she said she would do all she could to help them, and get others to assist; only without their own help she could not undertake anything. She told them to think and to talk over her plan for the school, and left it to them to select a teacher or governess from among themselves. On her next visit they had chosen as schoolmistress a young woman, Mary Connor, recently committed for stealing a watch. An unoccupied cell was given to her as the schoolroom by the governor of the prison. On the next day, Mrs. Fry with a friend, Mary Sanderson (afterwards the wife of Sylvanus Fox), went to open the school. It was intended for children and young women under twenty-five, for from the small

size of the room they were obliged to refuse admission to many older women who earnestly sought to share in the instruction.

The poor schoolmistress, Mary Connor, proved well qualified for her duties. She taught with the utmost carefulness and patience, and Mrs. Fry had the satisfaction of seeing her become one of the first-fruits of her Christian labour in the prison. A free pardon was granted to her about fifteen months afterwards; but it proved an unavailing gift, for a cough, which had attacked her some time before, ended in consumption. She displayed, during her illness, much penitence and true faith, and she died with a good hope of pardon through her Saviour.

It was in the visits to the school, where some lady attended every day, that the dreadful misconduct of most of the women in the female side of the prison was witnessed, swearing, gaming, fighting, singing, dancing; scenes so bad that it was thought right never to admit young persons with them in going to the school. But the way in which Mrs. Fry had been received when she went there among them alone, made her sure that much could be done by love and kindness, in dependence on Divine help, and with the power of the Word of God applied by the Holy Spirit.

Eleven members of the Society of Friends, with one other lady, the wife of a clergyman, formed themselves into an Association for the Improvement of the Female Prisoners in Newgate. The object was stated to be "to provide for the clothing, instruction, and employment of the women; to introduce them to a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures; and to form in them, as

much as possible, those habits of order, sobriety and industry, which may render them docile and peaceable while in prison, and respectable when they leave it."

The concurrence of the sheriffs, of the City magistrates, and the officials of the prison must be obtained, and they were too glad to grant full permission to the visitors; all of them at the same time expressing doubt as to the success of the undertaking, on account of the women not submitting to the restraints it would be necessary to impose. Mrs. Fry had foreseen this, and had drawn up rules to be observed. On a fixed date the sheriffs met some of the ladies' association at the prison; the women were assembled, and asked by Mrs. Fry if they were willing to abide by the rules. With a unanimous shout they assured her of their resolution to obey them strictly.

After the adoption of the rules, a visitor to the prison would scarcely have recognised the place or the people. A matron, partly paid by the Corporation and partly by the associated ladies, had the women, now first divided into classes, under her superintendence. A yards-woman acted as porter. The prisoners, who formerly spent their time wholly in idleness or in card-playing, were now busily at work. A visitor, who went to see the change of which he had heard, describes his being "ushered to the door of a ward, where at the head of a long table sat a lady belonging to the Society of Friends. She was reading aloud to about sixteen women prisoners, who were engaged in needle-work. They all rose on my entrance, curtsied respectfully, and

then resumed their seats and employment. Instead of a scowl, leer, or ill-suppressed laugh, I observed upon their countenances an air of self-respect and gravity, a sort of consciousness of their improved character, and the altered position in which they are placed. I afterwards visited the other wards, which were the counterparts of the first."

In 1818 there was a House of Commons Committee, before which Mrs. Fry gave evidence. Her statement is so remarkable as to be worth recovering out of a long-forgotten Blue Book. In answer to questions, she told the Committee that "There are rules, which occasionally, but very seldom, are broken; order has been very generally observed. I think I may say we have full power amongst them, for one of them said it was more terrible to be brought up before me than before the judge, though I used nothing but kindness. I have never punished a woman during the whole time, or even proposed a punishment to them.

"With regard to our work, they have made nearly twenty thousand articles of wearing apparel, the generality of which, being supplied by the shops, pays very little. Excepting three out of this number of articles that were missing (which we really do not think owing to the women), we never lost a single thing. They knit from about 60 to 100 pairs of stockings and socks every month, and they spin a little. The earnings of their work, we think, average about eighteen-pence per week for each person. This is usually spent in assisting them to live, and helping to clothe them.

"Another very important point is the excellent effect we have found to result from religious education; we constantly read the Scriptures to them twice a day; many of them are taught, and some of them have been enabled to read a little themselves. It has had an astonishing effect. I never saw the Scriptures received in the same way, and to many of them they have been entirely new, both the great system of religion and of morality contained in them."

XI.
OTHER BENEFICENT WORKS

The work so successfully accomplished in Newgate was the precursor of similar work undertaken in other prisons, not in London only, but all over the country. With prisons now so much better managed, and with multitudes of workers, single or associated, striving for the welfare of prisoners, the record of Mrs. Fry's early labours may have lost much of its interest. But it is well to state clearly the nature of her work, and the spirit in which it was undertaken. Nor was it only in the interior of the prisons that her labours were carried on. At that time the transportation of criminals to penal settlements was very largely resorted to, and the state of convict ships was as bad as that of the worst prisons in England. Mrs. Fry made arrangements for the classifying of female prisoners; for obtaining superintendents and matrons; for providing schools and work on board ship; and in many ways attending to the welfare of the poor convicts. She used to go down to almost every ship that left the Thames, and saw everything done that was possible for their comfort. In one case, that of the *Wellington* convict ship, hearing that patchwork was an easy and profitable work, she sent quickly to different Manchester houses in London, and got an abundance of coloured cotton pieces. When the ship touched at Rio Janeiro, the quilts made by the women were sold for a guinea each, which gave them

money to obtain shelter on landing, till they could get into service or find respectable means of subsistence. The children were taught to knit, and sew, and read; the schoolmistress and monitors being themselves chosen from the convicts, with guarantee of reward if they continued steady.

A more public and national benefit was the assistance given by Mrs. Fry to those who sought revision of the penal code by Parliament. Sir Samuel Romilly, Sir James Mackintosh, the Earl of Lansdowne, Mr. Wilberforce, all acknowledged the help obtained in their parliamentary efforts to amend the administration of the criminal law, in the facts and the experience supplied by her from her long and successful efforts in prison work. The popularity acquired by her brought all manner of persons, the very highest in Church and in State, to seek to know her and to do her honour. Even the aged Queen Charlotte, who had never taken much interest in philanthropic work, and had paid undue attention to small matters of court formalism and etiquette, was melted into admiration of what this Quaker lady had done. On the occasion of a public ceremony at the Mansion House, the Queen asked Mrs. Fry to be present, and paid particular attention to her. The pencil of the artist has left a record of this scene, as well as of the meetings in Newgate, where she is addressing the prisoners. Some years later she was introduced to Queen Adelaide by the Duke of Sussex, and it was the beginning of profitable intercourse with one whom she esteemed on account of her true piety and unbounded charity.

With the Duchess of Gloucester and others in exalted position she had frequent interviews; and also more than once visited the Duchess of Kent, and her daughter, then the Princess Victoria. She was always glad to meet persons of rank, hoping to be of use to them personally, and also to increase their interest in works of charity and of mercy. But she valued above all aristocratic or royal recognition the good opinion of earnest and devoted Christian workers. Of many gifts which she received, few were more prized by her than a copy of the venerated Hannah More's *Practical Piety*, received by her on a visit to Barley Wood, in which the author wrote the following inscription: "To Mrs. Fry, presented by Hannah More, as a token of veneration of her heroic zeal, Christian charity, and persevering kindness, to the most forlorn of human beings. They were naked and she clothed them; in prison and she visited them; ignorant and she taught them, for His sake, in His name, and by His word who went about doing good."

Repeated visits to Ireland, to Scotland, and to different parts of England, Leicester, Derby, Nottingham, Plymouth, and the Channel Islands, were made at different times in her latter years; forming Prison Associations and fulfilling various engagements. In 1825 she wrote: "My occupations are just now multitudinous. I am sensible of being at times pressed beyond my strength of body and mind. But the day is short, and I know not how to reject the work that comes to hand to do." To enumerate all the good works which she originated or supported, would require

more space than a brief memoir could allow. Societies for visiting prisons, libraries for the Coastguard men, reformatory schools for juvenile offenders, were among the many institutions which she established. An excellent institution at Hackney, bearing the name of the Elizabeth Fry Refuge, for the reception of discharged female prisoners, will long perpetuate the memory of her useful work.

In the summer of 1829, the family removed to a small but convenient house in Upton Lane, adjoining the Ham House grounds, the residence of her brother Samuel Gurney. In this place she passed most of her later years, and from it she went out on her many expeditions in England or on the Continent.

XII.
VISITS TO THE CONTINENT

It was not till 1838, the year after the accession of Queen Victoria, that Mrs. Fry paid her first visit to France. She saw most of the prisons of Paris, and she had most pleasant interviews with King Louis Philippe, the Queen, and the Duchess of Orleans. The Queen was much pleased with the "Text Book," prepared some years before, and said she would keep it in her pocket and use it daily. Rouen, Caen, Havre, as well as Paris, were visited. A second journey in France, in 1839, began at Boulogne, and thence by Abbeville to Paris. Here she again took interest in the prisons, obtaining from the Prefect of Police leave for Protestant ladies to visit the Protestant prisoners. Avignon, Lyons, Nismes, Marseilles were visited, and the Protestants of the south of France were much gratified by the meetings held at various places. With the brothers Courtois of Toulouse they had much agreeable intercourse. At Montauban they saw the chief "school of the prophets," where the Protestant pastors are educated, They also went to Switzerland, enjoying the scenery, and also the intercourse with the Duke de Broglie's family, then at the house of the Baroness de Staël. Above a hundred persons were invited to meet her, at the house of Colonel Trouchin, near the Lake of Geneva. Several places were visited, and they returned by Frankfort, Ostend, and Dover.

In February, 1839, she was called to pay a visit to the young Queen Victoria at Buckingham Palace. She went, accompanied by William Allen, Lord Normanby, the Home Secretary, presenting them. The Queen asked where they had been on the Continent. She also asked about the Chelsea Refuge for Lads, for which she had lately sent £50. This gave opportunity for Mrs. Fry thanking Her Majesty for her kindness, and the short interview ended by an assurance that it was their prayer that the blessing of God might rest on the Queen and her relatives.

In the autumn of that year she went to the Continent, with several companions, her brother Samuel Gurney managing the travelling. They saw Bruges, Ghent, Brussels, and the great prison of Vilvorde; Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Pyrmont, and Hameln, where there were about four hundred prisoners, all heavily chained. The prisons in Hanover at that time were in deplorable condition, about which, at an interview with the Queen, Mrs. Fry took occasion to speak.

From Hanover they went to Berlin, where a cordial welcome was received. The Princess William, sister of the late King, was in warm sympathy with Mrs. Fry's prison-work, and, after the death of Queen Louisa, was a patron and a supporter of every good word and work. After Frankfort, they went to Düsseldorf, and paid a most interesting visit to Pastor Fliedner, at his training institution for deaconess-nurses, at Kaiserswerth. Pastor Fliedner had witnessed the good results of Mrs. Fry's labours at Newgate, and he had established a society called the Rhenish Westphalian

Prison Association for similar work in Germany. Everywhere authority was given to see whatever the travellers desired, so that this Continental journey was very prosperous and satisfactory. They got back to England in the autumn of 1840.

In 1841 she once more went with her brother Joseph, who was going to some of the northern countries of Europe. She knew that such a journey would be fatiguing to a frame much enfeebled by illness and a life of continuous exertion, but she still had an earnest desire to work for the good of others, if it seemed the will of her Lord and Master. "I had very decided encouragement," she says, "from Friends, particularly the most spiritual among them;" and so, all difficulties being removed, she started, with her brother and two young nieces.

The most interesting of all their North German experiences was visiting the Prussian Royal Family, then in Silesia, whither, on leaving Berlin, they had been invited to follow them. Mrs. Fry had always misgivings in regard to her intercourse with exalted personages, chiefly, she herself explained, lest in anything she said or did she might not "adorn the doctrine of God her Saviour." But she was soon put at ease as to this, on finding that she was coming to real Christians, as devoted as she was to the service of the Master, for such there have generally been among members of the House of Brandenburg. The King and Queen of Prussia were at the time residing at Ermansdorf, and most of the Royal Family were with them or in the neighbourhood. Addresses and conversations on matters connected with prisons

or with religious liberty were prominent as usual, but the especial feature in the Silesian visit was the intercourse with the poor Tyrolese refugees from Zillerthal, expelled from their own country by the Austrian Government, and settled in Silesia by the permission of the late King of Prussia. These people had become converts from Romanism to the Reformed faith, by reading the Bible and religious books. After much suffering, they were commanded to quit their homes at short notice. The King of Prussia, on hearing of this cruel edict, was willing to receive them all, and gave them a new home in the domain of Ermansdorf, which they called Zillerthal, after their native village. The Countess Reden, an excellent Christian lady, was authorised to do everything for their comfort. She had cottages built in the true Tyrolese style, with balconies and all the picturesqueness of Swiss chalets. Schools were established, and every means taken to benefit the exiled families. The good Countess Reden arranged for Mrs. Fry meeting the Zillerthallers, who came in their national costume, and heard words of kind and earnest counsel from the English lady. A Moravian brother was brought a distance of forty miles to be interpreter.

XIII.
IN LONDON AND IN PARIS

Not long afterwards Mrs. Fry's greatly enfeebled health compelled her return to England. She landed at Dover on the 2nd of October. After a short stay at Ramsgate with her husband and some of her family, she was taken to Norfolk. There she received letters from the Countess Reden, giving most gratifying tidings of the impressions made by her visit, and of the practical reforms in prisons, effected by royal order since her visit to Prussia. The chaplain of the great prison at Jauer stated that above two hundred Bibles and Prayer-books had been purchased by the prisoners out of their small earnings.

In the winter of 1841, a succession of family events from time to time occupied her attention, her strength gradually improving, till at the beginning of 1842 she again took part in public proceedings. Sir John Pirie was Lord Mayor that year, and Lady Pirie had been a most valued helper of Mrs. Fry in the cause of prison reform. They were anxious to give her an opportunity, at the Mansion House, of bringing her influence to bear on persons of position, and Sir John invited Prince Albert to dine there, with the most prominent members of the Government.

It was in this year the King of Prussia made a state visit to England, and the marked attention he showed to Mrs. Fry was much noticed. He went to meet her at Newgate, and he also

insisted on going to Upton to dinner, where Mrs. Fry presented to the King her husband, eight daughters and daughters-in-law, seven sons, and twenty-five grandchildren, with other relatives, Gurneys, Buxtons, and Pellys—an English family scene much enjoyed by the Prussian guest. Other visits are described in her Journals, to the Queen Dowager, the Duchess of Kent, the Duchess of Gloucester, and others of the Royal Family; having interesting conversations about "our dear young Queen, Prince Albert, and their little ones; about our foreign journey, the King of the Belgians, and other matters." She often used to say she preferred visiting prisons to visiting palaces, and going to the poor rather than the rich, yet she felt it her duty to "drop a word in season" in high places, and at the same time to be "kept humble, watchful, and faithful to her Lord."

After the fatigues of the Continental and London season, she was glad in the summer to occupy the house of her brother-in-law Mr. Hoare at Cromer, and when there she saw much of the residents at Northrepps Hall, The Cottage, and other places famed far and wide for their philanthropic associations.

She got home to Upton Lane, and spent the winter there. The most noticeable event mentioned is her meeting at dinner Lord Ashley, at her son's house. "He is a very interesting man; devoted to promoting the good of mankind, and suppressing evil—quite a Wilberforce, I think." Such was her opinion of the good Earl of Shaftesbury in his early days.

In the spring of 1843, feeling her health to be somewhat

restored, she surprised her friends by announcing her wish to visit Paris again, to complete works of usefulness formerly initiated there. More than once she saw the widowed Duchess of Orleans at the Tuilleries, the only other person present being her stepmother the Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg, "an eminently devoted pious woman," by whom the Duchess of Orleans had been brought up from childhood. They spoke much about the children of the House of Orleans, and "the importance of their education being early founded in Christian faith;" a desire which may be re-echoed in another generation. Another important series of interviews was with M. Guizot, then the chief statesman of France. Altogether the last visit to Paris was a pleasant and useful expedition.

XIV.
LAST YEARS

The end was now drawing nigh—the end of her busy, useful life. In June, 1843, Elizabeth Fry attended the Quarterly Meeting at Hertford, the last time she left home expressly on religious service. She felt it her duty, she said, "to encourage the weary, and to stir up to greater diligence the servants of the Lord, who uses weak and foolish instruments for His work," yet who is "made unto His people, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."

Symptoms of increasing feebleness led to her removal that autumn from her home at Upton Lane, to various places, Sandgate, Tunbridge Wells, and Bath, in hope of recovering her strength. But she knew that her time for active service was over. She frequently said to those about her, "I feel the foundation underneath me sure." Her concern was not about herself, but about those near and dear to her.

One of the last entries in her Journal is this: "I do earnestly entreat Thee, that to the very last I may never deny Thee, or in any way have my life or conversation inconsistent with my love to Thee and most earnest desire to live to Thy glory; for I have loved Thee, O Lord, and desired to serve Thee without reserve. Be entreated, that through Thy faithfulness, and the power of Thy own Spirit, I may serve Thee unto the end. Amen."

The year 1844 was one of much trial and affliction. Her husband's only sister died of consumption on July 2nd; a grandson of much promise was taken off at the age of twelve by the same disease towards the end of July; in August and September her second son and two of his young daughters were rapidly carried off by malignant scarlet fever. In the spring of the following year the death of her brother-in-law, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, excited her tenderest feelings. In fact, there was a succession of bereavements, which caused her to say in her Journal, "Sorrow upon Sorrow!" and after writing the long list of deaths, she closes the entry with these words "O gracious Lord! bless and sanctify to us all this afflicting trial, and cause it to work for our everlasting good; and be very near to the widow and the fatherless; and may we all be drawn nearer to Thee, and Thy kingdom of rest and peace, where there will be no more sin, sickness, death, and sorrow."

As to her own health, she rallied a little after returning home from Bath, but it was thought well to move from place to place for change of air, and for the pleasure of communion with loved friends. The beginning of 1845 saw her again in Norfolk, her husband and her daughter taking her to Earlham, where she enjoyed, for several weeks, the companionship of her brother, Joseph John Gurney, his wife, and other relatives. She went frequently to Meeting at Norwich, drawn in her wheeled chair, and thence ministering with wonderful life and power to those present.

The Annual Meeting of the British Ladies Society, an excellent organisation for visiting and caring for female convicts, although usually held at Westminster, was this year held in the Friends' meeting-house at Plaistow. After the meeting, which she had addressed several times in a sitting posture, she invited those present to come to her home, and it was felt that her affectionate words at parting were probably the last they would hear from her in this world.

As the year passed, it was thought that the air of the south coast might be useful, and the house at Ramsgate, Arklow House, which proved her last abode, was prepared for her. Her bed-chamber adjoined the drawing-room, with pleasant views of the sea, in which she delighted. While driving in the country, or being wheeled to the pier in a Bath-chair, she still strove to be useful, distributing Bibles and tracts, accompanied with a few words of kindly exhortation. Thus she was employed till the close of her days in work for the Master. She lingered, with gradual decay; and passed away, after a few days' illness which confined her to bed, on the morning of the 13th of October, 1845, in her 66th year. The last words she was heard to articulate, were "O dear Lord, help and keep Thy servant."

There was much sorrow when she had ended her useful life; and when she was taken to Barking for interment, a great number of people assembled, and a solemn meeting was held. But far beyond any local gathering, her example will continue to speak, through all the ages, and in many a land. There are many workers

in our time in every branch of Christian usefulness, but the name and the work of Elizabeth Fry will be for ever remembered.

JAMES MACAULAY, M.D.

SELINA, COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON

Lady Selina Shirley, afterwards Countess of Huntingdon, was born August 24, 1707. She died June 17, 1791. Hence her long and useful life extended over almost the whole of the eighteenth century. She witnessed the rise of the great evangelical revival, which, beginning with the Holy Club at Oxford, gradually spread over the United Kingdom and the English colonies in America. For half a century she was a central figure in that great religious movement which affected so deeply all classes of the community, consecrating her position, her means, her influence to the glory and the extension of His kingdom.

I.
EARLY YEARS

Lady Selina Shirley was the second of the three daughters of Washington Shirley, who in 1717 succeeded to the Earldom of Ferrars, being the second to bear that title. She was born at Stanton Harold, a country seat near Ashby de la Zouch, in Leicestershire. At a very early age she gave evidence of intelligence above the average, of a retentive memory, and of a clear and strong understanding. She manifested when but on the threshold of womanhood that sound common sense and keen insight into character and the true bearing of affairs which distinguished her so pre-eminently in mature and late life. She was serious by temperament, and when at the age of nine years she happened to meet the funeral cortège of a child the same age as herself, she was attracted to the burial, and used afterwards to trace her first abiding sense of the eternal world to the profound impressions produced upon her mind by that service. In after life she frequently visited that grave. She was earnest in her study of the Bible, much given to meditation, and at times almost oppressed by her convictions of the certainty and duration of a future state. By her station and education she was compelled to go out into society, and to take her place in circles in which religion was as far as possible ignored. But her prayer was that she might not marry into a frivolous, pleasure-seeking family.

On June 3, 1728, she became the wife of Theophilus, the ninth Earl of Huntingdon, who resided at Donnington Park. This proved a happy union, and even if, in later life, her husband was not always able fully to share her beliefs and sympathise with her actions, he never threw any obstacles in her way.

II.
HER CONVERSION

At Donnington Park the Countess began the kindly and charitable deeds for which she afterwards became so noted. Her religious feelings were strong, and she strove earnestly to discharge fully her responsibilities to both God and man. And yet, as she afterwards came clearly to see, she was ignorant of the true nature of the Gospel, and she was attempting, by strict adherence to prayer, meditation, right living, and charitable action, to justify herself in the sight of God. But, all unknown to her, the mighty religious awakening begun at Oxford in 1729, and publicly preached in 1738 by Whitefield and the Wesleys, was destined to be the cause of her spiritual awakening also. Lady Margaret Hastings and Lady Betty Hastings, the Earl of Huntingdon's sisters, had come at Oxford under the influence of the Methodist movement. While on a visit at Ledstone Hall, in Yorkshire, they received great blessing under the preaching of Benjamin Ingham, a well-known member of the Holy Club, whom in 1741 Lady Margaret married. They both received the truth as it is in Jesus, and were led by the influence of the Holy Spirit to labour and pray for the salvation of their relatives and friends. In talking with her sister-in-law one day, Lady Margaret affirmed "that since she had known and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ for life and salvation she had been as happy as an

angel."

These words depicted an experience so different from her own that they exerted a very abiding influence upon Lady Huntingdon's thoughts. She felt her need, she was conscious of sin, and yet the more she strove to attain salvation the further she seemed removed from it. "A dangerous illness having, soon after, brought her to the brink of the grave, the fear of death fell terribly upon her, and her conscience was greatly distressed. She now perceived that she had beguiled herself with prospects of a visionary nature; was entirely blinded to her own real character; had long placed her happiness in mere chimaeras, and grounded her vain hopes upon imaginary foundations. It was to no purpose that she reminded herself of the morality of her conduct; in vain did she recollect the many encomiums that had been passed upon her early piety and virtue. Her best righteousness now appeared to be but 'filthy rags,' which, so far from justifying her before God, increased her condemnation. When upon the point of perishing, in her own apprehension, the words of Lady Margaret returned strongly to her recollection, and she felt an earnest desire, renouncing every other hope, to cast herself wholly upon Christ for life and salvation. From her bed she lifted up her heart to her Saviour, with this important prayer, and immediately all her distress and fears were removed, and she was filled with peace and joy in believing…. Her disorder from that moment took a favourable turn; she was restored to perfect health, and, what was better, to newness of life. She

determined thenceforward to present herself to God, as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which she was now convinced was her reasonable service…. No sooner was her heart surrendered to God, and her alienated affections restored to their original claimant, than outward fruits appeared in her conversation: her renovation introduced new light into her understanding, and new desires into her heart and affections, and produced its effect upon her temper; not wholly to eradicate its constitutional peculiarity, but to sanctify and render it subservient to the glory of God and the good of souls."[2]

The Countess on recovering from her illness, hearing that John and Charles Wesley were preaching near by, sent them a message wishing them God-speed and testifying to her own purpose to live entirely for the Saviour who had died for her. Her friends failing in their attempt to persuade her husband to exert his influence against what they considered fanaticism, enlisted the aid of Dr. Benson, Bishop of Gloucester, who had been Lord Huntingdon's teacher. But the bishop, as many another in later days, found that the Countess was fully equal to giving cogent reasons for her faith and practice. It was he who had ordained Whitefield, and to the latter the bishop ascribed the change in her opinion. So far from accepting the bishop's view, the Countess urged home upon him her opinion of *his* duty, enforcing her argument with such apt quotations from the Bible, the Articles, and the Homilies, that at length he left her presence

[2] *The Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon*, vol. 1. pp. 14, 15.

openly regretting the fact that he had ever laid his hands upon Whitefield's head. "My Lord," was the last word of the Countess, "mark my words: when you are on your dying bed that will be one of the few ordinations you will reflect upon with complacence." It is pleasing to know that when on his death-bed in 1752, this prelate sent to Whitefield, and asked to be remembered in his prayers.

III.
HELP IN THE WORK OF WESLEY AXD WHITEFIELD

Although in 1738 and 1739 Wesley and his followers frequented the Moravian meeting-house in Neville's Court, Fetter Lane, the first home of organised Methodism in London was the Foundry in Moorfields. Lady Huntingdon had identified herself with the Methodists, and thus was enabled to exert great influence upon a movement, small at first, but soon fraught with most potent consequences, the employment by Wesley of lay evangelistic agency. Wesley had already allowed some of his lay helpers to expound, but not to preach. Yet here, as in his strong desire to keep the Methodist movement within the borders of the Established Church, he was to find that his personal view, if enforced, would hinder the work which was so manifestly of God, and with his clear common sense he at once gave way. During 1739 Lady Huntingdon had frequently heard Thomas Maxfield pray, and, according to her biographer, it was at her suggestion that he began to expound the Scriptures. Wesley had been summoned from London, and no clergyman being available at that moment, he left Maxfield in charge, to pray with the members of the society and to give them such helpful advice as he could. In a letter to Wesley, written either at the close of 1739

or the beginning of 1740, Lady Huntingdon writes of Maxfield: "He is one of the greatest instances of God's peculiar favour that I know: he is raised from the stones to sit amongst the princes of His people. The first time I made him expound, expecting little from him, I sat over against him and thought what a power of God must be with him to make *me* give any attention to him. But before he had gone over one-fifth part, any one that had seen me would have thought I had been made of wood or stone; so quite immovable I both felt and looked. His power in prayer is quite extraordinary."

The border line between such expounding and preaching is very narrow, and it is hardly to be wondered at that Maxfield soon found that he was not only preaching, but doing so with the most true and certain warrant of fitness for the office—souls were being born again under his ministrations. On hearing such unexpected tidings, Wesley hurried back to London, and entering his house next door to the Foundry with clouded face, replied to his mother's question as to the cause, "Thomas Maxfield has turned preacher, I find." Great was his surprise to receive the rejoinder, "Take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are." Such testimony from such a source could not fail to move John Wesley. He wisely heard for himself, and expressed his judgment in the words of Scripture—"It is the Lord: let Him do what seemeth Him good."

Thus Methodism passed through what might have been its

first great crisis. Thus it equipped itself to keep pace with the ever-increasing claims of its work. The quick spiritual insight of Lady Huntingdon recognised both the need and the fitness of the hitherto unrecognised worker.

One of the first members of the noble band of itinerating preachers thus called into the active exercise of their spiritual gifts was David Taylor, a servant in Lord Huntingdon's household, who did much fruitful evangelistic work in the villages surrounding Donnington Park. It was this man who stood by John Wesley's side when the drunken curate of Epworth refused him admission to what had been his father's pulpit, and who announced to the congregation as they left the church that in the afternoon Wesley would preach in the graveyard. And there that same afternoon Wesley, standing upon his father's tombstone, preached to a congregation, the like of which Epworth had never seen before, the first of a series of sermons that afterwards became famous.

Having thus aided one of the brothers during a critical administrative stage, Lady Huntingdon shortly afterwards was of great service to the other in a crisis of spiritual experience. Soon after the organisation of the first Methodist Society, the "still" heresy developed among the Moravian members of the Fetter Lane Chapel. This was the view, "that believers had nothing to do with ordinances—were not subject to them—and ought to be *still*; that they ought to leave off the means of grace, and not go to church; not to communicate; not to search the

Scriptures; not to use private prayer till they had living faith; and to be *still* till they had it."[3] Wesley used all his influence and all his persuasive power to counteract these opinions, but without avail. At length he decided to sever all connection with those who insisted upon acting in accordance with them, and removed Methodism to the Foundry. Charles Wesley at first went cordially with his brother, but at a later date he ceased attending the Foundry, and manifested signs of a desire to return to Fetter Lane. Lady Huntingdon, for whose views he entertained feelings of the deepest respect, remonstrated with him, and in conjunction with John Wesley's efforts kept him from a step that might have proved fatal to his further usefulness. In a letter written to John Wesley in October, 1741, Lady Huntingdon writes: "Since you left us the *still ones* are not without their attacks. I fear much more for your brother than for myself, as the conquest of the one would be nothing to the other…. I comfort myself very much that you will approve a step with respect to them your brother and I have taken. No less than his declaring open war with them…. Your brother is also to give his reasons for quite separating. I have great faith God will not let him fall; He will surely have mercy on him, and not on him only, for many would fall with him."

[3] *Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon*, vol. 1. p. 36.

IV.
FAMILY BEREAVEMENTS

Lady Huntingdon at this period of her life was called upon to endure some very heavy domestic griefs. She had to mourn for two of her sons, George, aged thirteen, and Fernando, aged eleven, who died of small-pox. They were both buried in Westminster Abbey. On October 13, 1746, she lost her husband, who was carried off by an apoplectic seizure, in his fiftieth year. The Countess had only just passed her thirty-ninth birthday when this last great sorrow came upon her. She herself was at the same time tried by a long and severe illness. The effect of these repeated and heavy afflictions was to further develop her character, and to increase the devotion and self-sacrifice with which she gave herself to works of benevolence and to the extension of the Saviour's kingdom. On Lord Huntingdon's death, besides having entire control of her own means, she became sole trustee of the children and their fortune. In regard to the latter she proved herself a good steward; the former she devoted very largely to the evangelistic and charitable work in which she delighted.

Early in 1747 she wrote to Dr. Doddridge: "I hope you will comfort me by all the accounts you can gather of the flourishing and spreading of the glad tidings. Oh, how do I lament the weakness of my hands, the feebleness of my knees, and coolness

of my heart! I want it on fire always, not for self-delight, but to spread the Gospel from pole to pole." And in other letters: "My heart wants nothing so much as to dispense *all—all* for the glory of Him whom my soul loveth." "I am nothing—Christ is all; I disclaim, as well as disdain, any righteousness but His. I not only rejoice that there is no wisdom for His people but that from above, but reject every pretension to any but what comes from Himself. I want no holiness He does not give me, and I could not accept a heaven He did not prepare me for; I can wish for no liberty but what He likes for me, and I am satisfied with every misery He does not redeem me from; that in all things I may feel that without Him I can do nothing…. To preach Christ and His blessing upon repentance over the earth is the commission—the event must be with Him—all else is from man and of man. May the Lord give us all such love, to live and die to Him and for Him alone."

At a later period in life, May, 1763, she sustained another serious bereavement in the loss of her youngest daughter. Although only twenty-six years of age, she had long been a great comfort to her mother, who, writing after her death, called her "the desire of my eyes and the continual pleasure of my heart." Many were the letters of sympathy she received from Venn, Berridge, Romaine, Fletcher, and others; but it was a loss that could not be replaced. But it could and it did help to purify still more the loving and trusting heart which could see, even as Fletcher urged, in so sore a trial, "mercy rejoicing over

judgment." One of the sayings of her daughter on that death-bed must often have come to the mother's mind in later days, "I am as happy as my heart can desire to be."

V.
WHITEFIELD AS LADY HUNTINGDON'S CHAPLAIN

Prior to 1744, the date of Whitefield's first voyage to the American colonies, the Countess had made his acquaintance, and had often heard him preach. She, in common with multitudes of her contemporaries, had come under the extraordinary spell of his pulpit oratory. In 1748, after a four years' absence in North America, Whitefield returned to England, and at her request Howel Harris, the famous Welsh evangelist, brought the great preacher to Lady Huntingdon's house in Chelsea. In a reply to a letter sent the next day, conveying the request that he would come again, as "several of the nobility desired to hear him," Whitefield wrote, August 21, 1748: "How wonderfully does our Redeemer deal with souls! If they will hear the Gospel only under a ceiled roof, ministers shall be sent to them there. If only in a church or a field, they shall have it there. A word in the lesson, when I was last at your Ladyship's, struck me, 'Paul preached privately to those who were of reputation.' This must be the way, I presume, of dealing with the nobility who yet know not the Lord. Oh, that I may be enabled, When called to preach to any of them, so to preach as to win their souls to the blessed Jesus! I know that you will pray that it may be so."

Thus began the series of drawing-room services which were attended by so many of those who were high in rank, and at which some of the most famous incidents in Whitefield's career occurred. At these services the Word of God often found an entrance into worldly hearts, and once and again Whitefield tried to win for the Saviour such men as Chesterfield and Bolingbroke. Lady Huntingdon made him one of her chaplains, and in order to afford greater facilities for this special work, she removed from Chelsea to a house in Park Street, and for six weeks Whitefield carried on these special services, in addition to all his other work. When, for his own spiritual refreshment, he left London for an evangelistic tour to Bristol, Exeter, and Plymouth, this special work was continued by John and Charles Wesley, and several of their fellow-workers.

The young Earl of Huntingdon came of age in 1750, and the Countess gave up Donnington Park to him, removing her household to Ashby, living there with her other children and two of the Ladies Hastings. Towards the close of 1749 Whitefield desired, if possible, with the aid of Lady Huntingdon, to organise the vast numbers who had been greatly blessed by his evangelistic work, into a corporate body, like that which the clear, practical wisdom of John Wesley had created for the societies which looked up to him as leader. Whitefield had already seriously differed from Wesley on the tenets of Calvinism and much trouble was to ensue in after years from a renewal of the controversy between the two sections, Calvinistic and Arminian

Methodism. Lady Huntingdon seems to have been attracted by Whitefield's wish and plan; though it was not at this time destined to bear fruit. But early in 1750 she exerted herself, and with success, to bring about a renewal of thoroughly friendly relations between the two great leaders. On January 19 and 26, 1750, Whitefield and Wesley took part in combined services; Wesley reading prayers and Whitefield preaching on the former, these respective functions being reversed on the latter date. Until Whitefield's death this harmony was never again broken.

At this period Whitefield paid several visits to Ashby. Here and in London he had fellowship with Dr. Doddridge, whose MS., "from Corinthians to Ephesians," of *The Family Expositor*, was nearly consumed by fire at Ashby; Hervey, the author of that well-known book of which so many have heard but so few have read, *Meditations among the Tombs*; Madan, a lawyer who, going to hear John Wesley, in order that he might mimic him before his companions, listened to a sermon on the text, "Prepare to meet thy God," was converted by it, and upon his return, said in reply to the question, "Have you taken off the old Methodist?" "No, gentlemen, but he has taken me off!" and from that day devoted himself to the service of God; Moses Browne, afterwards Vicar of Olney, and many others.

"Good Lady Huntingdon," he wrote from Ashby, "goes on acting the part of 'a mother in Israel' more and more. For a day or two she has had five clergymen under her roof, which makes her Ladyship look like a good archbishop with his chaplains

around him. Her house is a Bethel; to us in the ministry it looks like a college. We have the sacrament every morning, heavenly conversation all day, and preach at night: this is to live at Court indeed."

Lady Huntingdon's London house continued for very many years to be a centre of evangelistic effort on behalf of many of the highest rank and social status in the capital. In addition to Whitefield, John and Charles Wesley, Romaine, Madan, Venn, and others preached. Among those who were converted by these sermons were the wife and sister of Lord Chesterfield; the latter, Lady Gertrude Hotham, opening her house for the preaching of the Gospel. Lady Huntingdon was no recluse. Uncompromising as she was in every matter where religious principle was involved, she was always ready to avail herself of the true privileges of pleasure which her rank and position enabled her to enjoy. In this way she cultivated the acquaintance of many of the distinguished personages of her time. She was fond of music, and in early life had become acquainted with Handel. In the closing years of the great composer, the intimacy was renewed, and not long before his death she paid him a visit, of which she has left this account: "I have had a most pleasing interview with Handel, an interview which I shall not soon forget. He is now old, and at the close of his long career; yet he is not dismayed at the prospect before him. Blessed be God for the comforts and consolations which the Gospel affords in every situation and in every time of our need! Mr. Madan has been with him often, and he seems

much attached to him." With Giardini also, whose skill on the violin was at that time the theme of universal admiration, Lady Huntingdon was well acquainted. He often played at concerts of sacred music given at her house, and those of Lady Gertrude Hotham and Lady Chesterfield. At the request of the Countess he composed tunes for some of the hymns in frequent use at her chapels, thus giving Horace Walpole occasion to remark, "It will be a great acquisition to the Methodist sect to have their hymns set by Giardini." Tomaso Giordani, another Italian, composed at her request the old familiar tune "Cambridge," for the hymn in the Countess's book commencing, "Father, how wide Thy glory shines!"

VI.
LADY HUNTINGDON'S CHAPELS

From the appointment of Whitefield as her chaplain, Lady Huntingdon took a commanding position in the development of that section of Methodism which looked rather to Whitefield than to Wesley as its leader, and which held Calvinistic views. Around the Countess gradually gathered such fellow-workers as Romaine, Venn, Toplady, Fletcher of Madeley, and many others equally with them aflame with love for the perishing souls of men. Religion having become largely a mere matter of outward form where it was not wholly ignored, great numbers of the clergy being both ignorant of the true nature of the Gospel and very unwilling that others should preach it, Lady Huntingdon was led to establish chapels in different parts of Great Britain. In some parts she rented buildings; in others she built chapels; and gradually a considerable number of places of worship, largely originated by her, and almost wholly sustained by her, came into being. She herself always wished these to remain connected with the Church of England. She endeavoured to keep their pulpits supplied with clergymen of her way of thinking, and for a time succeeded. But the growth of the work early led her to apply the free agency of lay preachers; and later in life the refusal of the Church of England, upheld by the Courts, to consider her action legal in considering them to belong to the Established

Church, drove her in self-defence to constitute her chapels into a connexion with a legal standing and rights. The hostility on the part of many within the Established Church of the eighteenth century, to true New Testament ministry and practice, on the one hand expelled the Wesleyans from the National Church, and on the other compelled Lady Huntingdon to add one more to the dissenting bodies.

The most noted of the churches which thus came into being were those at Brighton, Bath, and Spa Fields. The first named stood upon the site in North Street, now occupied by a later, larger, and more ornate structure. Whitefield visited Brighton, first preaching there in the open air in 1759. This led to the formation of a Christian Society, and in 1761 Lady Huntingdon built a chapel, to defray the cost of which she sold her jewels, realising in this way the sum of nearly £700. The building was opened in 1761, Martin Madan conducting the first services, and being immediately succeeded by such notable preachers as Romaine, Berridge, Venn, and Fletcher.

Lady Huntingdon's connection with Bath began as early as 1739, and for the next twenty-five years she was frequently in that fashionable resort; but it was not until 1765 that she bought the land and established the famous Vineyards Chapel. On October 6, 1765, the chapel was dedicated, and Whitefield preached the first sermon. "Though a wet day," he wrote, "the place was very full, and assuredly the Great Shepherd and Bishop of souls consecrated and made it holy ground by His presence."

Romaine and Fletcher often preached at Bath in the early months of the chapel's history, and the latter thus referred to his ministry: "This place is the seat of Satan's gaudy throne; the Lord hath, nevertheless, a few names here, who are not ashamed of Him, and of whom He is not ashamed, both among the poor and among the rich."

It was in this chapel that there was the noted "Nicodemus Corner," a seat carefully shrouded from the public gaze, where sometimes a nobleman and sometimes a bishop heard the goodness of the Gospel.

In this connection may be quoted the following anecdote, given in the Life of Mary Anne Schimmelpenninck, who visited Bath with her mother in 1788. She writes:—

"My mother grew better, she frequently took me with her to the Pump Room, and she sometimes told me anecdotes of those she had seen there when a child. On one occasion, when the room was thronged with company—and at that time the visitors of Bath were equally distinguished for rank and fashion—a simple, humble woman, dressed in the severest garb of the Society of Friends, walked into the midst of the assembly and began an address to them on the vanity and follies of the world, and the insufficiency of dogmatic without spiritual religion. The company seemed taken by surprise, and their attention was arrested for a few moments; as the speaker proceeded, and spoke more and more against the customs of the world, signs of disapprobation appeared. Amongst those present was one

lady with a stern yet high-toned expression of countenance, her air was distinguished; she sat erect, and listened intently to the speaker. The impatience of the hearers soon became unrestrained. As the Quaker spoke of giving up the world and its pleasures, hisses, groans, beating of sticks, and cries of 'Down, down!' burst from every quarter. Then the lady I have described arose with dignity, and slowly passing through the crowd, where a passage was involuntarily opened to her, she went up to the speaker, and thanked her, in her own name and in that of all present, for the faithfulness with which she had borne testimony to the truth. The lady added, 'I am not of your persuasion, nor has it been my belief that our sex are generally deputed to be public teachers; but God who gives the rule can make the exception, and He has indeed put it in the hearts of all His children to honour and venerate fidelity to His commission. Again I gratefully thank you.' Side by side with the Quaker she walked to the door of the Pump Room, and then resumed her seat. This lady was the celebrated Countess of Huntingdon."[4]

[4] *Autobiography of Mary Anne Schimmelpenninck*, vol. 1. pp. 89, 90.

VII.
THE COLLEGE AT TREVECCA AND CHESHUNT

So rapidly did places of worship multiply under the Countess's fostering care, that very shortly after the opening of the Vineyards at Bath, the question of supplying preachers for their pulpits became so pressing that finally the scheme of founding a college for the training of suitable preachers took definite shape. Lady Huntingdon had already contributed liberally to Western College, Plymouth, Brecon College, and Dr. Doddridge's Academy at Northampton. She held much consultation with her most trusted advisers, Whitefield, Wesley, Venn, Romaine, and others. All were favourable except Berridge, who, although "the most dubious man in the world about his own judgment," yet wrote, "Will not Jesus choose, and teach, and send forth His ministering servants now, as He did the disciples aforetime; and glean them up when, and where, and how He pleaseth? The world says no, because they are strangers to a Divine commission and a Divine teaching. And what if these asses blunder about the Master's meaning for a time, and mistake it often, as they did formerly? No great harm will ensue, provided they are kept from paper and ink, or from a white wall and charcoal."

In 1768 Lady Huntingdon fixed upon an old mansion at Trevecca in Brecknockshire, as the home of the new experiment. Her relations with Welsh evangelistic work had long been close and helpful, and by means of Howel Harris, Trevecca had become familiar to her. Fletcher of Madeley was appointed President, although he was not to reside there permanently; and Joseph Easterbrook resident tutor. Students soon began to appear, the first on the roll being in all probability James Glazebrook, a collier in Fletcher's parish. To Fletcher the Countess had sent the circular describing what she wished the college to be, and asking him, in common with all her ministerial friends, whether he could recommend any suitable persons as students. He replied: "After having perused the articles and looked round about me, I designed to answer your Ladyship that out of this Galilee ariseth no prophet. With this resolution I went to bed, but in my sleep was much taken up with the thought and remembrance of one of my young colliers who told me some months ago that for four years he had been inwardly persuaded that he should be called to speak for God. I looked upon the unusual impression of my dream as a call to speak to the young man, and at waking designed to do so at the first opportunity. To my great surprise he came to Madeley that very morning, and I found upon inquiry that he had been as much drawn to come as I to speak to him."

The man who in this remarkable way secured the recommendation and interest of Fletcher was the first of what

is now the long roll of good and useful men whom the college has sent forth into the evangelical ministry at home and into the great mission field of the world.

Trevecca House was formally opened and dedicated as a theological college on August 24, 1768, the anniversary of the birthday of the foundress. Whitefield preached the sermon, choosing as his text Exodus xx. 24, "In all places where I record My name, I will come unto thee and bless thee." The next Sunday he addressed a congregation of some thousands gathered in the courtyard of the college, from the words, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

From its foundation the college has combined both the literary and theological training. While estimating literary and theological learning at a very high value, the aim has always been first and foremost to train earnest spiritual evangelistic preachers. The college has been almost as much a home as a seminary. The students have always resided within its walls, enjoying intimate relationship with each other, and friendly intercourse with the principal. Lady Huntingdon made the college in a very real sense her home, and the institution has never lost the impress of her own fervent piety and the saintly benediction bestowed upon it by Fletcher.

From the very beginning the students combined regular preaching, either in the village near Trevecca, or in the pulpits of the Countess's chapels, with the prescribed courses of study. The college prospered at once, and even Berridge bestowed

his characteristic blessing upon it. "I am glad to hear of the plentiful effusion from above on Talgarth. Jesus has now baptized your college, and thereby shown His approbation of the work. You may therefore rejoice, but rejoice with trembling. Faithful labourers may be expected from thence; but if it is Christ's college, a Judas will certainly be found among them."

Mr. Easterbrook's stay at Trevecca was brief. He left early in 1769, and was succeeded, on John Wesley's recommendation, by Joseph Benson, afterwards so eminent in the Methodist movement, and the biographer of Fletcher. But prior to his coming into residence the first anniversary was held, and the occasion was utilised for the holding of a series of very remarkable services. From August 20-23 crowds of people flocked to hear sermons twice daily in the courtyard by Shirley, Fletcher, Rowlands, Peter Williams, Howel Harris, and others. On August 24, 1769, John Wesley administered the sacrament to his fellow-ministers, the students, the Countess and her household. At ten o'clock "Mr. Fletcher preached an exceedingly lively sermon in the court; when he had finished William Williams preached in Welsh till about two o'clock. At two they all dined with Lady Huntingdon; and baskets of bread and meat were distributed among the people in the court, many of whom had come from a great distance. Public service commenced again at three o'clock, when Mr. Wesley preached in the court, then Mr. Fletcher; about five the congregation was dismissed." "Truly," wrote Lady Huntingdon, "our God was in the midst of

us, and many felt Him eminently nigh. The gracious influence of the Spirit seemed to rest on every soul."

Although Fletcher did not reside at Trevecca, he frequently visited it during the first three years of its history. "Being convinced that to be filled with the Holy Ghost was a better qualification for the ministry of the Gospel than any classical learning (although that too be useful in its place), after speaking awhile in the schoolroom, he used frequently to say, 'As many of you as are athirst for this fulness of the Spirit, follow me into my room.' On this many of them have instantly followed him, and there continued for two or three hours, wrestling like Jacob for the blessing."

Lady Huntingdon spent much of her time at Trevecca, and for some years bore the entire cost of the college, expending upon it from £500 to £600 a year. The lease of the property at Trevecca expired within a few months of the Countess's death in 1791, and it having become imperative to find a new location, the college was in 1792 removed to Cheshunt in Hertfordshire, about twelve miles from London, where it has ever since continued to flourish.

During the century and a quarter of its existence Cheshunt College has rendered good service to the Church of Christ. Among the students educated at Trevecca were such men as John Clayton of the Weigh House Chapel, Roby of Manchester, and Matthew Wilks of the Tabernacle. The longer roll of those who entered after 1792 contains such names as Joseph Sortain of Brighton, and James Sherman of Surrey Chapel, in the ministry

of the home churches; and is peculiarly rich in men who have done and are still doing noble service in the great mission field of the world. The flame of missionary enthusiasm has ever burnt brightly at Cheshunt. Among the many who have gone to their well-earned rest are men like Dr. Turner of Samoa, and James Gilmour of Mongolia. In the succession of able and devoted workers for the Church at home and for the heathen abroad, sent forth year by year, the good work begun at Trevecca is still living and growing.

VIII.
THE CALVINISTIC CONTROVERSY

The leaders of the great revival of the eighteenth century were divided into two great groups, the one headed by John Wesley, the other by George Whitefield. The Calvinism of the latter at times seemed dangerously rigid to the former; while Whitefield sometimes spoke and acted as though he feared that in preaching free grace Wesley lost sight altogether of the Divine sovereignty. So sharply marked was the divergence of view that for a time it interfered with their co-operation. Mainly by Lady Huntingdon's influence, as we have seen, in 1750 unity was restored. For twenty years the two wings of the evangelical army laboured harmoniously; but in 1770 the doctrinal strife was renewed in a way and with a vehemence that separated the two sections; although in most cases it did not affect the mutual love and personal esteem in which the contending parties held each other.

At the annual conference of his ministers, held in August, 1770 (the year of Whitefield's death), John Wesley drew up his fateful minute on Calvinism. Intended solely for the guidance of his own preachers, Wesley apparently had not contemplated the use to which these statements might be put in controversy; if so, they would in all probability have been more carefully guarded. He also expected them to be considered *as a whole*, and could hardly have foreseen the use soon to be made of fragments

torn from their context. However this may be, soon after their publication the sky was overcast, and Wesley found himself in the centre of an embittered theological controversy, in which, after he had in vain striven to maintain peace by explanation and concession, he vigorously maintained what he held to be the truth. He did this the more because the Calvinism of the eighteenth century found itself face to face with a dangerous Antinomianism. This was rife among the Moravians; some of Wesley's own preachers adopted it; John Nelson fought it to the death in Yorkshire; and it was in the face of this state of affairs that the minute was penned.

Lady Huntingdon from the first took great umbrage at the teaching of the minute. She apprehended "that the fundamental truths of the Gospel were struck at and considering Mr. Wesley's consequence in the religious world, as standing at the head of such numerous societies, thought it incumbent on them to show their abhorrence of such doctrines." She further declared "that whoever did not wholly disavow them should quit her college."

Wesley, on the other hand, thought the time had come when it was his duty to act the part of a faithful pastor towards the good Countess. "For several years I had been deeply convinced that I had not done my duty with regard to that valuable woman; that I had not told her what I was convinced no one else would dare to do, and what I knew she would hear from no other person, but *possibly* might hear from *me*. But being unwilling to give her pain I put it off from time to time. At length I dare not delay

any longer lest death should call one of us hence; so I at once delivered my own soul by telling her all that was in my heart."

Lady Huntingdon on her part acted promptly and vigorously. Mr. Benson having defended the minute, was dismissed from Trevecca. Fletcher, by whom Benson's appointment had been arranged, visited the college in March, 1771, preached under great difficulties, and proffered his resignation, which Lady Huntingdon accepted at once.

All hope of a peaceful settlement was now at an end. Lady Huntingdon drew up a circular inviting the clergy of all denominations to assemble at the Wesleyan Conference at Bristol in August, 1771, and protest against the obnoxious minute. It is needful to quote some extracts from this circular in order that the position of the Countess may be fully perceived. "The minutes given by John Wesley we think ourselves obliged to disavow, believing such principles repugnant to Scripture and the whole plan of salvation under the new covenant. In union with all Protestant and Reformed Churches we hold *faith* alone in the Lord Jesus Christ for the sinner's justification, sanctification, righteousness, and complete redemption. And that He, the only wise God, our Saviour, is the First and Last, the Author and Finisher, the Beginning and the End of man's salvation: wholly by the sacrifice of Himself to complete and perfect all those who believe. And that under this covenant of free grace for man He does grant repentance, remission of sins, and meetness for glory, for the full and true salvation to eternal life; and that all

called good works are alike the act of His free grace…. We mean to enter into no controversy on the subject; but, separated from all party bigotry, and all personal prejudice to Mr. Wesley, the Conference, or his friends, do hereby most solemnly protest against the doctrine contained in these minutes."

The leader and champion on the part of Lady Huntingdon was the Honourable and Rev. Walter Shirley, grandson of the first Earl Ferrars, and her own first cousin. He was an able, fervent, eloquent man, who both in Ireland and England had given full proof of his ministry, and at first was left almost alone in the conflict. Wesley wrote to Lady Huntingdon on June 19, 1771, ending with these words, "You have one of the first places in my esteem and affection; and you once had some regard for me. But it cannot continue if it depends on my seeing with your eyes, or my being in no mistake. What if I were in as many errors as Mr. Law himself? If you were, I should love you still, provided your heart was still right with God. My dear friend, you seem not well yet to have learned the meaning of these words, which I desire to have ever written upon my heart, 'Whoever doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.'"

As the time for the conference drew on, it became apparent that the protestors had no standing place there. Only those who were actual members of the conference could attend. Hence, instead of the large number looked for, Shirley and seven others only appeared. The circular, which perhaps was needlessly

strong in its statements, had been withdrawn the day before the conference met. Wesley allowed Shirley to appear at the third session of the conference, and after careful consideration a declaration was drawn up stating that as the minutes of 1770 "have been understood to favour justification by works," "we abhor the doctrine of justification by works;" "that we have no trust or confidence but in the alone merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, for justification or salvation, either in life, death, or the day of judgment. And though no one is a real Christian believer (and consequently cannot be saved) who doth not good works when there is time and opportunity, yet our works have no part in meriting or purchasing our justification, from first to last, either in whole or part." Wesley and fifty-three of his ministers signed this, John Nelson and Thomas Olivers alone refusing.

Shirley, on the other hand, was constrained to sign a public avowal that "he was convinced that he had mistaken the meaning of the doctrinal points" of the minute. Fletcher meanwhile had written his five letters to Shirley, and the MS. was in Wesley's hands during the conference. Unfortunately he ordered it to be printed, and then left for Ireland. Fletcher, after learning the issue of the conference, would have liked to stay their publication, but in Wesley's absence this could not be done. Thus appeared the first portion of Fletcher's famous *Checks to Antinomianism*. Into the subsequent controversy, extending over several years, many writers were drawn, the chief being on

Wesley's side, Fletcher and Olivers; and on Lady Huntingdon's, Shirley, Toplady, Berridge, Sir Richard and Rowland Hill. Many bitter words were written, and much said and done that would have been far better left unsaid and undone. But through it all even Toplady, Wesley's bitterest opponent, could say of Olivers, "I am glad I saw him, for he appears to be a person of stronger sense and better behaviour than I had imagined;" and Berridge welcomed Fletcher to Everton after a twenty years' absence, with tears in his eyes, crying, "My dear brother, how could we write against each other when we both aim at the same thing, the glory of God and the good of souls!"

IX.
SPA FIELDS CHAPEL

In addition to the constant services held in her different London houses by her chaplains and others, Lady Huntingdon opened and supported several chapels in the capital. The first was leased in 1770 in Ewer Street. The next was in Princess Street, Westminster, and was opened in 1774. Then came Mulberry Gardens Chapel at Wapping, where George Burder sometimes and John Clayton very often preached. Towards the close of 1776 negotiations for the purchase of what was known as the Pantheon, a large building in Spa Fields, one of "the places where Satan had his seat," were commenced. Owing to the advice of Shirley and Toplady, the completion of the purchase was delayed; but at length the Countess wrote: "My heart seems strongly set upon having this temple of folly dedicated to Jehovah-Jesus, the great Head of His Church and people. I feel so deeply for the perishing thousands in that part of London that I am almost tempted to run every risk; and though at this moment I have not a penny to command, yet I am so firmly persuaded of the goodness of the Master whose I am and whom I desire to serve, that I shall not want gold or silver for the work." Nor did she. A company of gentlemen secured it, fitted it up as a chapel, and on July 5, 1777, John Ryland of Northampton preached the opening sermon.

Unforeseen and far-reaching consequences followed hard upon the opening of this place of worship. The Rev. W. Sellon, incumbent of St. James, Clerkenwell, the parish in which the new chapel stood, was a pluralist, holding no less than four ecclesiastical appointments, yielding him in all £1500 a year. Destitute himself of any knowledge of or sympathy for Gospel preaching, he resented this attempt to feed "the hungry sheep" of his parish. He invoked the law against Mr. Jones and Mr. Taylor, both clergymen of the Established Church, who were conducting the services at Spa Fields with conspicuous success. Sellon claimed the right of preaching in Spa Fields whenever he wished, and asserted his right to all the moneys derived from sittings and other sources. He obtained a verdict in the Consistorial Court inhibiting Jones and Taylor and closing the church. To meet this state of affairs, Lady Huntingdon acquired the building in her own right, changed the earlier name of Northampton Chapel into Spa Fields Chapel, and appointed Dr. Haweis, one of her chaplains, to preach. Sellon again applied to the Ecclesiastical Courts, and obtained an inhibition prohibiting any clergyman of the Established Church, whether Lady Huntingdon's chaplain or not, from preaching in Spa Fields.

Lady Huntingdon rose to the occasion. She was not the woman to allow an altogether unworthy opposition to defeat what she felt to be God's work. Since the law upheld Sellon, she in her turn invoked it. Under the Toleration Act she claimed and exercised her rights. "I am reduced," she wrote, "to turn

the finest congregation, not only in England, but in any part of the world into a Dissenting meeting." Mr. Wills and Mr. Taylor, two clergymen who were prominent at this time among the Countess's helpers, both determined to secede from the Established Church; and thus once and for ever she disposed of Mr. Sellon's claims and prerogatives. Mr. Wills became the regular minister of the church. It was in this building that the first annual sermon of the London Missionary Society was preached by Dr. Haweis, and for over a hundred years Spa Fields Chapel was a centre of light and help and healing for that part of London.

This legal conflict had placed those numerous and able clergymen who had been in the habit of preaching in Lady Huntingdon's chapels in a very awkward position. They had to choose between two masters. Not unnaturally they remained in the Established Church. Hence from 1779 Romaine, Venn, Jones, and many others, though still in full sympathy with the Countess's work, ceased to preach in her chapels.

The students educated at Trevecca now rendered services of great value. In addition to their itinerating labours, they gradually filled the pulpits thus left vacant in the chapels. Hitherto the great majority of them had sought ordination in the Church of England, such having always been Lady Huntingdon's desire for them. This being no longer possible, the first public ordination of Trevecca students took place at Spa Fields March 9, 1783, when Mr. Wills and Mr. Taylor ordained six young men to the work of the ministry. It was on this occasion that the well-known Fifteen

Articles, subscription to which became essential for entrance into the college, or into any of the pulpits under Lady Huntingdon's control, were first publicly read.

"Lady Huntingdon never intended her chapels or societies to be organised into a denomination—she never thought of providing for them an ecclesiastical constitution as such. As she intended and sustained them they were simply evangelising agencies. The spiritual necessities of her day induced her to become a builder of chapels for Evangelical preaching and worship. These she sustained and ruled as her own private property, devoted by her to the service of Christ, but disposable by her own uncontrolled will. No elements of ecclesiastical constitution or permanence are to be found in such an agency. Nor are there in the trusts declared after her death. The trustees of her chapels are invested with absolute powers of government, like her own."[5]

By her will dated January 11,1790, Lady Huntingdon bequeathed "all her chapels, houses, furniture therein, and all the residue of her estates and effects to Thomas Haweis and Janetta Payne, his wife, Lady Ann Erskine, and John Lloyd." These persons were thus constituted trustees of all her property, to administer it all to the best of their ability, in harmony with what they knew to be her wishes. Many of the buildings associated with her name and ministers were local trusts, so that the power of the Connexion trustees never extended over more

[5] Address by Dr. Allon in the *Centenary Celebration of Cheshunt College*, p. 33.

than a portion of the churches which her evangelistic zeal had founded or strengthened. It was almost inevitable that such an arrangement should be fatal to development, and so it has proved.

The latest sketch of Lady Huntingdon's life thus sets forth the present position of the Connexion: "The Fifteen Articles are the bond and doctrinal basis of administration in the Connexion; and in the words of the Countess, written when she left the Church of England, 'Our ministers must come recommended by that neutrality between Church and Dissent—secession.' Beyond this the Connexion has no act of uniformity. The worship, according to the varying needs of different localities, may be liturgical or non liturgical. Congregations are allowed much liberty in the form of their self-government."[6]

When Lady Huntingdon died there were only seven chapels in the legal possession of her representatives; but there were in all about one hundred in close union with and considered as together forming her Connexion. In the century succeeding her decease, while the number vested in the trustees of the Connexion increased from seven to thirty-three, the total number diminished to less than one half. Not a few of those included in the latter half became Congregational Churches, and remain in that fellowship up to this time. Some have been swept away by modern improvements, and never rebuilt elsewhere. The steady pressure of life and thought during the last half century has

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[6] *The Countess of Huntingdon and her Connexion*, edited by Rev. J.B. Figgis, M.A., p. 48.

told rather against the development of churches which stand apart from the life and associations on the one hand of the Established Church, and on the other of Nonconformity. But the mere enumeration of the chief chapels yet remaining, either in the central or in special local trusts, is interesting as an illustration of how the evangelising influence of Lady Huntingdon and her preachers extended to all corners of the kingdom. They are found at Bath, Bristol, Brighton, Canterbury, Cheltenham, Ely, Exeter, Hereford, Kidderminster, Malvern, Margate, Norwich, St. Ives, Cornwall, Rochdale, Swansea, Spa Fields, Tunbridge Wells, Worcester, and Yarmouth.

X.
CLOSING YEARS

Until the close of her long life of eighty-four years, Lady Huntingdon retained much of that vigour of intellect which had marked the whole of her career. In spiritual life also she continued to develop year by year. In a letter written to an old ministerial friend on April 26, 1790, she says, "Here (in my heart) every wild and warm imagination, intoxicated by pride and self-love, must end; and submit, not only to learn of the poorest and most afflicted Man in our nature, but also to find in Him, and in Him alone, a suitable relief for all our misery; and, through the same medium, a free access to all divine and heavenly wisdom, whenever a sense of our own evil renders us sufficiently conscious of our wants. Thus faith, that faith which is the substance or subsistence of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, must carry the day; and by it walking in the light, as God is in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin; while His heavenly and Divine Spirit, daily carrying us forward, leads us experimentally into those various states which He Himself has declared to be truly blessed."

The decay of her bodily powers was hastened by the breaking of a blood-vessel in November, 1790. During the ensuing illness at her house next door to Spa Fields Chapel she said to Lady Ann Erskine, who was continually with her, "I am well, all is

well—well for ever; I see wherever I turn my eyes, whether I live or die, nothing but victory." From this attack she partially recovered, and for months she lingered in a weakened state, eager up to the last for the extension of her Master's kingdom. About a week before her death she was confined to her bed, and during this time she was greatly interested in a scheme for sending missionaries to the South Seas. Lady Ann Erskine and the other watchers, who were unremitting in their attentions, heard her praying day and night, and saying at one time, "I am reconciled in the arms of love and mercy;" and at another, "I long to be at home; oh, I long to be at home!" Only an hour before her death she asked, "Is Charles' letter come?" referring to a request that had been sent to the Rev. Thomas Charles of Bala, asking him to come and preach at Spa Fields. Almost the last words that fell from her lips were a testimony to the strength and clearness of her faith: "My work is done—I have nothing to do but to go to my Father." Soon after saying these words, on June 17, 1791, she "fell asleep in Jesus." She was buried in the family vault at Ashby de la Zouch.

Lady Huntingdon, whose long life thus triumphantly closed, was happy in many ways. She possessed rank and a competency and all the social advantages which such things involve. She was blessed with exceptional vigour of body, of mind, and of spirit. She was happy also in the time of her earthly life. Above all was she happy in the fact that she came so early and so completely under the power of saving faith in the Lord Jesus and

under the renewing power of the Holy Spirit. From that time she threw herself into God's work; and by her zeal, ability, and consecration, quite as much as by her rank and wealth, became one of the spiritual landmarks of a wonderful century.

From a course which she believed to be right even John Wesley could not move her; and on one occasion she showed her power even to the Archbishop of Canterbury. About 1770 the prelate then holding that high office, and his wife, gave some balls and parties which scandalised even the gay votaries of fashion who attended them. Remonstrances which Lady Huntingdon addressed to the archbishop, Dr. Cornwallis, through relatives, being treated with ridicule and contempt, she appealed direct to George III. The King and Queen received her most graciously, conversed with her about her religious work for more than an hour, and a few days later surprised the Archbishop by a letter requesting the summary suppression of these "improprieties." The prelate was probably as much astonished as shortly afterwards a lady was, who, in the King's presence, said Lady Huntingdon must surely be insane since she had ventured to "preach to His Grace." "Pray, madam," said the King after he had assured her she was quite mistaken, "have you ever been in company with her?" "Never!" "Then never form your opinion of any one from the ill-natured remarks and censures of others."

Fitted to shine in courts, in an age notoriously pleasure-loving, profligate, and irreligious, she deliberately and whole-heartedly

cast in her lot with the despised people of God, "accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." She was tried by repeated bereavements, and she had to bear the heavy cross of a son who lived and died in hostility to the Christian faith. But these sorrows only deepened her trust in and her hold upon the Lord Jesus Christ. In 1747 she had written, "My heart wants nothing so much as to dispense *all—all*, for the glory of Him whom my soul loveth." In 1791, after forty-four long years of hard labour, steady faith, and self-sacrificing zeal, she passed to her eternal rest, with the simple trust that He whose glory she had so humbly and earnestly sought had glorified Himself in her. No nobler close could have been desired for such a life than that which God granted: "My work is done—I have nothing to do but to go to my Father."

RICHARD LOVETT, M.A.

RACHEL, LADY RUSSEL

I

It is not often that we find the names of person illustrious in the annals of this world also pre-eminent in the records of the kingdom of heaven. "Not many wise, not many noble are called;" but sometimes the wisest and noblest appear among the truest and best of Christians. Such were, in our English history, William, Lord Russell, patriot and martyr, and his wife Rachel, Lady Russell, whom all agree in regarding as at once a heroine and a saint.

With the cause of civil and religious liberty the name of Lord Russell will be for ever associated. He died, as he had lived, the friend of true religion and a firm adherent of the reformed faith. He said that he hoped his death would do more for the Christian good of his country than his life could do. He was beheaded on Saturday, July 21,1683. Upon the scaffold, just before his execution, he handed to the sheriffs a written declaration, in which, after denial of the false charges on which he had been condemned, he concludes with a prayer which shows that far higher than mere political feelings moved him: "Thou, O most merciful Father, hast forgiven all my transgressions, the sins of my youth, and all the errors of my past life, and Thou wilt not lay

my secret sins and ignorance to my charge, but wilt graciously support me during the small time of life now before me, and assist me in my last moments, and not leave me then to be disordered by fear or any other temptations, but make the light of Thy countenance to shine upon me. Thou art my Sun and my Shield; and as Thou supportest me by Thy grace, so I hope Thou wilt hereafter crown me with glory, and receive me into the fellowship of angels and saints in the blessed inheritance purchased for me by my most merciful Redeemer, who is at Thy right hand, I trust preparing a place for me, and is ready to receive me, into whose hands I commend my spirit!"

It is of Lady Russell, the wife and the worthy partner of this good man, that we are about to give a brief memoir in our gallery of *Excellent Women*.

II

Rachel Wriothesley, born in 1636, was second daughter of Thomas Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, by his first wife, Rachel de Ruvigny, of an ancient Huguenot family. Her mother died during her infancy. An elder sister, Lady Elizabeth, married Edward Noel, son of Viscount Campden, afterwards Earl of Gainsborough. Lord Southampton married twice after his first wife's death, but he had only one surviving daughter by his second marriage, who being heiress of Sir Francis Leigh, afterwards Earl of Winchester, the whole of the Southampton property was left to the children of his first marriage, who thus became considerable heiresses. Lady Rachel, when yet young, married Francis, Lord Vaughan, eldest son of the Earl of Carberry, but it was an alliance rather of acceptance than of choice on either side, and the early death of Lord Vaughan left her free to marry again. All we know is that she possessed the love and attachment of her husband and the respect of his family. They had one child who died in infancy.

In 1667, on the death of her father, she inherited the estates of Stratton, but she passed most of her time with her beloved sister, Lady Elizabeth Noel, at Tichfield, in Hampshire. There she became engaged to Mr. Russell, younger son of the Earl of Bedford. They were married in 1669, but she still retained the name of Vaughan till in 1678, on the death of his elder brother

Francis, William succeeded to the courtesy title of Lord Russell, when she assumed that of Lady Russell.

Lord Southampton, her father, was a man of high character and great influence. During the civil troubles he took no very decided part until after the misfortunes of Charles I., when his loyalty overmastered all other feelings. In the first disputes between the king and the parliament he disapproved of the high-handed measures of the Court, and, disliking the government of Strafford and the principles of Archbishop Laud, he was considered to be one of the peers attached to the popular cause. But, like Lord Falkland, he could not heartily join the party opposed to the king, whom he accompanied to York and to Nottingham. He was at the fight at Edgehill, and thence went to Oxford, where he remained with the Court during the rest of the war. He was hopeless all along of the success of the royal cause, and was ever the strenuous and unwearying advocate of accommodation and peace. When the execution of the misguided king took place, he was one of the four faithful servants who obtained permission to pay the last sad duty to his remains. From that time he retired to his seat at Tichfield, taking no further part in public affairs. When Cromwell rose to supreme power he greatly wished to meet Lord Southampton, but the meeting was avoided by the earl, and he continued in retirement. His daughter was educated on strict Protestant lines, with every predilection for the doctrines which her mother's family, professing a faith persecuted in their own country, were likely to encourage.

Southampton, though attached to the Church of England, was most tolerant towards Dissenters, so much so that Clarendon in his History, while describing him as "a man of exemplary virtue and piety, and very regular in his devotions," says, "He was not generally believed by the bishops to have an affection keen enough for the government of the Church, being willing and desirous that something more might be done to gratify the Presbyterians than they thought right." This spirit of her father was probably the source of the Christian charity as well as piety of Lady Rachel's life, appearing in her letters and animating her whole conduct. Or rather we may say, that both father and daughter were influenced by the old Huguenot principles and connection.

III

The Marquis de Ruvigny, head of an old family in Picardy, had long been the leader of the Protestant cause in France; in fact, he was almost the minister plenipotentiary of the Huguenots at the Court of Louis XIV. As "Deputy-General of the Reformed Church," he well served the interests of that body, both in getting a patient hearing of their grievances, and obtaining knowledge of the designs of their enemies. He possessed the personal favour and the support of Cardinal Mazarin, and the king himself put confidence in Ruvigny. He was several times employed in services of a confidential kind to the English Government, but was given to understand that any military position or further advancement must be purchased by a change of his religion. To this he never could consent, being a man of sincere and enlightened piety, as well noted for his ability, courage, and conduct. On the recall of Colbert in 1674, he was minister plenipotentiary in England, and remained so for two or three years, when a more pliable tool was found in a M. Courtin. He still retained the good opinion of the French king and his advisers, for on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes he had permission to emigrate to England with his family, a permission granted to no other Protestant noble. His estates, however, were confiscated, as were those of all the *émigrés*. It was the sister of this Marquis, Rachel de Ruvigny, who became the wife of

Lord Southampton. For the family of the Ruvignys Lady Russell always retained a warm affection.

IV

During the fourteen years of her happy married life with William Russell, she was seldom parted from her husband. Their only moments of separation were during his visits of duty to his father at Woburn, and short absences on private or political business. The longest absence was when Lord Russell attended a meeting of parliament summoned by the king at Oxford. Her letters during this period are such as would be written by a loving wife and a tender mother—happy, cheerful messages of personal or domestic interest; yet even in these familiar epistles displaying a character of good sense and deep piety as well as womanly affection. "They are the most touching love-letters I have ever read," says the editor of the published selection from her correspondence. Two or three short bits out of many letters will suffice to show the spirit in which she then wrote. August 24, 1680. "Absent or present, my dearest life is equally obliging, and ever the earthly delight of my soul. It is my great care (or ought to be so) so to moderate my sense of happiness here, that when the appointed time comes of my leaving it, or its leaving me, I may not be unwilling to forsake the one, or be in some measure prepared and fit to bear the trial of the other. This very hot weather does incommode me, but otherwise I am very well, and both your girls. Your letter was cherished as it deserved, and so, I make no doubt, was hers, which she took very ill I should

suspect she was directed in, as truly I thought she was, the fancy was so pretty. I have a letter about the buck, as usual, from St. Giles's [the seat of the Earl of Shaftesbury, in Dorsetshire]; but when you come up I suppose it will be time enough to give order. Coming so lately from St. Giles's, I am not solicitous for news for you, especially as Sir Harry Capel is to see your lordship to-morrow. The greatest discourse we have is (next to Bedloe's affidavit) Tongue's accusing of Lord Essex, Lord Shaftesbury, and Lord Wharton, for the contrivers of the plot, and setting his father and Oates to act their parts. This was told me by a black-coat who made me a visit yesterday, but I hear it by nobody else. My sister and Lady Inchiquin are coming, so that I must leave a better diversion for a worse, but my thoughts often return where all my delight is. I am, yours entirely, R RUSSELL."

In a letter sent to Oxford in March, 1681, she says: "The report of our nursery, I humbly praise God, is very good. Master [her son] improves really, I think, every day. Sure he is a goodly child; the more I see of others, the better he appears; I hope God will give him life and virtue. Misses and their mamma walked yesterday after dinner to see their cousin Alington. Miss Kate wished she might see the new-born son, so I gratified her little person. Unless I see cause to add a note, this is all this time,

"From yours only entirely, R. RUSSELL."

The postscript of this letter conveys a curious idea of the suspicion and insecurity of the times: "Look to your pockets. A printed paper says you will have fine papers put into them, and

then witnesses to swear."

A later letter, October 20,1681, written on Saturday night, begins: "The hopes I have, my dearest life, that this will be the concluding epistle, for this time, makes me undertake it with more cheerfulness than my others." And it thus closes: "I pray God direct all your consultations; and, my dearest dear, you guess my mind. A word to the wise. I never longed more earnestly to be with you, for whom I have a thousand kind and grateful thoughts. You know of whom I learned this expression. If I could have found one more fit to speak the passion of my soul, I should send it you with joy; but I submit with great content to imitate, but shall never attain to any equality, except that of sincerity; and I will ever be, by God's grace, what I ought and profess,

"Thy faithful, affectionate, and obedient wife,

"R. RUSSELL.

"I seal not this till Sunday morning, that you might know all is well then. Miss sends me word that she is so, and hopes to see papa quickly; so does one more."

V

In October, 1680, Lord Russell moved in the House of Commons a resolution that they ought to take into consideration how to oppose Popery and prevent a Popish successor to the throne. A Bill was accordingly brought in for excluding the Duke of York from the crown, which passed the House of Commons, but was thrown out by the Lords, to whom it was carried up by Lord Russell, attended by nearly the whole of the Commons. About the same time Lords Shaftesbury, Russell, and Cavendish presented the Duke of York to the grand jury for Middlesex at Westminster Hall, as indictable, being a Popish recusant. In January, 1680-1, the Commons resolved that "until a Bill be passed for excluding the Duke of York, they could not vote any supply, without danger to His Majesty and extreme hazard to the Protestant religion."

Things had come to this crisis after years of arbitrary power, and the humiliation of England in its king being a pensioner of Louis XIV. As far back as 1669 a secret treaty was made with France, Charles engaging to declare war against Holland, France to pay the king £800,000 annually and make a division of the conquests, of which France would have the largest share. In 1670 Colbert mentions Charles's ratification of this treaty, having the king's seal and signature, and a letter from his own hand. This treaty was kept secret from his ministers, and a pretended treaty

(un traité simulé) was to be promulgated, to which the Protestant members of the Cabinet were to be parties. Colbert further states that he was told in confidence by the Duke of York that the king was ready to declare himself a Catholic, and that he was determined to rule independently of any parliament. The object of Charles was mainly to obtain money from the French king, but the Duke of York had deeper and more dangerous plots to carry out. The marriage of the Princess Mary to the Prince of Orange in 1677 somewhat disturbed the understanding, but a renewal of the treaty in 1678 brought England again to lie at the mercy of the French king. The impeachment of Lord Danby, Lord Treasurer, for the part taken by him in these disgraceful transactions, showed that there were still many Englishmen prepared to act for the honour and freedom of their country. To Lord Russell most men looked as the leader of the patriotic party, and it was determined to get him out of the way as the chief opponent of the arbitrary power of the king and the Popish designs of his brother, who showed the most unrelenting hatred of Russell. It was resolved that he should be brought to trial for treason, as compassing the overthrow of the government of the king. He was arrested on January 26, 1683; after examination was committed to the Tower the same day, and afterwards removed to Newgate.

Lord Russell was found sitting in his study, neither seeking to conceal himself nor preparing for flight. As soon as he was in custody, he gave up all hopes of life, knowing how obnoxious he was to the Duke of York, and only thought of dying with

honour and dignity. The Earl of Essex was at his country house when he heard of the arrest of his friend. He could have made his escape, and when pressed by his people to fly, he answered that "his own life was not worth saving if, by drawing suspicion on Lord Russell, it might bring his life into danger." He was taken to the Tower, where, it was announced, he killed himself on the morning of Lord Russell's trial. It is more probable, as was generally believed, that he was murdered, and the report of suicide was spread in order to strengthen the charges against Russell. Monmouth had disappeared, but, actuated by the same generous motive with Essex, he sent a message to Russell, on hearing of his arrest, that "he would surrender himself and share his fate, if his doing so could he of use to him." Russell answered in these words: "It will be of no advantage to me to have my friends die with me."

VI

The trial of Lord Russell is one of the darkest events in the annals of our courts of law, while it is also one of the most important in the history of England. He was tried at the Old Bailey on the charge of conspiring the death of the King's Majesty, and of raising rebellion in the kingdom. Every point in the legal indictment was strained, and every artifice resorted to, in order to obtain a verdict of guilty. When it was objected that the jury were not freeholders, the objection was overruled, although in a recent trial, when made in the king's behalf, it had been admitted without any difficulty. The evidence of two or three false witnesses was received, and was made to weigh against a mass of testimony borne by the noblest and best men of the time. Nothing could be proved against him, except that he had been seen in the company of Monmouth, Shaftesbury, Algernon Sidney, and others known to be opposed to the measures of the Government. Lords Anglesey, Cavendish, and Clifford, the Duke of Somerset, Doctors Burnet, Tillotson, Cox, FitzWilliam, and many others testified to his mild and amiable character, his peaceable and virtuous life, and the improbability of his being guilty of the charges brought against him. His public services in defence of freedom and of the Protestant religion were the real causes of the resolution to get rid of him. Towards the close of the trial, one of his enemies, the notorious Jefferies,

made a violent declamation, and turned the untimely end of Lord Essex in the Tower into a proof of Russell's being privy to the guilty conspiracy. This base insinuation evidently had effect on the jury, who brought in a verdict of guilty. The sentence was considered by all right-minded persons as a shameful injustice. Burnet afterwards spoke of him as "that great but innocent victim, sacrificed to the rage of a party, and condemned only for treasonable words said to have been spoken in his hearing."

Among the incidents of the trial, one of the most memorable was when the prisoner asked for somebody to write, to help his memory. "You may have a servant," said the Attorney-General, Sir Robert Sawyer. "Any of your servants," added the Lord Chief Justice Pemberton, "shall assist you in writing for you anything you please." "My wife is here, my Lord, to do it." "If my Lady please to give herself the trouble," was the civil reply of the Lord Chief Justice. So the noble wife sat by his side throughout the trial to assist and support her husband.

After the condemnation she drew up and carried to the king a petition for a short reprieve of a few weeks; but this was rejected, though the king saw at his feet the daughter of the Earl of Southampton, the best friend he ever had. His answer was, "Shall I grant that man a reprieve of six weeks, who, if it had been in his power, would not have granted me six hours? Besides," he said, "I must break with the Duke of York if I grant it." Seeking the king's life had never been made a charge, far less attempted to be proved, though something had been said about attacking the

king's guards. But Russell denied with his last breath any design against the person of the king. All considerations were weak against the passion of revenge with which the king and the Duke of York were actuated. The Duke of York descended so low in his personal animosity that he urged that the execution should take place before Russell's own door in Bloomsbury Square, but the king would not consent to this. An order was signed for his being beheaded in Lincoln's Inn Fields, a week after the trial. It is said that at that time Southampton House, on the north side of Bloomsbury Square, was visible from the place where the scaffold was erected.

Lord Cavendish generously offered to manage his escape, and to stay in prison for him while he should go away in his clothes; but Russell would not entertain the proposal. It was then planned that Cavendish, with a party of horse, should attack the guard on the way to the scaffold, and rescue the innocent victim; but this, too, was overruled, as Russell refused to allow any lives being endangered to save his own. He prepared to receive the stroke with meekness, and with a dignity worthy of his name.

On the Tuesday before his execution, when his wife had left him, he expressed great joy in the magnanimity of spirit he saw in her, and said that parting with her was the worst part of his pain. On Thursday, when she left him to try to gain a respite till Monday, he said he wished she would cease from seeking his preservation, but he did not forbid her trying, thinking that these efforts, though unavailing, might bring some mitigation of her

sorrows. On the evening before his death he suffered his young children to be brought by their mother for the final parting. In this trying time he maintained his constancy of temper, though his heart was full of tenderness. When they had gone he said that the bitterness of death was passed, and then spoke much of the noble spirit of her whom he had so loved, and who had been to him so great a blessing. He said, "What a misery it would have been to him if she had not that magnanimit of spirit, joined to her tenderness, as never to have desired him to do a base thing for the saving of his life. There was a signal providence of God in giving him such a wife, where there was birth, fortune, great understanding, true religion, and great kindness to him; but her carriage in his extremity was beyond all. He was glad she and his children were to lose nothing by his death; and it was a great comfort to him that he left his children in the hands of such a mother, and that she had promised to him to take care of herself for their sakes."

It should be stated that when they partook of the Communion together for the last time, she so controlled her feelings, for his sake, as not to shed a tear; although afterwards she wept so much that it was feared she would lose her sight.

The scene of the parting in prison is not only memorable in history, but has been a favourite theme in art, and one of the frescoes in the new Houses of Parliament commemorates it. Many poets have written about the death of Lord Russell, among them Canning, in a supposed letter to his friend Lord Cavendish,

in which the noble character of his wife is celebrated as well as the virtues of her husband.

The execution took place not on Tower Hill, as usual with persons of high rank, but in Lincoln's Inn Fields, in order that the citizens of London might be humbled and terrified by the sight, as he was carried in a coach to the scaffold through the City. The effect was very different from what was intended. The death of this one man made many enemies to the king, and though the triumph of liberty and religion was delayed for a few years, the execution of Lord Russell did much to secure the overthrow of arbitrary power, and the defeat of Popery in England at no distant time. The trial took place July 13 and 14, and the execution on July 21, 1683.

VII

Lord Russell died for the civil and religious liberties of his country. All men, even those who were far from agreeing with his political principles, agreed in regarding him as a man of probity and virtue, and the model of a patriot. He passed through this world with as great and general a reputation as any one of the age, and his memory will be held in everlasting remembrance.

> "Bring every sweetest flower, and let me strew
> The grave where Russell lies, whose tempered blood
> With calmest cheerfulness for thee resigned,
> Stained the sad annals of a giddy reign;
> Aiming at lawless power, though, meanly sunk
> In loose inglorious luxury."

So sang of him the poet of the Seasons, Thomson, in his famous apostrophe to Britannia as the land of liberty.

One of the first Acts of King William III. after the Revolution, was to reverse the attainder of Lord Russell. In the preamble of this Bill, which was the second that passed in his reign, after receiving the Royal assent, his execution was called a murder: and in November of the same year, 1689, the House of Commons appointed a committee "to inquire who were the advisers and promoters of the murder of Lord Russell." In the year 1694 his father was created Marquis of Tavistock and Duke

of Bedford. The reasons for bestowing these honours were stated in the preamble of the patent in these terms: "And this, not the least, that he was the father of Lord Russell, the ornament of his age, whose great merits it was not enough to transmit by history to posterity, but they (the King and Queen) were willing to record them in their royal patent, to remain in the family as a monument consecrated to his consummate virtue, whose name could never be forgot, so long as men preserved any esteem for sanctity of manners, greatness of mind, and a love of their country, constant even to death. Therefore, to solace his excellent father for so great a loss, to celebrate the memory of so noble a son, and to excite his worthy grandson, the heir of such mighty hopes, more cheerfully to emulate and follow the example of his illustrious father, they entailed this high dignity upon the Earl and his posterity."

The first Duke of Bedford (fifth Earl) lived till September, 1700. He had six sons and three daughters, besides the martyred son. William, married to the daughter of the Earl of Southampton. They had one son, Wriothesley, who succeeded his grandfather as Duke of Bedford in 1700, and died of small-pox, in 1711, in the 31st year of his age. Of two daughters, the elder married William Lord Cavendish, afterwards Duke of Devonshire, and the second married John Manners, Lord Ross, afterwards Duke of Rutland. A third daughter died unmarried.

A striking anecdote is recorded of King James II. addressing himself in the time of his extremity, in 1688, to the aged Earl of Bedford, saying, "My Lord, you are an honest man, have great

credit in the State, and can do me signal service." "Ah, sir," replied the Earl, "I am old and feeble, I can do you but little service; but I had a son once that could have assisted you, but he is no more." James was so struck with this reply, that he could not speak for some minutes, and it is to be hoped that he felt remorse for the death of Lord Russell.

When the attainder on Russell was removed by King William III., the same justice was done to his friend Algernon Sidney, who is united with him in the famous lines of Thomson's patriotic remembrance:

> "With him
> His friend the British Cassius, fearless lad,
> Of high determined spirit, roughly brave,
> By ancient learning to the enlightened love
> Of ancient freedom warmed."

Algernon Sidney, unlike Russell, was in theory not averse to Republicanism, but the accusations are false as to his being a sceptic or a deist, as his own dying apology attests. He says: "God will not suffer this land, where the Gospel has of late flourished more than in any part of the world, to become a slave of the world. He will not suffer it to be made a land of graven images; He will stir up witnesses of the truth, and in His own time spirit His people to stand up for His cause, and deliver them. I lived in this belief, and am now about to die in it. I know my Redeemer liveth; and as He hath in a great measure upheld me in the day of

my calamity, I hope that He will still uphold me by His Spirit in this last moment, and giving me grace to glorify Him in my death, receive me into the glory prepared for those that fear Him, when my body shall be dissolved. Amen." These were the last words of Algernon Sidney. It is noteworthy that the Duke of Monmouth, in his Declaration against James II, among other things, accuses him of ordering the barbarous murder of the Earl of Essex in the Tower, and of several others, to conceal it; and he gave as a reason for his appeal to arms, in his unhappy rebellion, the unjust condemnation of Sidney and of Russell.

VIII

It has been remarked that the incidents in the life of Lady Russell, apart from the one memorable public event of her husband's trial and death, are so few and her merits confined so much to the domain of private life and feminine duties, that her character, unlike that of most heroines, deserves to be held up more to the *example* than the *admiration* of her countrywomen. Few of her sex have been placed in such a conspicuous situation, but fewer, after behaving with unexampled fortitude and dignity, have shrunk from public notice, and in the sight of God only have led unobtrusive, quiet lives in the daily performance of domestic duties as a careful and conscientious mother and guardian of her children.

It is this that makes the record of her life so valuable for all time. If she, who had such an unusual and terrible affliction, was enabled, by the grace of God in the exercise of reason and religion, to show such complete submission to the Divine will, and such patient continuance in well-doing, her example is well fitted for the comfort and succour of all who in this transitory life are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity.

One of the earliest letters, written to a friend who sought to comfort her in her deep sorrow, reveals the noble spirit and wise resolution of a true Christian. She says: "Fresh occasions recalling to my memory the dear object of my affections must

happen every day, I may say every hour of the longest life I can live. But I must seek such a victory over myself that immoderate passions may not break forth, and I must return into the world so far as to act that part incumbent upon me, in faithfulness to him to whom I owe as much as can be due to man. It may be that I may obtain grace to live a stricter life of holiness to my God, who will not always let me cry to Him in vain. On Him I will wait till He hath pity upon me, humbly imploring that by the mighty aid of His Holy Spirit He will touch my heart with greater love to Himself. Then I shall be what He would have me. But I am unworthy of such a spiritual blessing, who remain so unthankful a creature for those earthly ones I have enjoyed, because I have them no longer. Yet God, who knows our frames, will not expect that when we are weak we should be strong. This is much comfort under my deep dejections." And in a letter to Doctor Tillotson she said: "Submission and prayer are all we know that we can do towards our own relief in our distresses. The scene will soon alter to that peaceful and eternal home in prospect."

It is interesting to know that one who helped to bring her to this state of mind was the Rev. John Howe, a man noted for wisdom as well as piety, who had been chaplain to Oliver Cromwell and to his son Richard Cromwell. Although too long to insert in full, some sentences selected from the letter are worthy of quotation.

"The cause of your sorrow, madam, is exceeding great. The causes of your joy are inexpressibly greater. You have infinitely

more left than you have lost. Doth it need to be disputed whether God is better and greater than man? Or more to be valued, loved, and delighted in? And whether an eternal relation be more considerable than a temporary one? Was it not your constant sense, in your best outward state, 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee, O God, and whom can I desire on earth, in comparison of Thee?' (Psalm lxxiii. 25). Herein the state of your ladyship's case is still the same, if you cannot with greater clearness and with less hesitation pronounce these latter words. The principal causes of your joy are immutable, such as no supervening thing can alter. You have lost a most pleasant, delectable earthly relation. Doth the blessed God hereby cease to be the best and most excellent good? Is His nature changed? His everlasting covenant reversed or annulled, which is ordered in all things, and sure, and is to be all your salvation and all your desire, whether He make your house on earth to grow or not to grow? (2 Samuel xxiii. 5).

"Let, I beseech you, your mind be more exercised in contemplating the glories of that state into which your blessed consort is translated, which will mingle pleasure and sweetness with the bitterness of your afflicting loss, by giving you a daily intellectual participation through the exercise of faith and hope in his enjoyments. He cannot descend to share with you in your sorrows; but you may thus every day ascend and partake with him in his joys."

After much devout reasoning of this kind, the good and wise preacher makes a practical appeal: "Nor should such thoughts

excite over-hasty, impatient desire of following presently to heaven, but to the endeavour of serving God more cheerfully on earth for your appointed time, which I earnestly desire your ladyship to apply yourself to, as you would not displease God, who is our only hope; nor be cruel to yourself, nor dishonour the religion of Christians, as if they had no other consolations than the earth can give, and earthly power can take from them. Your ladyship, if any one, would be loth to do anything unworthy of your family and parentage. Your highest alliance is to that Father and family above, whose dignity and honour are, I doubt not, of highest account with you."

Mr. Howe wrote to Lady Russell without revealing his name, but she laid to heart the excellent counsel he gave. The style of the letter, and some special phrases in it, discovered who was the author, and Lady Russell, as we learn from Dr. Calamy, Howe's biographer, wrote to him a letter of warm thanks, and told him he must not expect to remain concealed[7]. She promised to endeavour to follow the excellent advice he had given. She often afterwards corresponded with him, and the friendship lasted during Howe's life.

[7] Cf. *John Howe*, Biographical Series, No. 94 (R.T.S.).

IX

In the great public affairs of the time she could not but feel interest, and her letters abound in references to the most striking events as they occur. Her sister, Lady Elizabeth Noel, was in Paris at the time of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and describes the terrible scenes of which she heard or witnessed. Hundreds of thousands were driven into exile, their property seized by their persecutors; those who remained being exposed to the cruelty of the dragonnades. Then there were the excitements at home, following the Monmouth rebellion and the bloody assizes where Judge Jefferies obtained his notoriety. The trial of the seven bishops; the overthrow of the Stuart cause; the glorious revolution of 1688 and the accession of King William and Mary; the war in Ireland, where the de Ruvignys served under William and the Mareschal Schomberg; the reign of Queen Anne and the Hanoverian succession under George I.; all these historical events are referred to in Lady Russell's correspondence which she carried on with the most notable persons of the time. A letter of hers to King William about the King's favourable designs for the Duke of Rutland and his family was found in his pocket when he died. Several letters are addressed to Queen Mary. The great Duke of Marlborough told her that if ever there appeared a chance of Popery getting again the upper hand, he would retire from public affairs. Even the proud Sarah, Duchess

of Marlborough, regarded Lady Russell with marked deference and respect. In reference to the accession of King William she wrote, "Regard for the public welfare carried me to advise the princess to acquiesce in giving William the crown. However, as I was fearful about everything the princess did while she was thought to be advised by me, I could not satisfy my own mind till I had consulted with several persons of wisdom and integrity, and particularly with the Lady Russell of Southampton House, and Dr. Tillotson, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. I found them all unanimous in the opinion of the expediency of the settlement proposed, as things were then situated."

Her friends and her country shared with her own family the heart and the correspondence of Lady Russell. Her children she lived to see well provided for in honourable and influential positions. Her second daughter was married to the son of her husband's dearest friend, Lord Cavendish, and she became the Duchess of Devonshire. The eldest daughter was unmarried, but the third became the Duchess of Rutland. Her only son, afterwards Duke of Bedford, was in high favour in the reign of William and Mary, and acted as High Constable of England at the coronation of Queen Anne. His education and training was carefully directed by his mother. One of her letters is to his grandfather, then Earl of Bedford, interceding with him for one of the errors of her son's early life. He had been tempted, as many young Englishmen still are, to gamble when on his travels, but his debt taught him a lesson which saved him from ever after

getting into trouble in this way. Lady Russell, while pleading for his forgiveness, undertook to be answerable for the whole loss which had been incurred. It is a sensible and motherly letter.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.